

"The sign of intelligence is that you are constantly wondering..." ~ Vasudeva

Planet Yale '62

Boola, Boola!

The primary impetus for attending my 60th Yale reunion was that I was invited to participate with classmate **Sam Waterston** and others in a panel on "Working in Our 80s," although in my case, it's more like "Walking in our 80s" – which, by the way, has become easier since I've been taking a med called Lyrica twice a day, and a muscle relaxant to prevent cramps before going to bed.



Our adventure began with a fun-filled stay with **Melinda's** brother **Art** and family, in West Hartford, and a special visit with fellow Yalie **Rob Irving**, who was unable to come to New Haven, at Rob's home in Avon.

Then, we checked into our dorm rooms in Timothy Dwight College, where about 150 other classmates gathered to eat, drink, and make merry under a big white tent in the spacious courtyard. The event was beautifully managed by the reunion committee which included my Scroll & Key pal and "Whiff," **John Stewart**, providing creatively themed, tasty and beautifully catered meals. There were lectures galore

and wonderful entertainment provided by **The Whiffenpoofs** and the hysterical musical hijinks of **Finkle and Weeden** (above left).

It was a totally wonderful opportunity to visit with old friends, fellow Dramat member **David Honneus**, and we even ran into our mascot, **Handsome Dan!**

I'm looking forward to the 65th!!



"A nation that forgets the past has no future." ~ Winston Churchill

Orgy on Broadway

THEN, IT WAS ON TO NEW YORK CITY TO CHECK into the friendly W hotel on Times Square which we regularly occupy for easy access to Broadway shows – and indeed, we were able to see 6 plays in 5 days and enjoy great food and drink in nearby eateries.

We also included our friend **Charles Moed** in our theater orgy, and in return, he introduced us to some of his favorite restaurants. (I'm hoping to lose weight soon...)

We started off by seeing ***Girl from the North Country***, featuring the winning **Mare Winningham**, with music and lyrics by **Bob Dylan**, followed by a speedy, minimalist production of ***Macbeth 2022***, featuring a versatile ensemble of 17 diverse players, including an actor in a wheelchair, portraying multiple roles, provocatively directed by **Sam Gold** and starring **Daniel Craig** in a colorful, vulnerable and ultimately sympathetic performance.



CRYSTAL, CLEAR
Backstage with Billy...

Then we enjoyed the precedent-breaking, Tony Award-winning musical ***The Strange Loop***, by **Michael J. Jackson**, starring the amazing **Jaquel Spivey** in this unique story of a Black, queer writer writing a musical about a Black, queer writer... battling with his embodied insecurities.

Next (thanks to **Shadoe Stevens**, who arranged for house seats), we saw ***Mr. Saturday Night*** starring **Billy Crystal** as his alter-ego, **Buddy Young, Jr.** Billy is at the top his game in this high-flying, heart-warming and side-splitting musical romp which also features a superb cast, including my friend **David Paymer** as his beleaguered brother-manager.

Billy was quoting Firesign Theatre when we met after the curtain fell, and I gave him a copy of the Firesign calendar and our recent Magic Mushroom release.

And we ended our trip with two startling productions, the moving musical ***Paradise Square***, and ***Fat Ham***, an incredibly clever take on *Hamlet* by **James IJames** at the Public.

Paradise Square tells the true story of the notorious 19th Century Five Points neighborhood where Irish immigrants and free blacks created a prosperous integrated community only to be destroyed in riots provoked by wealthy, envious whites. I've honestly never seen such jaw-dropping dances inspired by Irish clog and African tribal traditions, and the powerhouse singing is led by the Tony Award-winning **Jouquina Kalukango**, whose deeply committed, show-stopping performance, will both inspire you and break your heart.

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

Finally, thanks to our friend, **Tulis McCall** of **FRONT ROW CENTER**, we were able to enjoy a performance of ***Fat Ham*** – James IJames' Pulitzer Prize-winning transformation of Shakespeare's tragedy into a play about a Black family-operated BBQ franchise and a chubby, black queer kid who is forced to deal with the murder of his father. It's an incredibly funny and

inventive farce on a wonderful backyard set in an arena theater that had us roaring with laughter, while enjoying a rollicking reinvention of this familiar classic that we had just enjoyed in a brilliant production at our own **Antaeus** company in Glendale.

And let me close by noting that every play we saw ended with a well-deserved standing ovation by the fully masked audience.

There is a prevailing atmosphere of joy in the city right now, as people are able to finally leave their apartments and experience the wonders of the city anew.

I also believe that the high quality of the performers might well be because during the long downtime, they've been studying and honing their craft. And I must also acknowledge that the stagecraft, lighting and sound design is equally inspired. On with the show!

"Adapt or perish, now more than ever, is nature's inexorable imperative." ~ H. G. Wells

Cat skills

FOUR MEN WERE BRAGGING ABOUT HOW SMART their cats are. The first man was an engineer, the second man was an accountant, the third man was a chemist, the fourth was a government employee.

To show off, the **engineer** called to his cat, “T-square, do your stuff.” T-square pranced over to a desk, took out some paper and a pen and promptly drew a circle, a square, and a triangle. Everyone agreed that was pretty smart. But the **accountant** said his cat could do better.

He called his cat and said, “Spreadsheet, do your stuff.” Spreadsheet went out into the kitchen and returned with a dozen cookies. He divided them into 4 equal piles of 3 cookies each. Everyone agreed that was good. But the **chemist** said his cat could do better. He called his cat and said, “Measure, do your stuff.”

Measure got up, walked over to the fridge, took out a quart of milk, got a 10-ounce glass from the cupboard and poured exactly 8 ounces without spilling a drop. Everyone agreed that was good. Then the three men turned to the government employee and said, “What can your cat do?”

The **government worker** called to his cat and said, “Coffee Break, do your stuff.” Coffee Break jumped to his feet, ate the cookies, drank the milk, crapped on the paper, screwed the other three cats, claimed he injured his back while doing so, filed a grievance report for unsafe working conditions, put in for Workers’ Compensation and went home for the rest of the day on sick leave.

“All propaganda has to be popular and has to accommodate itself to the comprehension of the least intelligent of those whom it seeks to reach.”

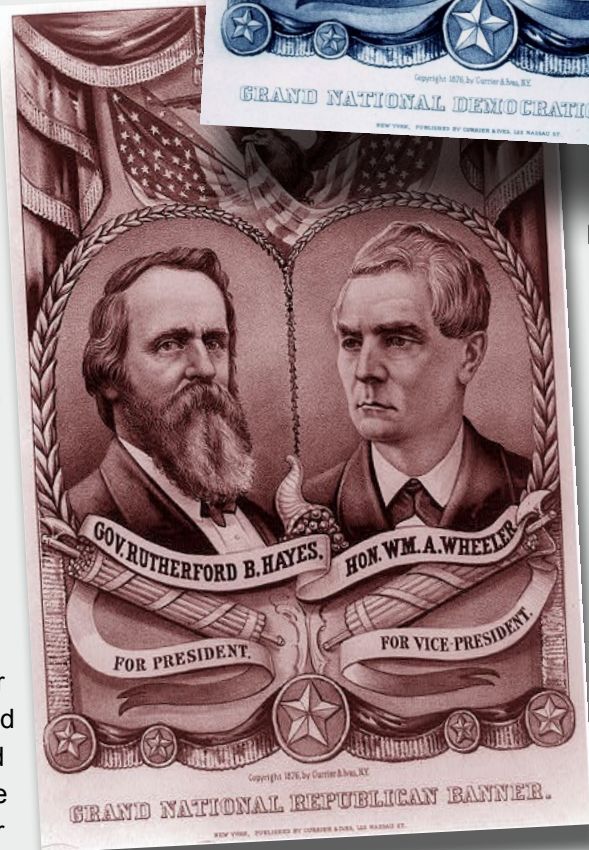
~ Der Schnifter

Take two

THE U.S. ONCE HAD TWO PRESIDENTS IN OFFICE simultaneously, for one day. The election to replace outgoing **President Ulysses S. Grant** in 1876

was “highly contested.” Republican **Rutherford B. Hayes** and Democrat **Samuel Tilden** fought a vicious campaign. Rather like the 2000 Bush/Gore election, Tilden won the popular vote (with a 250,000 majority) but Hayes won the Electoral College – by one electoral vote.

There were huge protests, and a lot of talk about Tilden’s people forcibly taking over the White



FACE OFF

Not much to distinguish the gentlemen running for POTUS and Vice President on these period campaign posters.

House...which also sounds familiar, somehow. This is long before the Secret Service started guarding the President; there was little real security at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

The night before the inauguration, Hayes dined with President Grant, and the two of them, along with the Chief Justice, **Morrison R. Waite** – who, by a happy coincidence, was also dining that night – slipped away into the Red Room. There Waite administered the oath to Hayes, as a legal precaution against a forcible takeover.

Hayes took the oath again the next day at noon on the steps of the Capitol.

Still, technically, the country had two Presidents for at least 15 hours or so. Both were Republicans, and neither was very successful.

“How fortunate for governments that the people they administer don’t think.” ~ **Der Schnifter**

■ CONTINUED

No contest

THREE OLD MEN ARE DISCUSSING THEIR SEX lives. The **Italian** man says, "Last week, my wife and I had great sex. I rubbed her body all over with olive oil, we made passionate love, and she screamed for five minutes at the end."

The **Frenchman** boasts, "Last week when my wife and

I had sex I rubbed her body all over with butter. We made passionate love and she screamed for 15 minutes."

The old **Jewish** man says, "Well last week my wife and I had sex too. I rubbed her body all over with chicken schmaltz (kosher chicken fat), we made love and she screamed for six hours.

The Italian and Frenchman were stunned. They replied, "What could you have

possibly done to make your wife scream for six hours?"

"I wiped my hands on the drapes."

*"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."
~ Helen Keller*

The unkindest cut

A GUY STUCK HIS HEAD INTO A BARBER SHOP and asked, "How long before I can get a haircut?" The barber looked around the shop full of customers and said, "About two hours." The guy left.

A few days later the same guy stuck his head in the door and asked, "How long before I can get a haircut?" The barber looked around at the shop and said, "About three hours." The guy left.

A week later the same guy stuck his head in the shop and asked, "How long before I can get a haircut?" The barber looked around the shop and said, "About an hour and half." The guy left.

The barber turned to a friend and said,

"Hey, Bill, do me a favor. Follow that guy and see where he goes. He keeps asking how long he has to wait for a haircut, but then he never comes back."

A little while later, Bill returned to the shop, laughing hysterically. The barber asked, "So where does that guy go when he leaves?"

Bill looked up, tears in his eyes and said, "Your house."

*"When the gods wish to punish us,
they answer our prayers." ~ Oscar Wilde*

Whoa!!

A N AMISH LADY IS TROTTING DOWN THE ROAD in her horse and buggy when she is pulled over by the sheriff. "Ma'am, I have to warn you, you have a broken stake on your wheel," says the sheriff.

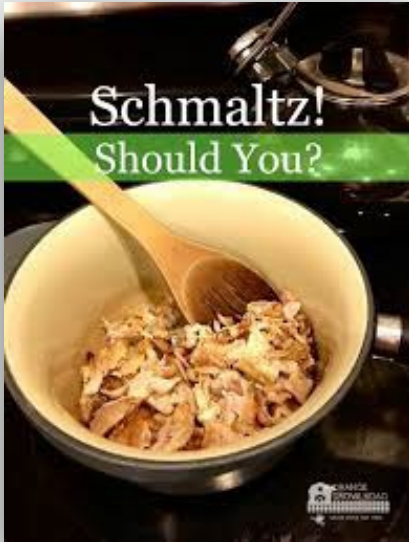
"Oh dear. I'll let my husband Jacob know as soon as I get home," she replies. "That's fine," he continues. "Another thing, ma'am... I don't like the way that one rein loops across the horse's back and around one of his testicles. I consider that terrible cruelty to the animal. Have your husband take care of that right away."

The woman thanks him and drives home. Later that day, the lady is home telling her husband about her encounter with the sheriff. "Well, dear, what exactly did he say?" asks the husband. "He said a stake is broken," replies the lady. "I can fix that in a heartbeat," says the husband. "What else?"

"I'm not sure, Jacob," she replies. "Something to do with the emergency brakes."

"The only lasting truth is change." ~ Octavia Butler

■ CONTINUED



Don't mess with B

SO, YOU PUNK-ASS BITCHES THINK YOU'RE tough because you jumped me??? Waited for me to be alone... in my own front yard??? I still handled all of you, left three of you on the ground laid out in blood!!! You're lucky I don't have any marks on my face. I have some on my arms and legs but so what!!!! I bet you didn't expect me to swing back since it was six against one. You should have known better!!! I might

be getting old, but I have a lot of fight left in me! Yeah, I'm not gonna lie, I was getting a little tired, but I kept on swinging and made sure you got yours... Little Punks!!! All I have to say is you started this and I finished it. I hate mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are not my friends...

So says planeteer **Bernie Minkler**, who adds, "Welcome to summer!"

PLANETCLICK

FOR YOU
DEMOCRACY
BE A LADY
STUPID
DEADSPEAK
HAVE A NIP
HOOSIER

"I have only to break into the tightness of a strawberry, and I see summer - its dust and lowering skies."

~ Toni Morrison



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For me

Michael Sheehan, Nick Oliva, Kenneth Wilhite, Jr., Robert Tevis, Richard Fish, Bill Weeden and Dave Finkle, Ivan Berger, 'The Week' and 'Baba-Mail.' For quotes and jokes.

And a fraternal farewell to fellow actors **Ray Liotta, Mary Mara**, and my friends, **George Shapiro**, and **Philip Baker Hall**, with whom I finally worked (in Icelandic!) on 'The Loop.'

"Life isn't about finding yourself or finding anything. Life is about creating yourself and creating things."

~ Bob Dylan



Nancy Cartwright

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TO LISTEN

"Idiots are always dead sure about every damn thing they do in life." ~ Vasudeva

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