

PLANET PROCTOR | JULY 2024

# Planet 84

**E**ighty-four is the new 48! At least, that's my story, as this ol' Leo spins uncontrollably once more around this glowing gasbag we call the sun. It will be the first birthday in over 35 years that I will have to observe without the company of my beloved partner, **Melinda**.

So, to celebrate on Sunday, July 28, I was surrounded by friends at the legendary *Beaverwind* summer campgrounds on magical Fox Island, Tacoma, WA.

Melinda was a counselor there for many moons with **Oona Austin** and **Mary Norman** and other special friends, and this time we were grateful to have **David Ossman** and **Judith Walcutt** join in the festivities.

Then, on July 31, we will be commemorating the unexpected transition of my darling wife, one year ago, just two weeks before her 74th birthday on August 20.

*More photos next page*







### HERE'S TO MORE AT 84!

Clockwise from above:  
Dave Ossman and I; Oona and Melinda  
in 2018; Battling a Birthday Cake  
(Chocolate Mousse by Dan Norman)  
and blowing it! And me and Oona



## Laugh after death

**A**ND THEN, ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, FROM 2-4 p.m., there will be a celebration of Melinda's life and art at the **Antaeus Theatre** in Glendale, and since the venue only holds 80 guests, please note that the event will be zoomed and then post-produced and posted to be enjoyed anytime from somewhere in cyber heaven. The zoom link of Melinda's memorial will be available a couple weeks before the date.

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

In the meantime, here's a link to the memorial reel put together from an amazing collection of my darling Melinda's extraordinary work in film, TV, commercials, radio and stage. **VIEW REEL HERE**

Thanks to **Taylor Jessen** for transferring everything on a hard drive and the multitasking **John Apicella** for assembling her reel. **MELINDA'S MEMORIAL PAGE**





"A mind always employed is always happy.  
The idle are the only wretched."  
~ Thomas Jefferson

## Wisdom from Uncle Carl

"Science is not perfect. It can be misused. It is only a tool. But it is by far the best tool we have, self-correcting, ongoing, applicable to everything. It has two rules. First: there are no sacred truths; all assumptions must be critically examined; arguments from authority are worthless. Second: whatever is inconsistent with the facts must be discarded or revised.

"The obvious is sometimes false; the unexpected is sometimes true."

Carl Sagan, "Cosmos" (1985)

"You can only fight with one foot at a time.  
Otherwise, you fall on your butt."  
~ Soccer star Ferenc Puskas



5. "Remember: Y'all is singular. All y'all is plural. All y'all's is plural possessive."
6. "Money can buy you a fine dog, but only love can make him wag his tail."
7. "Friedman's just another word for nothing left to lose."

Kinky was not a native Texan, but he once said that he had to come to Texas because we were the only state that would put up with his nonsense...

"Life can only be understood backwards,  
but it must be lived forward."  
~ Soren Kirkegaard

## Kinky thinking

**T**HE LEGENDARY KINKY FRIEDMAN RECENTLY died at 79. Irreverent, iconoclastic, but with a heart as big as Texas, he lived on his own terms. Truly one of a kind.

Here are a few of his kinky observations:

1. "If elected, the first thing I'll do is demand a recount."
2. "A fool and his money are soon elected."
3. "There's a fine line between fiction and non-fiction, and I snorted it in 1976."
4. "I believe musicians can run this state a lot better than politicians. We just won't get much done in the morning."

## Fishing for Corwin

**A**BOUT THIS TIME OF YEAR IN 1941, AMERICA was increasingly divided over a life-and-death question: should we go to war? The country had not been so polarized since the 1860s. Families were divided. Old friends stopped speaking. Passionate arguments reached screaming and threatening levels. Isolationist "America Firsters" called interventionists "traitors." Sound familiar?

**Norman Corwin** was then creating a brand new radio play every Sunday for CBS, and the July 4th weekend was coming up. He wrote a piece he called "Between Americans" – an "informal conversation for informal listeners." The half-hour broadcast reminded listeners of how much we all had in common, what we all could agree

■ CONTINUED

on, and asked, "What does America mean to you?"

Then **Orson Welles** called Norman and asked permission to produce the script again, with himself in the leading role. By sheer chance (who knew?) Welles' broadcast was scheduled for the evening of December 7, 1941. It was the first program heard on CBS that day which was not a news report. Listeners wept and glowed with relief as America unified once again.

Flash forward to the 21st Century. Norman Corwin, now in his 90s, decided that this script needed a new production – but the original was too much set in its day, its language and references now outdated. He called a younger friend, **Richard Fish**, and asked him to help restructure the program for a modern audience. They worked on the revised script for several years and finally agreed on a new version in 2010. Corwin gave Fish the rights, but before a production could be arranged, he died at 101.

Without Corwin to help, it was 2021 before Fish could mount a production, thanks to the **National Audio Theatre Festivals**. The Covid pandemic made it necessary to record all the actors separately

Cast members, recorded literally from Manhattan to Maui, ranged in age from 10 to 84; half female, half male; and either African, Hispanic, or Asian-Americans. I'm proud to say that I and the late **Melinda Peterson** are in **THE CAST**, and the principal voice is our dear friend **David Ossman**. The finished



production, with an original score, was acclaimed – and turned out to be more timely than ever. And now, CBS veteran **Tom Curley** has created a video component to complement the audio, and the result is spectacular.

**OUR NATF 2021 AUDIO ON YOUTUBE**

**NATF 2021 VERSION WITH ADDED IMAGES**

**ORSON WELLES 1941 VERSION**

"What people want is simple. They want an America that fulfills its promise." ~ **Barbara C. Jordan**



**E**LECTIONS! THEY'RE FUN, RIGHT? RIGHT!?

You'll have to speak up, we can't hear over your hysterical sobbing!! Yes, in 1980 Americans gathered in the public square of their minds and considered the many candidates for President, so obviously it was time for the **Firesign Theatre** to produce outspoken commentaries for NPR, called "Campaign Chronicles!"

Broadcasting weekly on "Morning Edition," Firesign provided useful thumbnails of every Presidential candidate, offered helpful summaries of the big campaign issues, did vox pops with a variety of real, average citizens and produced regular updates on the star-crossed campaign of candidates, including **Daffy Duck**!

Originally released in a limited mail-order set of six cassettes by **Rhino Records**, this never-reissued series finally returns as a deluxe remastered download with bonus tracks and a supplemental PDF. featuring a complete ballot to print out and throw away!

Will you laugh? Will you chortle? Listen to the end and find out, as Firesign delivers a post-election wrap-up so obscene and slanderous it COULD NOT BE AIRED. But now, at last, **IT CAN BE HEARD**!

"Not everything that is faced can be changed,  
but nothing can be changed that is not faced."

~ **James Baldwin**

■ **CONTINUED**



## Sing along, America

(To the tune of CAMELOT)

Kamala! Kamala!  
I know her name's a bit bizarre,  
But -- KAMALA! KAMALA!  
She's our new rising star.  
We know the vote's not counted til November,  
But if we vote all blue, then we'll survive!  
We've got to kick the rump  
Of fascists, crooks and Trump!  
We've got to vote them out  
If we're to save Democracy!"

"We are not ready to fight because we love fighting; we are ready to fight because we are worth fighting for." ~ **Activist Zoe' Samudzi**

1978	2023
Long hair	Longing for hair
8 Tracks	Cataracts
KEGs	EKGs
Streaking	Leaking
Acid Rock	Acid Reflux
Seeds and stems	Fiber
Stayin' Alive (the song)	Stayin' Alive (the goal)
Hoping for a BMW	Hoping for a BM
Going to a new, hip joint	Getting a new hip joint
Rolling Stones	Kidney Stones
Bell bottoms	Big bottoms
Disco	Costco
Whatever	Depends
Rock n' roll all night	Sleep through the night
Think you know everything	Think you know your name

## PLANETCLICK DISTRIBUTIONS

**DON Q**  
**UNIFORM**  
**GOLDEN**  
**RAM 1**  
**RAM 2**  
**RAM 3**

## Contributions

**J**ames & Emily Marrow, Allison Barenbrug, Cat Ishikawa, Greg Benson, Gregg Oppenheimer, Art Peterson, Jamie Alcroft, Kristin Weber, Adam Meyer, my helper Nereida, my neighbors, Angelo, Cristina and Devi, my Planet partner **Cristofer Gross**, and my loving friend **Adele**, for bringing music, travel and adventure back into my life, and of course, **The Week**, for consistently appropriate quotes!

Also, a fond farewell to the inspirational and unique comedian, **Bob Newhart**, activist **Barbara Jordan**, and thank you to **Chuck Norris**, for not being dead! And congratulations to our friend **Gabby Gruen**, on the publication of his suspenseful first novel *The Uniform*, about survival against appalling odds. ([Link in Planet Click, above](#))

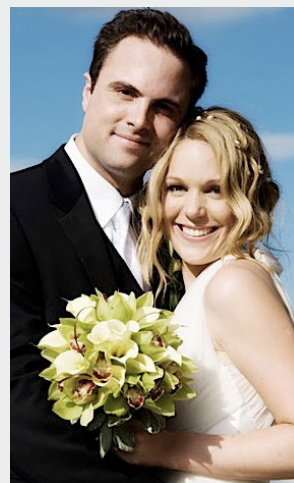
"We don't so much want to see a female Einstein become an assistant professor. We want a woman schlemiel to get promoted as quickly as a male schlemiel." ~ **Bella Abzug**

## Happy Anniversary

**T**O MY DARLING DAUGHTER, KRISTIN, AND her hubby, **Geoff Campbell**, for 17 years of wedded blitz – also celebrated on July 26, so I'll never forget it! I think they tie the knot in Vancouver, where they and the kids, Audre and Bowen, are presently enjoying a summer break.

And a special congratulation to Geoff, for his new executive job at **Conde-Nast Publishing**. I see a trip to New York in our future...

"The secret of a happy marriage remains a secret."  
~ **Henny Youngman**



"Moral indignation is jealousy with a halo." ~ **H. G. Wells**

Visit the new **FIRESITE** and the old **BOOMERS**  
**HOME • FORTUNE COOKIE • RIGHT WING UNCLE • MERCH**

To join the Planet Proctor mailing list **CLICK HERE**.

**PLANET PROCTOR** © Phil Proctor 2024 • layout and production Cristofer Gross / **Theatertimes.org**