

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools." ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

PLANET PROCTOR

Planet Thank Me

NOVEMBER 20, 2017



Ankles Away

My darling broken bride, the brave and “patient” Melinda Peterson is healing heels over head from her ankle-replacement surgery on our new articulated beds. The steady stream of loving friends (from as far away as New Zealand) bearing edibles, pain-killers and laughs is unending; and her progress is so successful that after she was “recast” this week, she will soon be “getting the boot” – the so-called “Frankenstein Boot” – and will then be able to begin serious rehab sooner than we thought possible...

Thanks to you all for your loving support and thoughtful messages; you have given Melinda and me many reasons to celebrate this Thanksgiving!

"Hope is a projection of the imagination; so is despair. Despair all too readily embraces the ills it foresees..."
~ Thornton Wilder



DRIVE, SHE SAID

My neighbor was working in his yard when he was startled by a late-model car that came crashing through his hedge and ended up in his front lawn. He rushed to help an elderly lady driver out of the car and sat her down on a lawn chair. He said with excitement, "You appear quite elderly to be driving."

"Well, yes, I am," she replied proudly. "I'll be 97 next month, and I am now old enough that I don't even need a driver's license anymore." He asked, "How do you know?"

"The last time I went to my doctor, he examined me and asked if I had a driver's license. 'I told him, 'Yes' and handed it to him. He took scissors out of the drawer, cut the license into pieces, and threw them in the waste basket, saying, 'You won't need this anymore.' So, I thanked him and left!"

*"It's easier to fool people than to convince people they've been fooled."
~ Mark Twain*

TICK-TOCK TALK

'Howdy, Phil," writes Planeteer **Ian Zalewski**, responding to my piece on perspectives... "I was walking around a large event in 1998 for a spoken word project asking people about time. 'What is time?' 'How do you tell time?' 'What does time tell you?' And I ended d'whole pizza d'resistance with a ten-year old boy's answers to 'When will time be up?' There was a windstorm brewing, and he spat, "AT THE END!" and ran away..."

"But then he gave a second answer, and I enticed him to come back and say *that* into the mic, and he said:



"Time will be up, when the humans forget!"

"Living in the past is for cowards." ~ Football coach Mike Ditka

THANKS GIVE-ME

Before you start carving, think about this: The wild turkey is the heaviest flying bird in the world that flies; and although eagles and geese are monogamous for life, turkeys are monogamous for about a minute.

To attract hens, tom turkeys vibrate their body, which causes their feathers to become erect, except in Utah, where it is prohibited. Male turkeys are called "toms," female turkeys are called hens, baby turkeys are called poults, and teenage turkeys are called trexters. Tom turkeys have beards – a single black, hair-like feather on their breast. Hens sometimes have beards but rarely get asked out on dates. Wild turkeys sleep in trees, but commercially raised turkeys cannot fly... because they're raised to be gobbled.

For their first meal on the moon, astronauts **Neil Armstrong** and **Edwin Aldrin** ate roast turkey in foil packets and washed it down with Tang for the first Tangsgiving. Turkeys, however, as opposed to our other fowl-feathered friends, eat a wider variety of things like fish, snakes,

baby birds, insects, fruit, grasses, grains, acorns, mice, and crow, like me.

Wild turkeys were almost wiped out in the early 1900s, but today there are wild turkeys in every state except Alaska, since they all moved to Hawaii. So carve generously, because the breast of domestically raised turkeys is so large that the bird often tips over -- especially in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. So, why don't we eat Turkey tails?

READ MORE

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HOLD THE TURKEY

*Roast beef on whole wheat, please,
With lettuce, mayonnaise and a center slice
Of beefsteak tomato,
The lettuce splayed, if you will,
In a Beaux Arts derivative of classical acanthus;
And the roast beef, thinly sliced, folded
In a multi-foil arrangement
That eschews Bragdonian pretensions,
Or any idea of divine geometric projection
For that matter, but simply provides
A setting for the tomato.
And form a medallion with a dab
Of mayonnaise as a fleuron,
And—as eclectic as this may sound—
If the mayonnaise can also be applied
Along the crust in a Vitruvian scroll,
And as a festoon below the medallion.
That'd be swell.
"You mean like in the Cathedral St. Pierre in Geneva?"
Yes, but the swag more like the one below the
rosette
At the Royal Palace in Amsterdam.
"You got it. Next!"*

Thanks to the ravenous Paul Gorman, Y'62

"Anyone who has the power to make you believe absurdities has the power to make you commit injustices." ~ Voltaire

"When I do good, I feel good; when I do bad, I feel bad; and that's my religion."
~ President Abraham Lincoln.

TICK TOCK, TOCK TRICK

Before daylight savings was made uniform in most of the U.S. in 1966, according to **National Geographic**, there was once an office building in Minneapolis where different floors of the building were observing different time zones because they were offices for different counties.

"Silence is the ultimate weapon of power."
~ Charles de Gaulle

LIKE A ROLLING LOAN

A woman walks into a bank in NYC and asks for a \$5000 loan. The banker asks, "Okay, miss, is there anything you would like to use as collateral?" The woman says, "Yes, of course. I'll use my Rolls Royce?" The banker, stunned, asks, A \$250,000 Rolls Royce? Really?"

She is completely positive and hands over the keys, as the bankers and loan officers laugh at her. They check her credentials; make sure she is the title owner. Everything checks out. They park it in their underground garage for two weeks.

When she comes back, she pays off the \$5,000 loan as well as the \$15.41 interest. The loan officer says, "Miss, we are very appreciative of your business with us, but I have one question. We looked you up and found out that you are a multi-millionaire. Why would you want to borrow \$5,000?"

The woman replies, "Where else in New York City can I park my car for two weeks for only \$15.41 and expect it to be there when I return?"

"The life I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place my touch will be felt."
~ Frederick Buechner



PARAPROSDOKIANS, PARLEZ-VOUS

These are **Winston Churchill's** favorite word play, in which the latter part of a phrase is unexpected and often humorous:

Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak. The last thing I want to do is hurt you ... but it's still on my list. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong. We never really grow up -- we only learn how to act in public. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you. War does not determine who is right, only who is left.

You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice. In filling out an application, where it says, "In case of emergency, notify ..." I wrote down "a doctor." To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.

Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car. You are never too old to learn something stupid. I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.

"Those who ride on the back of a tiger often end up inside" ~ JFK

GIVE TIL IT HURTS

Steven Thompson wrote this 5-star review for Amazon called "A Genial Fella Who Helped Create Comedy As We Know It Today. (Xmas is COMING...)"

I've never met Phil Proctor but I've spoken with him a few times online in relation to our late mutual friend **Kip King**. Long before that, I was aware of who he was and would recognize him when I saw him in various movie and TV projects. During the heyday of his comedy troupe, the **Firesign Theatre**, I had no idea what they were all about. I had discovered **Monty Python** like most of us in the US, when they debuted on PBS in the early 1970s. I

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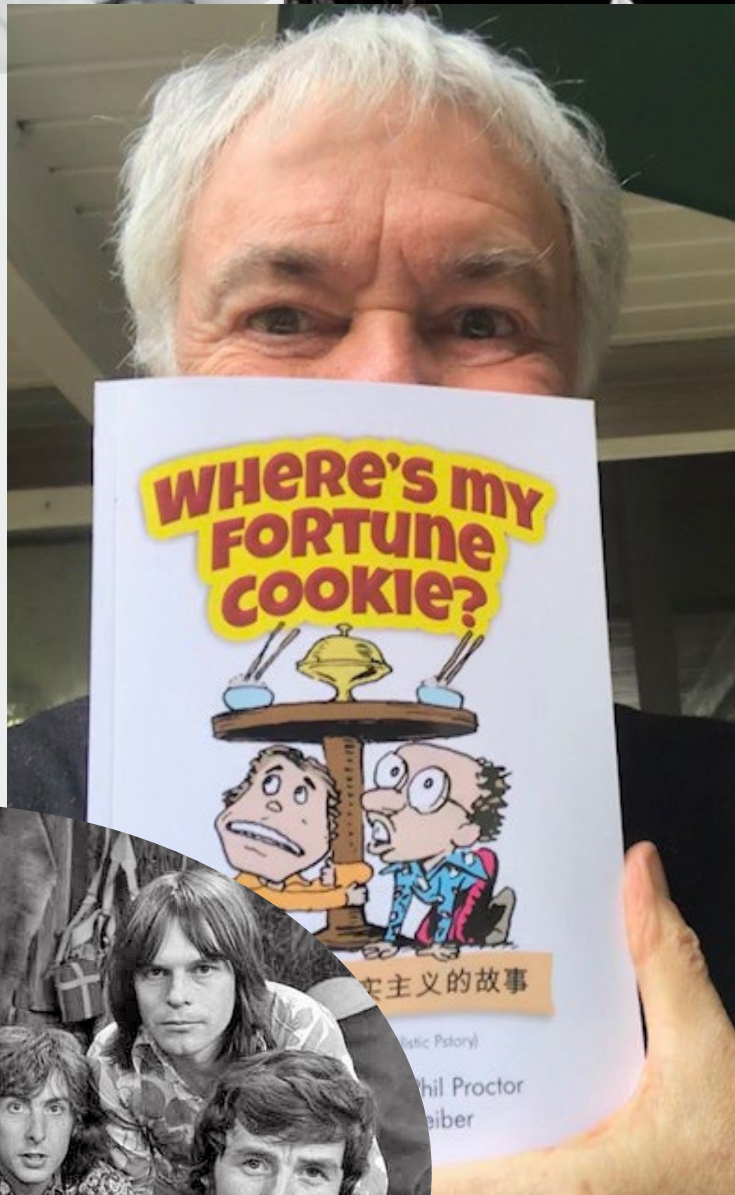
LEADERS IN LUNACY

Firesign Theatre (left, clockwise from me),
Dave Ossman, Peter Bergman and Phil Austin; The Goonies
(below, left to right): Spike Milligan, Harry Secombe,
Michael Bentine, and Peter Sellers; and Monty Python (bottom,
clockwise from top): Graham Chapman, Terry Gilliam, Michael Palin,
John Cleese, and Terry Jones surround Eric Idle, center.



discovered Python's influence, "**The Goon Show**," when a local college radio station ran it weekly here in the late '70s. It wouldn't be until the 21st Century, though, before I actually listened to the Firesign Theatre, also influenced by the Goons and often described as an "American Monty Python."

Essential to Phil Proctor's own story, **Where's My Fortune Cookie?** is, inevitably, the story of the Firesign Theatre. In fact, though, there is so much more to his personal journey and, if anything, it's twice as surreal as anything that group ever offered. I literally



had to look up a few things to make sure he was telling the truth and not just up to his old absurdist tricks!

Turns out Firesign was just a lingering stopover in Phil's long career as a child actor, a Broadway and off-Broadway performer, part of various club acts, album cover designer, TV character actor, radio show host, comedy writer, and cartoon voice actor—among other things.

But what an influential stopover it was, counting as fans **Robin Williams, Chevy Chase, John Goodman, George**

Carlin, and many others who have gone on to make the world laugh just a little bit more. The Firesign Theatre's humor is tough to describe with

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any degree of accuracy, the words “absurdist,” “anarchic,” and “surreal” being probably the best words for them. In a way, their albums—with names like, ***Don’t Crush That Dwarf, Hand Me the Pliers*** and ***We’re All Bozos On This Bus***, are like the underground comix equivalent of old-time radio comedies and dramas.

When I finally listened to them, I realized that even without knowing where they’d come from, I had incorporated some of their catchphrases into my own language, such as “Forward! Into the Past!” While Firesign might work even better whilst chemically enhanced, repeated listenings reward the listener as you start to realize all the audio tricks that have gone into the various LPs. I don’t think I ever laughed actually but I smiled appreciatively a lot at the group’s sheer cleverness, intelligent writing, and originality.

I do much the same with this book. As with anyone, Phil’s trip to now hasn’t been all sweetness and light. In fact, the book opens with a downright scary (but verified real) incident where he and sometime comedy partner **Peter Bergman** end up nearly being killed in a restaurant by the Chinese mafia! In an odd way, Phil Proctor’s story, at least from time to time, is also the late Peter Bergman’s story. Bergman was a bit more out there than Phil—politically, societally, humorously—but the two played off each other perfectly, so much so that when the Firesign Theatre was inactive for long periods at a time, Proctor and Bergman would often tour or do TV specials or movies like the great ***J-Men Forever*** (made from redubbing old movie serials) or the fun misfire, ***Americathon***.

The early chapters here are my favorite, with Phil acknowledging over and over his personal influences throughout his nearly lifelong career in show business, even as he has to put up with bullies and false hope and

disappointments as he never quite makes a complete success in spite of many opportunities. Peter pops in and out after Phil becomes an adult, and the two become fast friends and creative partners, in spite of Peter’s sometimes selfishness. The Firesign Theatre—so named because all four members were astrological fire signs—sprang from that friendship.

The book’s title, *Where’s My Fortune Cookie?*, is a clear reference to the Chinese restaurant incident but after a life of bizarre adventures on record, on radio, on stage and in the real world, that title comes around again, surreally, at the end of the book, thanks to the by then late Mr. Bergman.

In spite of his warts and all telling of the drugs, the orgies, and the struggles and fighting on both sides of the metaphorical footlights, Phil Proctor comes across as he always has—a genial, clever, nice, amusing man who can tell one heck of a story and really make you care about the characters you meet along the way.

If you’re a fan of Firesign Theatre or Proctor and Bergman, it’s a must. If you have no idea who any of these people are, it’s probably past time you learned who influenced so much of today’s comedy.

*“I’m supposed to respect my elders,
but it’s getting harder and harder
for me to find one.”
~ I forgot who sent me this*

HELP ME

Thanks to **Allen Schill, James Palka, Richard Laible, Barry Pearl, Art Peterson, Jordon Davis, Joan Allemand, Nick Oliva, Charles Moed, Victor Kopcewich, Kenneth Wilhite, Jr., George Riddle, Shelly Goldstein** for their contributions to this orbit – and a very happy 9th birthday to my grandson, **Bowen Campbell!**

*“The illegal we do immediately; the
unconstitutional takes a little longer.”
~ Henry Kissinger*

PLANETCLICK

CLICK WORDS TO OPEN

YELP ME
TRUMPED
GAS MUSIC
TWENTY-TWO
THINK/PRAY
TIME
BATS
POWERS
WOOF
WISH
JERRY
FLY
SAMMY
SCOTTY
GAS

“I have not failed, I just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” ~ Thomas Alva Edison

FIRESIGN • BOOMERS