

PLANET 78

Planet Proctor • July 28, 2018

"He who laughs has not heard the terrible news."

Bertolt Brecht

I'm a Poet

I didn't watch the news today.
I don't feel any better,
But Canada is looking better and *mieux* with every passing horror.
Being a poet is anonymous.
No one knows whose fingers are doing the talking.
No one knows even who is listlessly listening,
But it doesn't matter.
That's why I'm a poet, and I don't own it.
If I wrote Cowboy Poetry,
I'd be a Poet Lariat.
And I've been definitely stretched by the hemp.
I'm not PC.
I don't even own a PC, mac, and I don't do Windows.
I'm a Luddite!
I need a Guru to upload
And a laxative to download.
Old age is an adage,
(A maxim, an axiom, proverb, aphorism,
A saw, a dictum, a byword,
A precept, a motto, an truism,
A platitude, a dictum - a cliché...)
But we've all been there before, haven't we?
Been there, undone that...
So, if old age is just add age,
Why do I still live in the now?
My words will live forever.
I won't.
That's why I'm a poet...
And I know it.

A LONG-PLAYING 78

More revolutions per minute.

"Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully
as when they do it from religious conviction."

~ Blaise Pascal, 1699

EYE SEE

AN OLD BLIND COWBOY STROLLS INTO a bar one day. Without knowing it, he has actually entered an all-girl biker bar and asks the bartender for a shot of Jack Daniels. He sits there for a while, then calls out, "Hey, you wanna hear a blonde joke?" At that point the entire bar falls deadly silent.

In a very deep, husky voice, the woman next to him says, "Before you tell that joke, cowboy, I think it is only fair, given that you are blind, that you should know five things: The bartender is a blonde with a baseball bat. The bouncer is a blonde with a club. I'm a 6-foot 175-pound blonde with a black belt in Karate. The woman next to me is a professional weightlifter, and finally, the lady to your right is also blonde and a professional wrestler. Now, think about it seriously, cowboy... do you still wanna tell that blonde joke?"

The blind cowboy thinks for a second, shakes his head and mutters, "Nope – not if I'm gonna have to explain it five times."

"If you don't have anything nice to say, come sit by me."
~ Dorothy Parker

DARWIN WINERS/LOSERS

WHEN HIS .38 CALIBER REVOLVER FAILED to fire during a hold-up in Long Beach, California, would-be robber **James Elliot** did something that can only inspire wonder. He peered down the barrel and tried the trigger again. This time it worked.

The chef at a hotel in Switzerland lost a finger in a meat-cutting machine and after a little shopping round, submitted a claim to his insurance company. Expecting negligence, they sent out an agent to have a look for himself. He tried the machine and also lost a finger. (The chef's claim was approved.)

During a blizzard in Chicago, a man who shoveled snow for an hour to clear a space for his car, returned to find a woman had taken the space. Understandably, he shot her.

After stopping for drinks at an illegal bar, a Zimbabwean bus driver found that the 20 mental patients he was supposed to be transporting had escaped, and not wanting to admit his incompetence, he went to a nearby bus stop and offered everyone waiting there a free ride. He then delivered the passengers to the mental hospital, telling the staff that the patients were very excitable and prone to bizarre fantasies.

THERE'S A CATCH

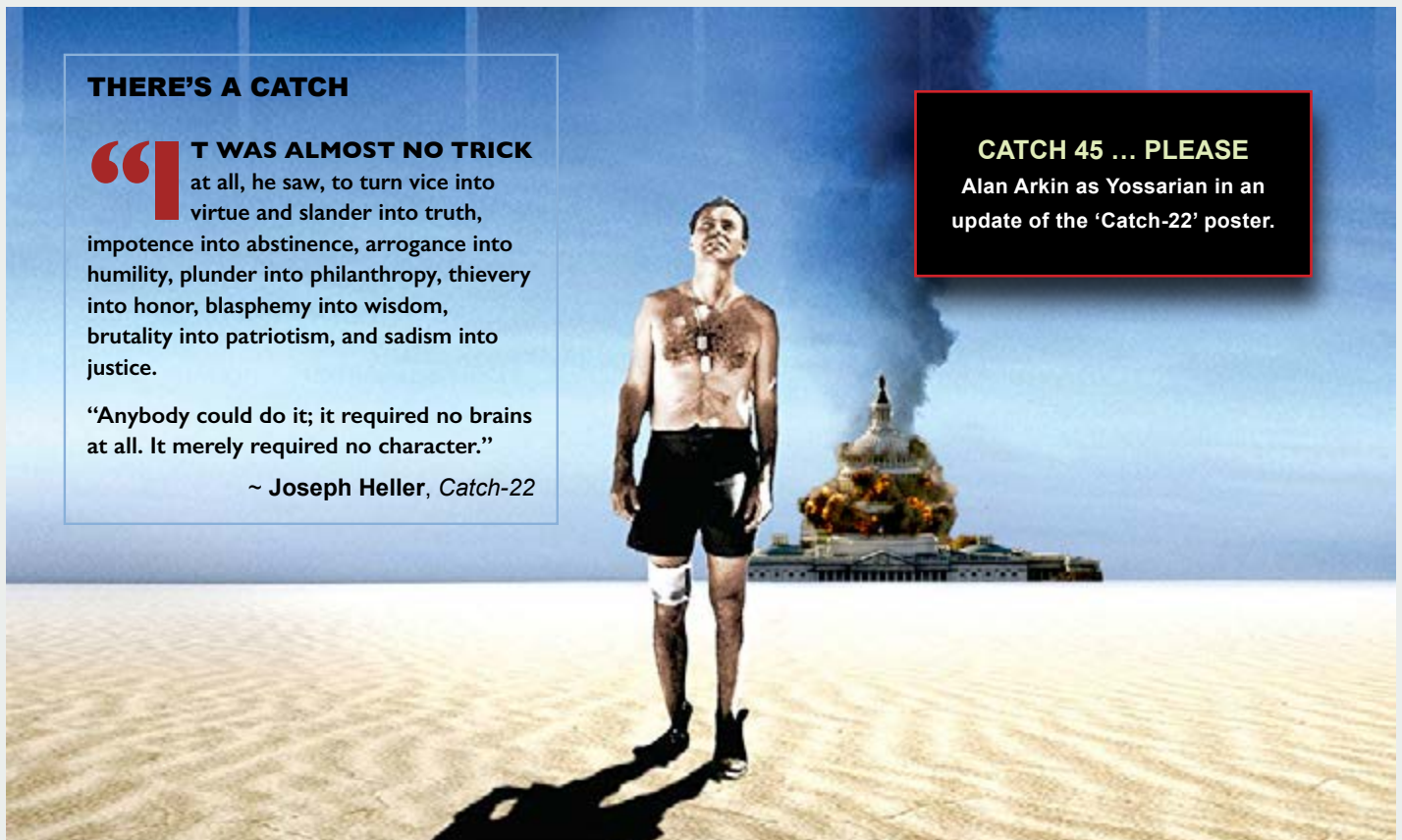
“IT WAS ALMOST NO TRICK at all, he saw, to turn vice into virtue and slander into truth, impotence into abstinence, arrogance into humility, plunder into philanthropy, thievery into honor, blasphemy into wisdom, brutality into patriotism, and sadism into justice.

"Anybody could do it; it required no brains at all. It merely required no character."

~ Joseph Heller, *Catch-22*

CATCH 45 ... PLEASE

Alan Arkin as Yossarian in an update of the 'Catch-22' poster.



"A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes." ~ Charles Spurgeon

The deception wasn't discovered for three days.

A man walked into a Louisiana Circle-K, put a \$20 bill on the counter, and asked for change. When the clerk opened

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the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash in the register, which the clerk promptly provided. The man took the cash and

'MATCH' MADE IN HEAVEN

The late Donald Ross on 'Match Game,' where he often appeared with his late wife, Patti Deutsch.

fled, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount of cash he got from the drawer was \$15.

As a female shopper exited a New York convenience store, a man grabbed her purse and ran. The clerk called 911 immediately, and within minutes, the police apprehended the perp and drove him back to the store for a positive ID. Upon confronting his victim he proclaimed, "Yes, officer, that's her. That's the lady I stole the purse from."

A man walked into a Burger King in Ypsilanti, Michigan, flashed a gun, and demanded cash. The clerk said he couldn't open the register without a food order, but when the guy ordered onion rings, the clerk said they weren't available for breakfast, so the frustrated gunman walked away.

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking that we used when we created them."
~ Albert Einstein

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE

A MAN ATTEMPTED TO SIPHON GASOLINE from a motorhome parked on a Seattle street by sucking on a hose, but when police arrived at the scene, they found a very sick man. The guy admitted he plugged his hose into the sewage tank by mistake.

The owner of the vehicle declined to press charges, saying it was the best laugh he'd ever had, and the perp had been punished enough!

They walk among us – and they reproduce and VOTE!

"I took a course in speed-reading and read 'War and Peace' in 20 minutes. It's about Russia."
~ Woody Allen



THE LOSS OF ROSS

OUR DEAR FUNNY FRIEND, PLAYWRIGHT and screenwriter **Donald Ross**, who was a classmate of mine at Riverdale Country School, recently succumbed to cancer several months after losing his beloved wife of 49 years, our antic fellow VO artist, **Patti Deutsch**, with whom he appeared on the celebrity game show "Tattletales."

Over a 30-year career, Donald wrote some of TV's most popular variety shows, comedies, and dramas, such as "This is Tom Jones," "Dinah!," "Diff'rent Strokes," "The Love Boat," "Matlock," and "Murder, She Wrote," including the final episode. He also tapped into his lifelong love of hot jazz to produce and write the Peabody and Christopher Award-winning "Timex All-Star Swing Festival."

In lieu of flowers, consider a donation to **The ARChive of Contemporary Music**, the next home for Donald's world-class jazz record collection – and hoist a shot of generic Scotch, in a rock glass, without rocks. Bottoms up!

"Never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was legal."
~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

SPEAK ENGRISH, TROOP!

HOMOGRAPHS ARE WORDS SPELLED the same but with different meanings, and if pronounced differently, it's a Heteronym. "Hear" are a few.

■ CONTINUED

The bandage was *wound* around the *wound.* The farm was used to *produce produce.* The dump was so full that it had to *refuse* more *refuse.* We must *polish* the *Polish* furniture. The soldier decided to *desert* his dessert in the *desert.* When shot at, the *dove dove* into the bushes. He could *lead* if he would get the *lead* out.

Since there is no time like the *present,* he thought it was time to *present* the *present.* A *bass* was painted on the head of the *bass* drum. I did not *object* to the *object.* The insurance was *invalid* for the *invalid.* There was a *row* among the oarsmen about how to *row.*

They were too *close* to the door to *close* it. The buck *does* funny things when the *does* are present. A seamstress and a *sewer* fell down into a *sewer* line. To help with planting, the farmer taught his *sow* to *sow.*

The *wind* was too strong to *wind* the sail. Upon seeing the *tear* in the painting I shed a *tear.* I had to *subject* the *subject* to a series of tests. How can I *intimate* this to my most *intimate* friends?

Those who know, don't know. Those who know they don't know, know. ~ Phil's Phunny Phacts

NOT TO BE TORTURING ME!

LET'S FACE IT - ENGLISH IS A CRAZY LANGUAGE. There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburger and neither apple nor pine in a pineapple. English muffins don't come from England nor French fries from France. Sweetmeats are candies, while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat. Quicksand works slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth, and more than one moose, meese? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why don't preachers praught? In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital, ship by truck and send cargo by ship – have noses that run and feet that smell? And if a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

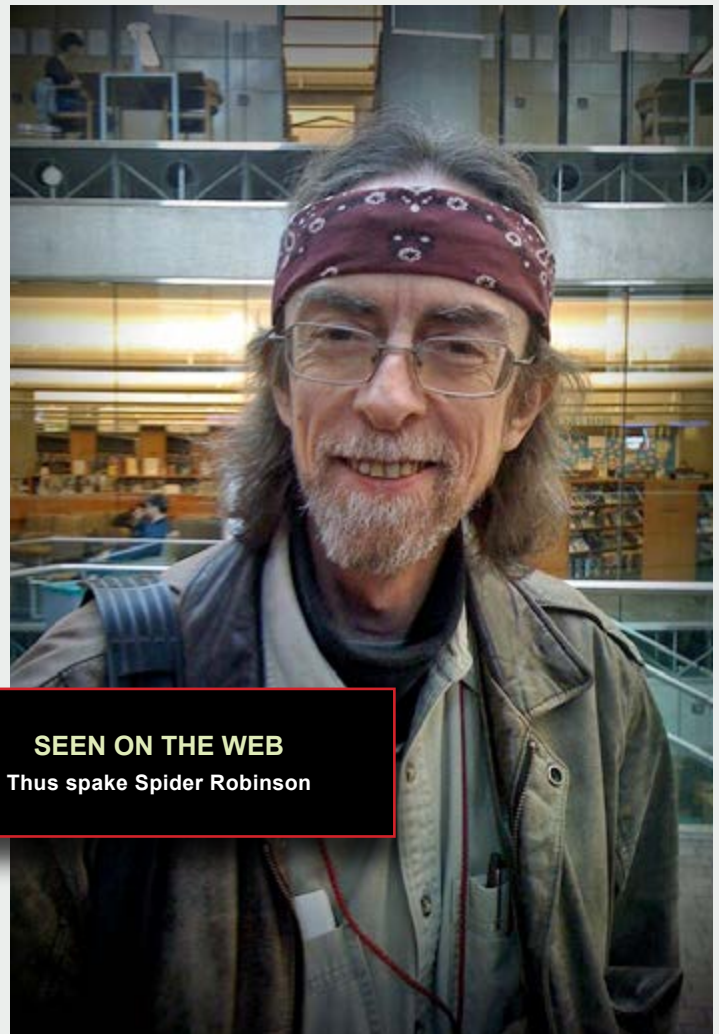
How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out, and in which an alarm goes off by going on. Why doesn't 'Buick' rhyme with 'quick'? And if a male goat is called a ram and a donkey is called an ass, why is a ram-in-the-ass called a goose?

English was invented by people reflecting the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all. And that is why when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they're invisible.

"It is when you give of yourself that you truly give."
~ Kahlil Gibran

THE SPIDER SPEAKS

“PHIL PROCTOR HAS TWO TALENTS THAT are not just rare, but normally impossible. First, he's spent half a lifetime diligently, intelligently persuading lots of us to pay attention to him, using only his wit and speaking voice. You think it's easy, you try it. But, unusually, he is so smart that he's spent the other half of his life paying attention to those countless other interesting people he noticed standing around him onstage. This makes him one of the rare celebs who not only has lots



SEEN ON THE WEB
Thus spake Spider Robinson

of great stories about celebs, he remembers them, past the obscuring fog of his own saved press releases.

"And that makes *Where's My Fortune Cookie?* one of

the most interesting books I've read in several years. I acquired more personal peeks at peerless people than I'd have picked up at a weekend party at **President Obama's** place, and heard more intelligent conversation, too – all without losing the company of one of the funniest men I've encountered in the last half century, since *Waiting For The Electrician or Someone Like Him* hit me like a milligram of Sandoz acid in 1968. He and his three mates were the Beatles of Laughter. If I'm lyin' I'm Brian, and I don't look a bit like Mr. Epstein. (Or Cagney.) This book is one fortune cookie you can believe."

Thanks to my friend, **Spider Robinson**, author of *Lady Slings the Booze*.

Enjoy the podcast [HERE](#). Or, buy the book at [AMAZON](#).

"Never throw mud; you can miss the target, but your hands will remain dirty." ~ **Dorothy Parker**

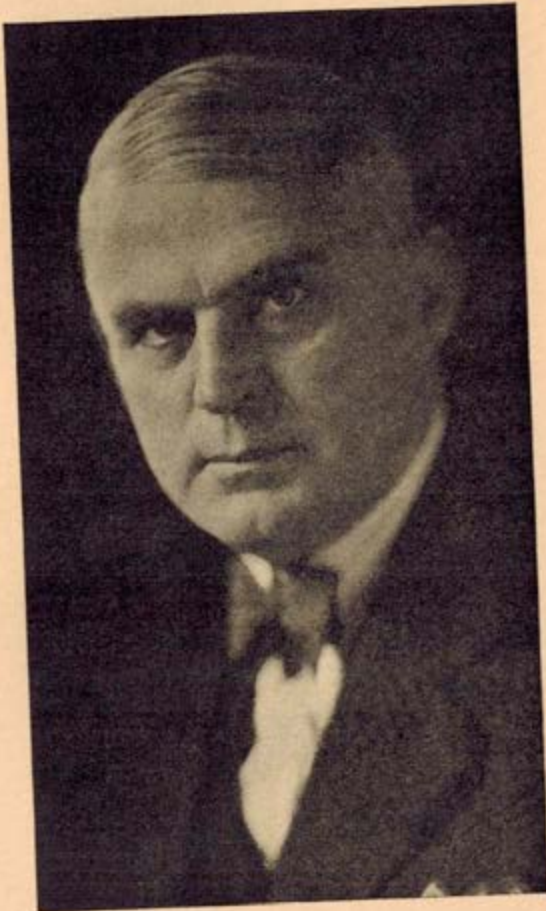
ELLISON, ELEISON

Like everyone who knew him, **Harlan Ellison** was an enigma; witty and gracious, cranky and contentious – to know him was to love and hate him. But for a small man, he was a giant in his field and an inspiration to us all.

He left us unexpectedly at 84, leaving behind his unique works, which he was loath to call science-fiction, for as he said, "I don't write about bug-eyed ants or Godzilla!" He wrote "imaginative fiction" and "contemporary fantasies," and according to his longtime literary agent, **Richard Curtis**, his motto was always – "Pay the writer!"

At 13, he ran away from home to join a carnival and escaped again to become a lumberjack in Canada, and as a teenager, fished on tuna boats out of Galveston, Texas, and drove a truck carrying nitroglycerin through

■ **CONTINUED**



Kin Hubbard,

HOOSIER HUMOR

Planeteer and fellow Hoosier Richard Fish, recently shared the wit and wisdom of humorist and caricaturist, Frank McKinney "Kin" Hubbard at the HEAR Now Audio Festival in Kansas City. Much respected by other satirists of his time, including Mark Twain, "Kin" wrote:

"It's no disgrace to be poor, but it might as well be. When a fellow says, 'It ain't the money but the principle of the thing' -- it's the money.; and the safest way to double your money, is to fold it over once and put it in your pocket. (It's going to be fun to watch and see how long the meek can keep the earth after they inherit it.)

"If there's anything a public servant hates to do it's something for the public. I don't look for much to come out of government...as long as we have Democrats and Republicans. One of the commonest ailments of the present day is the premature formation of opinion!

"Of all the home remedies, a good wife is the best. (The only time some fellows are ever seen with their wives is after they've been indicted.) Fun is like life insurance -- the older you get, the more it costs."

"I never vote FOR anyone - I always vote AGAINST the other guy..." ~ **WC Fields**



HARLAN JAY ELLISON

May 27, 1934 – June 28, 2018

North Carolina. "And all that time, if I wasn't writing, I was thinking, 'Gee, I could write that down ...' "

He favored typing with two fingers on an old Olympia typewriter in "The Lost Aztec Temple of Mars," as he called his memorabilia-jammed home and said about his fifth wife, **Susan**, "At long last, after four bad marriages, I've found someone who can stand me for more than 20 minutes and doesn't go shrieking into the night."

We'll miss you, ya crazy bastard...

"For a brief time, I was here,
and for a brief time, I mattered."
~ Harlan Ellison

AND, THEY'RE OFF!

That's right, dear friends, I'll be leaving soon to turn 78 on 7/28, surrounded by some of my revered **Riverdale Country School** classmates at a mini-reunion organized by **James Marrow**, Professor Emeritus of Art History at Princeton University and Honorary Keeper of Illuminated Manuscripts at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University! (Yes, it's a secret meeting of the Illuminati...)

Next, my darling Swedish/Scottish wife, **Melinda Peterson/McDougal** and I will ride the rails to Edinburgh and then drive up by Speyside to take the Whiskey Trail, including a soggy stop on the isle of Islay, which shelters six breweries...

And after we sober up (good luck), we will return to Edinburgh to celebrate friends like Antaeus **Michael McShane** and **Mark Doer** in the annual Theatre Festival, with a special evening at the Military Tattoo in the Castle before returning home, mid-August.

"You can laugh about anything, but not with anyone."
~ Pierre Desproges

"Under a government which imprisons unjustly,
the true place for a just man is also a prison."
~ Henry David Thoreau

CONTRIBUTERS

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And if you live in or near Lake Arrowhead, come see me and **Jamie Alcroft** LIVE on July 21 in the return of "Boomers on a Bench" on **JP Houston's** syndicated NPR radio show, *American Parlor Songbook*, at the picturesque Tudor House!

AMERICAN PARLOR SONGBOOK PODCASTS

Melinda and I also recorded a humorous intro in English and Russian to the latest Antaeus presentation of a Turgenev play adapted by **Patrick Marber**, entitled *Three Days in the Country*. Come see ... **INFORMATION**

"The future has arrived - it's just not evenly distributed yet." ~ William Ginson

PLANETCLICK

CLICK WORDS TO OPEN

DISTRIBUTING

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OLD NEGRO
TUESDAY
GOD HELP US

"The hardest years of life are those between 10 and 70." ~ Actress Helen Hayes

FIRESIGN • BOOMERS

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