

"My biggest fear is that the audience will beat me to the punchline." ~ David Mamet

PLANET ONA

On Fox Island

We are spending the early part of August as special guests at Camp Beaverwind, on Austin Acres near Tacoma in Washington state, to celebrate our Leo birthdays at the Austin compound and six-pack on Fox Island. Our outstanding host, **Oona**, my dear partner **Phil's** widow, keeps us occupied with food, snacks, dope, booze, foreign TV series and parties around the bonfire with mutual friends.

"Sometimes I wonder whether the world is run by people who are putting us on, or by imbeciles who really mean it." ~ Mark Twain

ISLANDEAR

Oona Austin looking out at the Sound from her property.



On the nose

A BOOKIE WAS AT THE RACES PLAYING THE ponies and losing his shirt. He noticed a Priest step out onto the track and bless the forehead of one of the horses lining up for the 4th race. Lo and behold, that horse – a long shot – won the race. Next race, as the horses lined up, the Priest stepped onto the track. Sure enough, he blessed one of the horses. The bookie made a beeline for a betting window and placed a small bet on the horse. Again, even though it was another long shot, the horse won the race.

He collected his winnings, and anxiously waited to see which horse the Priest would bless next. He bet big on it, and it won. As the races continued the Priest kept blessing horses, and each one ended up winning. The bookie was elated. He made a quick dash to the ATM, withdrew all his savings, and awaited the Priest's blessing that would tell him which horse to bet on!!

True to his pattern, the Priest stepped onto the track for the last race and blessed the forehead of an old nag that was 100 to 1. This time the Priest blessed the eyes, ears, and hooves of the old nag. The bookie knew he had a winner and bet every cent he owned on the old nag, but he watched dumbfounded as the old nag pulled up and couldn't even finish the race!

In a state of shock, he went to the track area where the Priest was. Confronting him, he demanded, "Father! What happened? All day long you blessed horses and they all won. Then in the last race, the horse you blessed never even had a chance. Now, thanks to you I've lost every cent of

my savings! The Priest nodded wisely and with sympathy. "You are not a Catholic are you my son?"

"No," he answered. "I'm Jewish."

"That's the problem," said the Priest. "You couldn't tell the difference between a blessing and last rites."

"I don't lie; I improve on life." ~ Josephine Baker

On the job

A SMALL, SKINNY GUY -- LIKE WE ONCE MIGHT have called "a weenie" -- is walking down a street, entering and leaving stores along the way, looking for work. When he spots the local lumber yard, he walks up to the foreman standing by the door, who says "How you doin'?" "Well not too bad," says the weenie. "Actually I'm looking for work. I don't suppose you ..."

"Geez, no, we really don't," the foreman answers briskly. The weenie gets it – he's been here before – but he spies a log with an ax buried in it, so he takes the handle and asks, "All right?" And the foreman looks a bit amused but shrugs, "Well ... okay."

The weenie pulls the ax out of the log, sees a good-sized oak nearby and fells it in 30 seconds! The foreman whistles, "Whoa, I've never seen anything like that, ever! Can you tell me where you learned it!"

And the weenie replies, "Yes: In the Sahara Forest." The foreman draws back, "You mean the Sahara Desert."

"Yeah," the weenie answers. "Now."

"Always tell the truth. It's the easiest thing to remember."

~ David Mamet

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

■ **CONTINUED**



HORSE SENSE

Win, place or ... just show up!

On point

BALLET FLATS ENTERED THE WORLD AS FOOTWEAR designed for use by ballerinas. Interestingly, the earliest ballet shoes were heeled; it wasn't until

Marie-Anne de Cupis de Camargo (or 'La Camargo'), a popular French ballerina, wore non-heeled slippers during her performances that heeled shoes were eliminated.

And later, in 1910, Russian prima ballerina **Anna Pavlova** helped catapult ballet flats into the mainstream fashion market after she purchased pairs for her entire cast from **Salvatore Capezio**, an Italian shoemaker.

In 1941, an American sportswear designer got high-end retailers like Lord & Taylor and Neiman Marcus then purchased and promoted the style. But it was **Brigitte Bardot** who ultimately transformed the ballet slipper into a chic fashion mainstay.

SHEER FOOTED

The sure-footed Anna Pavlova
in her patented slippers.

Bardot (who was trained as a ballet dancer) asked **Rose Repetto** to design a pair of shoes for her that were as flexible as ballet slippers but softer and more comfortable. The result was the famous Cendrillon, which Bardot wore in her 1956 film, *And God Created Woman*.

The ballet flat's appeal was further solidified by celebrity fans such as **Audrey Hepburn**, who wore a custom **Ferragamo** pair in *Roman Holiday*, **Princess Diana**, **Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis**, and **Rita Hayworth**.

Today, ballet flats have achieved a nearly iconic status in the fashion world and are considered a timelessly stylish wardrobe staple.

"In life as in dance, grace glides on blistered feet."
~ Poet Alice Abrams

Dogs flew spaceships

YOU WERE BORN DURING THE "DOG DAYS" OF summer – but the expression doesn't derive from our propensity to lie around, drink a lot, and pant. The ancients noticed that the "dog star" Sirius rises and sets with the sun this time of year and believed that the heat of the star combined with the sun to make it extra hot!!

"The planet Pluto must be populated with animals; otherwise, why is it named after a dog?" ~ Hershel Walker



This'll kill ya

THE FBI HAD AN OPEN position for an assassin, and after all the background checks, interviews and testing were completed, they had narrowed the field down to three possible agents, and for the final test, the FBI agents took one of them to a large metal door and handed him a gun. "We must know that you will follow your instructions no matter what the circumstances, so inside this room you'll find your wife sitting in a chair. We need you to kill her."

"You can't be serious!" the man said, "I could never shoot my wife," And the agent responded, "Then you're not the right man for this job. Take your wife and go home." The second man was given the same instructions, and he

took the gun and went into the room, but after about five minutes, the guy came out with tears in his eyes. "I tried, but I can't kill my wife." The agent said, "Well, you obviously aren't the man for this job, so just take your wife home."

Finally, the last candidate, a woman, was given the same instructions to kill her husband, so she took the gun and went into the room. Shots were heard, one after another, then screaming, crashing, banging, and after a few minutes, all was quiet.

The door opened slowly and there stood the woman, wiping sweat from her brow. "Some joker loaded the gun with blanks!" she complained, "So I had to finish him off with my bare hands." She got the job.

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"May the best of your past be the worst of your future." ~ Kinky Friedman

Not responsible

(This is from fellow Hoosier, Richard Fish. May he burn in Hell!)

HIS NAME WAS HENRY MCGINNAN, AND HE was born a Hoosier. His celebrated career began when he moved to Illinois and took a job with Caterpillar. Henry had great talent as a mechanic and contributed several valuable ideas to the company's design department. After a few years, he became a "test driver" for new equipment – bulldozers, graders, backhoes, front-loaders, forklifts, and all the various specialized equipment the company is famous for.

He put them through their paces on the company's testing grounds, running on various kinds of terrain, moving earth and rock under all kinds of conditions – and showed a great talent for operating heavy machinery. He was far and away the best test driver Caterpillar had ever had, and became intimately familiar with all their products.

After 20 years with the company, Henry took his retirement and worked a deal to become the proud owner of some of their latest models, a front-loader, a bulldozer, and a backhoe, with a brand-new flatbed truck to haul them around. He moved back to his home state and went into business for himself, as a contractor. Before long, he became known as the most skilled operator anyone had ever seen, and was in constant demand, especially for projects that faced difficulties or were challenged by tricky situations, and people began calling him "Backhoe."

"That's a pretty steep slope – you'd better call Backhoe for this one," they would say. Or, "Tell you what, let's call Backhoe. He'll dig a channel you can just drop the culvert straight in, and never touch that pipeline." And even, "I don't know...that's a very odd foundation and digging out that shape in this soil is going to be a hell of a job. But if anyone can do it, Backhoe can."

Henry's fame spread statewide, and then the word went round to neighboring states. He was called in on projects in Illinois, Ohio, and Kentucky, and even traveled to Michigan, Tennessee, and Missouri. He got so well-known that he had business cards printed that just said:

**Backhoe McKinnan
Indiana**

"Anyone who thinks the earth is flat has never seen a mountain. Think about it." ~ Hershel Walker

Oh, say can you see

IT WAS THREE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING, AND THE receptionist at a posh hotel was just dozing off, when a little old lady came running towards her, screaming. "Please come quickly! I just saw a naked man outside my window!" The receptionist immediately rushed up to the lady's room.

"Where is he?" asked the receptionist. "He's over there," replied the little old lady, pointing to an apartment building opposite the hotel. The receptionist looked over and sure enough, she could see a man with no shirt on, moving around his apartment.

"It's probably a man who's getting ready to go to bed," she said reassuringly. "And you can only see him from the waist up, so how do you know he's naked?"

"The dresser, honey," screamed the lady, "Try standing on the dresser!"

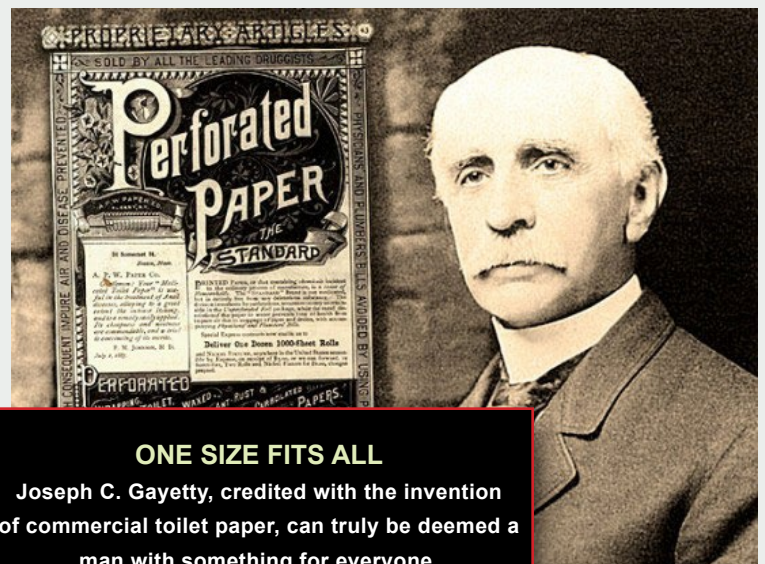
"Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe."
~ H. G. Wells

In the paper

IN AUGUST 1857 — 165 YEARS AGO — NEW

Yorkers tried a new product that most people consider essential today. It was toilet paper.

"Gayetty's medicated paper for the water closet" was first commercially produced in 1857 by **Joseph C. Gayetty**, who sold 1,000 sheets for a dollar out of his shop in Lower Manhattan. The city's residents were skeptical. They had to be talked into buying something they already had — in the coarser form of used catalog and newspaper pages.



"It is conducive to comfort," an 1858 ad read. "It is elegant and pure." It wasn't until toilet paper came in roll form 20 years later, produced by the **Scotts family** in Philadelphia that the idea finally caught on.

And would you like to know why a bad joke is called "corny?" Well, in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries companies hawked corn seed to farmers in the aforementioned catalogues – but unsurprisingly, they made for some pretty boring reading, so some companies started inserting jokes, and the ones they picked were usually obvious, silly and stupid. But they worked, and both subscriptions and sales went up!

"Rock 'n' roll might not solve your problems, but it does let you dance all over them."
~ Pete Townshend

OFF WITH HER BOBBLEHEAD
One of the items available for purchase at the Historic Lizzie Borden House in Fall River, Massachusetts

Wacky

ALSO, THIS MONTH — 130 years ago — **Lizzie Borden** took an ax and ... Well, just listen to the **CHAD MITCHELL TRIO**:

Andrew and Abby Borden, elderly residents of Fall River, Massachusetts, were found bludgeoned to death in their home, lying in a pool of blood on the living room couch.

Andrew's face had been nearly split in two, and Abby, Lizzie's stepmother, was found upstairs with her head smashed to pieces.

The Borden's, who were considerably wealthy, lived with their two unmarried daughters, **Emma** and Lizzie, and since Lizzie was the only other person present besides the housekeeper when the bodies were found, suspicion soon fell upon her, and because of the sensational nature of the murders her trial attracted attention around the nation.

Fingerprint testing was already becoming commonplace in Europe at the time, but the police refused to test for prints on the murder weapon — a hatchet — found in the Borden's basement. The prosecution tried to prove that Lizzie had burned a dress similar to the one she was wearing on the day of the murders and had purchased a small axe the day before.

But Lizzie was a sweet-looking Christian woman, and the jury took only 90 minutes to decide that she could never commit such a heinous crime, and although she was now an orphaned heiress rather than a convicted murderess the media continued to portray Lizzie as the perpetrator. But despite the taunts, Lizzie lived the high life until her death in 1927, and she was buried in the family plot next to her parents.

"Where there's a will, I want to be in it."
~ Phil's Phunny Phacts

The eyes have it

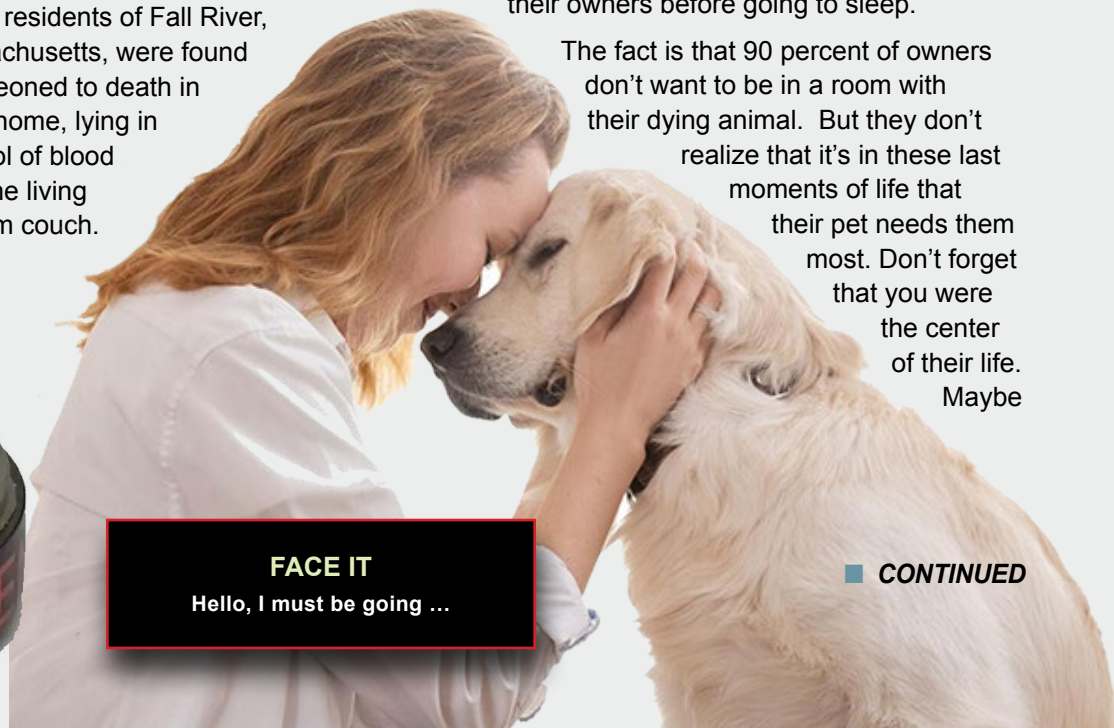
PETS, IT TURNS OUT, ALSO HAVE LAST WISHES before they die," **Tricia Mo'orea** writes. "Veterinarians say without hesitation that it is the hardest to see how old or sick animals look for the eyes of their owners before going to sleep.

The fact is that 90 percent of owners don't want to be in a room with their dying animal. But they don't realize that it's in these last moments of life that their pet needs them most. Don't forget that you were the center of their life. Maybe

FACE IT

Hello, I must be going ...

■ CONTINUED



they were just a part of yours, but they are also your family.

"So don't let them die in a strange room with a stranger. It is very painful for veterinarians to see how pets cannot find their owner during the last minutes of their life. They don't understand why the owner left them.

"Don't be a coward because it's too painful for you. Think about the pet. Endure this pain for their sake. Be with them until the end."

"A work of art is never finished, it is abandoned."
~ Leonardo da Vinci

Dead air

AND ALTHOUGH I wasn't looking into his eyes at the end, here's a tribute to the late, great **Larry Josephson**, who after bringing his unique, wildly eclectic and politically ambiguous style to



LAUNCHING LARRY

Richard Avedon's 1960s portrait of WBAI staff,
with Larry Josephson second from right

PLANETCLICK

FRIGHT ON

**DRAG
OLD
WEIRD
VERGA
WALKER TALKER
FUCK YOU
BANG**

listener-supported WBAI in NYC, later created a broadcast studio in his own apartment where **Firesign** often played.

But what I admired him for most, was that he almost single-handedly brought **Bob & Ray's** "sweetly subversive comedy" to a new audience by producing the "Bob & Ray Public Radio Show" that aired on 250 stations from 1981 to '86, as well as the duo's live shows at Carnegie Hall. And I'm proud to say that he included me and my mom's rare personal tape collection from their '50s NY radio show in his popular release of – *The Best of Bob & Ray!* Read all about him here ... **CLICK**

"Freedom is a fragile thing, and it's never more
than one generation away from extinction."
~ Ronald Reagan

Write on

THANKS TO TY GRANDERSON JONES, PAUL Guelph Gorman, Richard Junior Wilhite, Nick My Hero Oliva, Richard Hoosier Fish, Robin Woof Woof Cook, a Paul Lobster Wells, Andrew The Fixxer Hollis and once more to **Baba-Mail** for racy jokes and **The Week** again for spicy quotes – and farewells to **David Warner**, **Tony Dow**, **Paul Sorvino**, **Nichelle Nichols**, **Claus Oldenberg**, **Vin Scully**, **Anne Heche**, and historical author **David McCollough**, a fellow Yalie who's manuscript for his very first book, *The Johnstown Flood: The Incredible Story Behind One of the Most Devastating Disasters America Has Ever Known*, was typed for publication in 1968 by the fingers of my own amazing mother, **Audre!** WOW!

They say these celebrity deaths come in threes, but this is ridiculous....

And it's also a wrap for director **Bob Rafelson**, who as a kid in Manhattan, watched four movies a day and famously said: "If nothing else, I've learned that in order to survive, a director must always remember that the film industry is fickle, and is in a state of constant ignorance, that his fate is being dictated by guesswork, and that nobody endures forever."

"Life can only be understood backwards,
but it must be lived forwards."
~ Soren Kierkegaard

"Time travel is possible, but you can only go one way. Into the future, and you can only do it one second at a time." ~ Hershel Walker

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