

"If there's life on other planets, then the earth is the Universe's insane asylum." ~ Voltaire

# Planet \$anta

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## *A Scottish Holiday Toast*

**Here's to a long life and a good one,**

**A quick death and an easy one,**

**A pretty girl and an honest one,**

**A stiff whisky ... and another one!**

**(Compliments of "Outlander")**

"Let others praise ancient time - I am glad I was born in these." ~ Ovid



## Stranger than friction

**A** RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORIST ATTENDED a reunion of Cambridge Criminologists at Fishmongers Hall called *Learning Together*, and that's where the attack began. He claimed he was wearing a suicide vest which was fake, although the cops did help him commit suicide later, but only after he killed a man and a woman and wounded three more with two knives on London Bridge.

A lady said that after the attack began, one man sprayed the terrorist with a fire extinguisher, while "a Polish Londoner" grabbed a five-foot-long narwhal tusk from the wall (!) and used it to threaten him as a crowd swarmed the assailant, disarming him before police arrived and shot him dead. His name is Usman Kahn and the mayor of London is **Sadiq Khan**, you explain that?

Another man named **James Ford**, according to *The Daily Beast*, "grabbed a terrorist's knife, another one of which was duct-taped to his wrist, and staggering south across the bridge, warning pedestrians to beware of a potential explosion."



As cell-phone footage spread across social media and onto global news networks, the man was labeled a hero. However – some folks were appalled by what they saw, like **Angela Cox**, 65. She received a phone call from

police telling her to switch on the TV and was sickened to see that this "hero" wasn't in prison!

You see, Ford had been convicted in 2004 of the brutal murder of Angela's niece, after approaching the 21-year-old with the mental age of a 15-year-old in an isolated neck of woods and slitting her throat. "You clearly have an interest in the macabre," said the judge at the time, "and also an

obsession with death, including murder by throat cutting."

And yet, Ford was out of prison with a day pass that Friday to attend – *what?* – the University of Cambridge Criminology department's "Learning Together" event...

*"You have the watches; we have the time."  
~ Old Taliban saying*

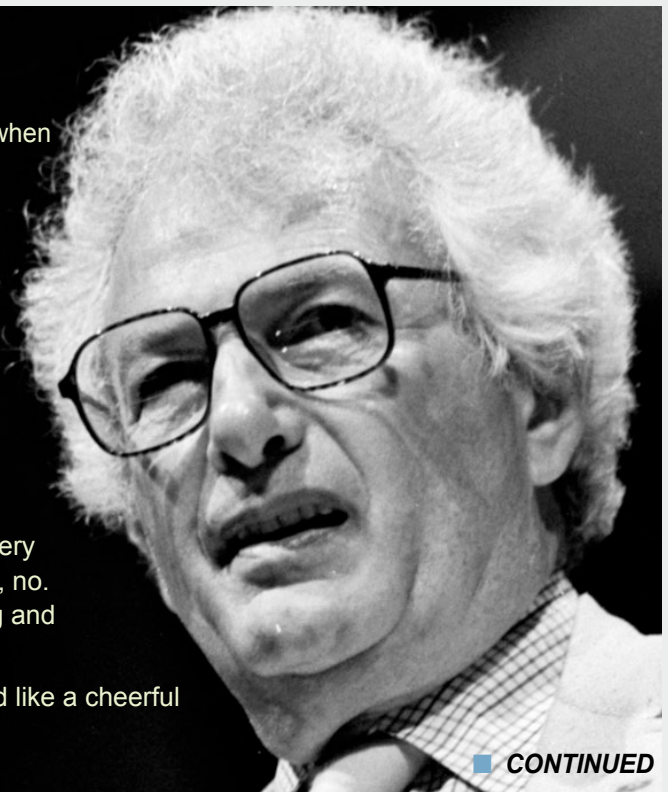
## What the Heller

**FROM A LOYAL PLANETEER AND A REGULAR** at *CHEERS* when everyone knew his name, our friend **Paul Willson** writes: "Phil, I remember hearing **Joseph Heller** on NPR, not long before he died. He said the reason for the title change was that the **Leon Uris** novel *Mila 18* would be coming out around the same time, both from Simon & Schuster, and Leon Uris had already scored big with *Exodus*, while Heller was pretty obscure.

"Heller said he and his editor were tearing their hair, because *Catch-18* was the perfect title. What were they going to call the book? They finally settled, with great misgivings, on *Catch-22*, but were sure sales would be severely diminished.

"As it turned out, this was a lucky break for Heller, because every humorist knows 18 is not a funny number. Seventeen, yes; 18, no. But 22 is to kill! And as you might expect, Heller was charming and funny.

"With his thick Brooklyn accent and gravelly voice, he sounded like a cheerful **Arthur Miller**."



■ **CONTINUED**

"If you boil a funny bone, it becomes a laughing-stock." ~ Thanks **Jaimie Alcroft**

## Forward, into the past!

**I F YOU ARE A GRAYING BABY BOOMER LIKE** me," writes Planeteer **Bill Croke** for *The American Spectator*, "you might remember a comedy troupe from the 1970s called "Firesign Theatre." They had their origin in FM "progressive" radio (KPFK-Los Angeles, 1966). The ensemble put out some two dozen comedy LP albums (remember those?), the most prominent with titles such as *We're All Bozos on this Bus* and *The Tale of the Giant Rat of Sumatra*, and despite popularity for performances in nightclubs and on college campuses, the group was for the most part an audio phenomenon. They've been called 'The Beatles of Comedy,' and one of their early fans was – oddly enough – **Rush Limbaugh**.

"Firesign Theatre's humor is best described as cultural-lefty-absurdist and was very much in keeping with the times (Nixon, Watergate, the Vietnam War, etc.). They wore bizarre costumes such as clown suits, safari garb with pith helmets, female drag couture, and some in the audience were likewise attired. And the latter could be intoxicated by a variety of both legal and illegal substances. The sketches were well scripted yet improvisational, and featured intricate wordplay and puns, which were meant to be politically and culturally thought-provoking without being obvious.

"The troupe consisted of four

unlikely members: **Peter Bergman**, a Yale graduate who had taught economics as a Carnegie Fellow...; **Phil Proctor**, another Yale alumnus, who was a child actor and worked in Broadway musical theater, a master of accents and dialects, Proctor is still working today doing film and Disney animation voiceovers; **Phil Austin** was a stage actor before joining Firesign Theatre, and had worked in radio; and **David Ossman**, a mystery novelist and screenwriter, contributed much to Firesign Theatre's radio scripts. Austin and Bergman are since deceased.

"I've been thinking lately about how the Hate Trump media has come to resemble this weird avant-garde ensemble. After all, to their aficionados, 'Fake News' was what Firesign Theatre was all about. It was zany and absurd, and the joke was that the reality of life, especially contemporary American life, strained credulity, and invited not only satire, but a total flight into fantasy. A typical line from a sketch: 'I don't know what you know, but I do know that everything you know is wrong.' This last illustrates the essence of Fake News, rooted in the leftist-inspired cultural divide that currently afflicts America.

"The very name '**Stormy Daniels** conjures up a Firesign Theatre bit ('The Adventures of Stormy Daniels: Porn Star from Mars!' – maybe Venus would be more appropriate).

**Brian Stelter's** future at CNN might involve honking a clown horn while wearing a pith helmet as an introduction to his commentary. Lately, all this has been sending me back to Firesign Theatre (easily found on YouTube) for perspective. Maybe a study of the works of Marx and Lennon is in order. Groucho and John, that is..."

"The paradise of the rich is made out of the hell of the poor."  
~ **Herman Melville**

### To Pee or Not to Pee

Go outside and pee in the yard.

If ants gather - diabetes.

If you pee on your feet - prostate.

If it smells like barbecue -  
cholesterol.

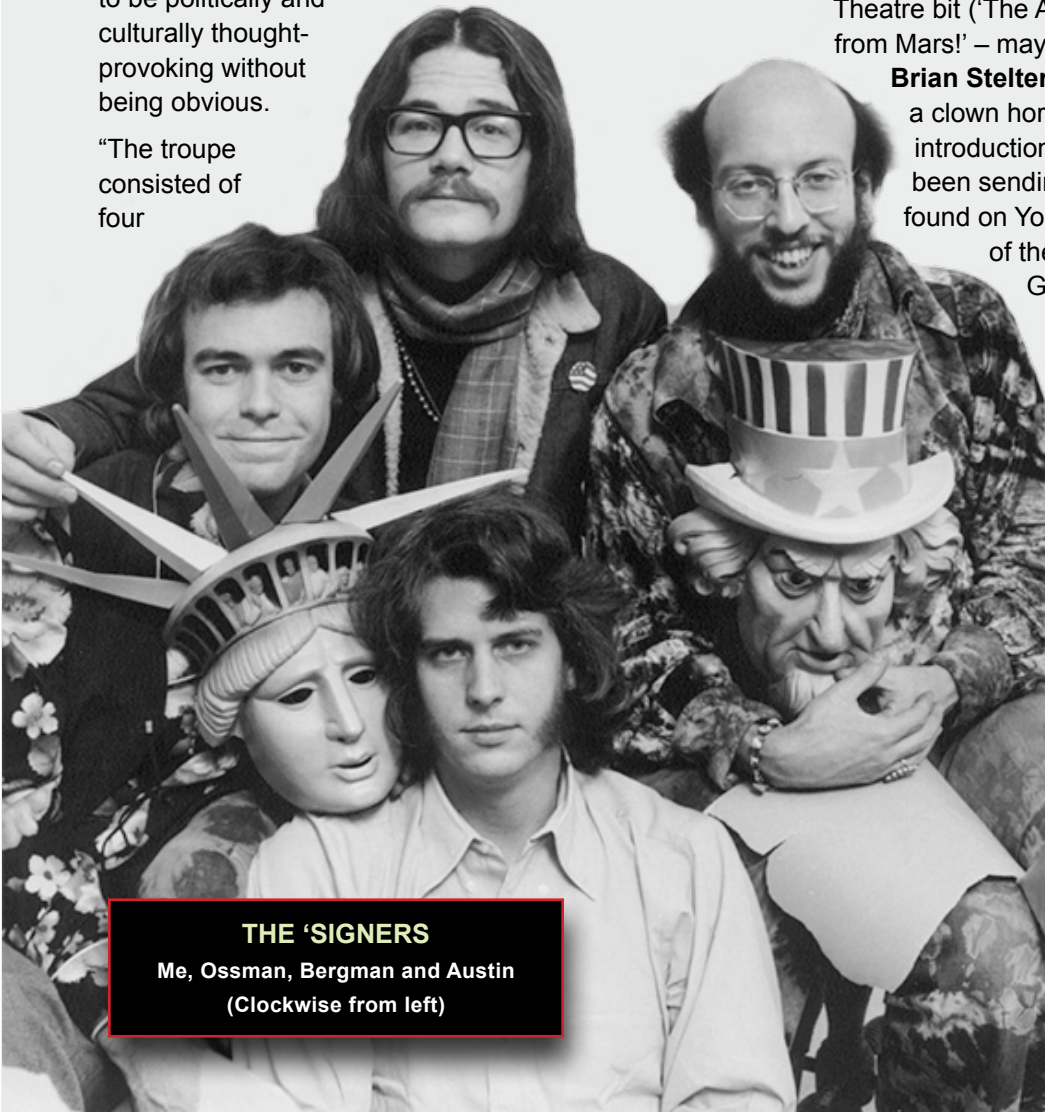
If when you shake it your wrist  
hurts - osteoarthritis.

If you return inside with  
your Johnson' hanging out -  
Alzheimer's.

"An adventure is only an  
inconvenience rightly considered."  
~ **G.K. Chesterton**

#### THE 'SIGNERS

Me, Ossman, Bergman and Austin  
(Clockwise from left)





**John Goodman** – Emmy Award winning actor  
 "Finally, a brilliant and funny moral argument for, and snappy comebacks to, the voices in my head! Got you now...bastards!"

**Ed Asner** – winner of 7 Emmy Awards and co-star of films like *Up and Elf*  
 "This book points out how the right-wing spinmeisters are lying through their goddamn teeth. Truth and facts are not 'alternative facts.'"

**John Densmore** – drummer of *The Doors* and author of NY Times bestseller *Riders on the Storm*  
 "During the 60's, families were split right down the middle of the dining room table over the Vietnam War. Today's climate feels the same. This little book is a much-needed hand across that table."

**Dan Castellaneta** - Voice of Homer Simpson and TV writer  
 "This book is an invaluable, and humorous how-to-guide to engage in political discourse with your crazy right-wing uncle, dotty uninformed aunt, balmi apathetic cousin, unhinged tea party sister, batty solipsistic nephew, nutty fascistic niece, pixilated non-voting offspring, goofy alt-right grandma, and distracted Whig party granddad."

**Rev. Barry Lynn** – former Executive Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State  
 "We liberals don't need to reduce ideas to bumper sticker slogans. But—we must learn to speak with the factual clarity, moral focus, and good humor that Sam and Phil provide in this important volume."

**Roy Zimmerman**, satirical songwriter:  
 "Pete Seeger said, 'It's a very important thing to learn to talk to people you disagree with.' Samuel and Phil have done a very important thing with *What to Say to Your Crazy Right-Wing Uncle*, and they've done it with humor, heart and disarming levelheadedness."

**Thom Hartmann** – nation's number one progressive radio talk show host  
 "In *What to Say*, Sam and Phil provide both a template for talking back to your Crazy Uncle (who's not really crazy, just misinformed) and a narrative script, both as example and detail. It's a small but important step in reclaiming truth and sanity in the midst of an insane and often nakedly untruthful media landscape. Read this book, share it, memorize it, and, most important, use it."

What to Say to Your Crazy Right-Wing Uncle: Talking Points for Liberals

## What to Say to Your Crazy Right-Wing Uncle Talking Points for Liberals

By  
**Samuel Warren Joseph  
 &  
 Phil Proctor**  
 Foreword by Thom Hartmann

Joseph Proctor

## Beer with me

**A**T A WORLD BREWING CONVENTION, THE CEOs of various popular brands retired to the bar at the end of each day. Bruce, the boss of Fosters, shouted to the barman, "in 'Strailya, we make the best bloody beer in the world, so pour me a Fosters, cobber."

So Rob, chief of Budweiser, calls out, "In the States, we brew the finest beers of the world, and I make the king of them all. Give me a pint of Bud."

Hans steps up next, "In Germany we invented beer. Give me a Beck's, the real king of beers."

Up steps Dutchman Jan, chief executive of Grolsch, who states that his is the ultimate beer and demands one with two fingers of head on top.

Then Patrick, representing Guinness, steps forward and says, "Barman, give me a coke with ice please." The other four stare at him in stunned silence and eventually Bruce asks, "Are you not going to have a Guinness then, Pat?"

"No, Patrick replies. 'If you lot aren't drinkin', then neither am I.'

"Freedom of the press is not just important to Democracy - it IS Democracy." ~ **Walter Cronkite**

## Say what?

**M**Y "GOD HELP US" WRITING PARTNER, **Samuel Joseph**, and I just posted our latest work on Amazon, with a foreword by our dear friend **Thom Hartmann** – just in time for Christmas!

*What to Say to your Crazy Right-wing Uncle: Talking Points for Liberals* is a fun, informative handbook for progressives to counter conservative talking points and disinformation. Full of funny and clever dialogue and political cartoons by Firesign friend, **Phil Fountain**, this is a perfect gift for your political allies and the loved ones in your life who you are driving you nuts.

The book addresses such hot topics as Republican scandals, gun control, abortion, the Supreme Court, and



### WINNING POINTS

The 'God Help Us' Team:  
 Asner, Joseph and Me

■ **CONTINUED**

## WALKING TALL

Caroll Spinney made Big Bird  
a Gentle Giant for Generations



income inequality. For instance, in the chapter “Kids in Cages,” myths about immigration are debunked. In “Corruption Eruption,” the Trump swamps are laid bare. In “Going to Pot,” the pros and cons of legalization are examined, as well as many more current topics.

Hartmann, the number one progressive radio talk show host in the U.S., writes in the book’s foreword: “Sam and Phil provide both a template for talking back to your Crazy Uncle (who’s not really crazy, just misinformed) and a narrative script, both as example and detail. It’s a small but important step in reclaiming truth and sanity in the midst of an insane and often nakedly untruthful media landscape.” **CHECK IT OUT**

Accordingly, we are looking forward to and reviews from my loyal Planeteers and other dear friends for our book! So, if you’re “Crazy” enough, please post it on **AMAZON.COM**, where the book already has a 5-star rating!

“Polarizing people is a good way to win an election and a good way to wreck a country.” ~ **Molly Ivins**

## Big losses

**F**IRST, FAREWELL TO CAROLL SPINNEY, THE embodiment of diminutive Oscar the Grouch and the 8-foot-tall Big Bird on the fabled children’s series “Sesame Street,” at the age of 85.

“His enormous talent and outsized heart were perfectly suited to playing the larger-than-life yellow bird who brought joy to generations of children and countless

fans of all ages around the world, and his lovably cantankerous grouch gave us all permission to be cranky once in a while,” the press release said. With deepest admiration, **Sesame Workshop** is proud to carry his memory – and his beloved characters – into the future.”

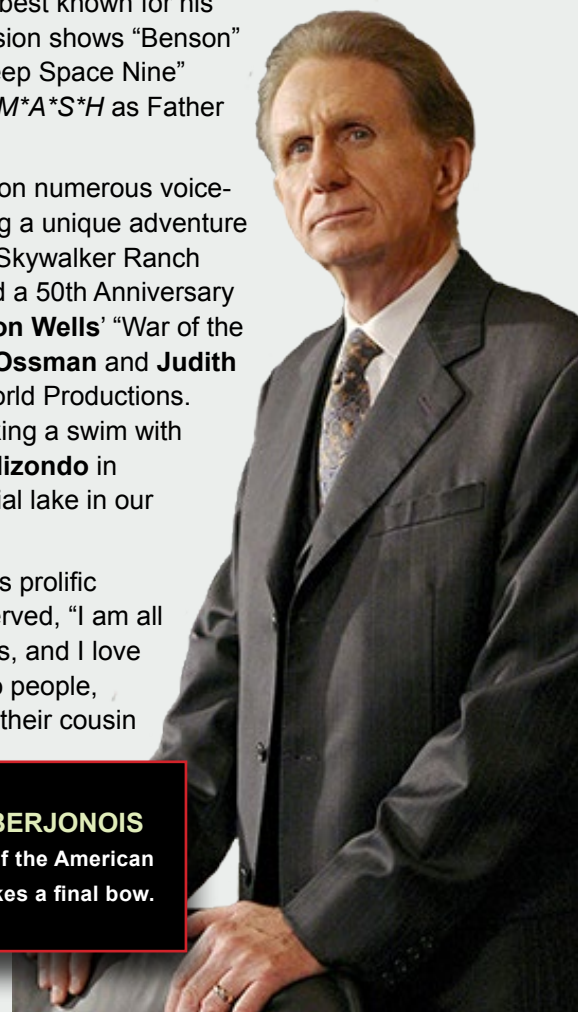
And sadly, we also lost the fabled actor **René Auberjonois**, 79, best known for his roles on the television shows “Benson” and “Star Trek: Deep Space Nine” and the 1970 film *M\*A\*S\*H* as Father Mulcahy.

I worked with him on numerous voice-over gigs, including a unique adventure on location at the Skywalker Ranch up North, to record a 50th Anniversary adaptation of **Orson Wells’** “War of the Worlds” for **Dave Ossman** and **Judith Walcutt’s** Otherworld Productions. I’ll never forget taking a swim with him and **Hector Elizondo** in Skywalker’s artificial lake in our tighty-whities.

Looking back at his prolific career, Rene observed, “I am all of those characters, and I love that! I also run into people, and they think I’m their cousin

## AU REVOIR, AUBERJONIS

A towering member of the American acting community takes a final bow.





or their dry cleaner. I love that, too." We loved you, too. And his talented daughter, **Tessa**, is part of our Antaeus company, carrying on his legacy of art...

"The young get ripped. The old get RIP." ~ **Phil's Phunny Phacts**

## The X in Xmas

**S**INCE RADIO STATIONS DECIDED to pull "Baby it's Cold Outside" from their playlists because it offends someone, we feel that these other holiday songs must be removed immediately:

**I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus:** subjects minors to softcore porn and cheating on daddy.

**The Christmas Song:** Open fire? Pollution. Folks dressed up like Eskimos? Cultural appropriation.

**Holly Jolly Christmas:** Kiss her once for me? Unwanted advances...

**I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas?** Blatantly racist!

**Santa Claus is Coming to Town:** "He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake!" Lock up that Peeping-Tom stalker...

**Most Wonderful Time of the Year:** "Be of good cheer?" Don't force me to hide my depression...

**Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer:** Sheer bullying. Can't play in any reindeer games, indeed!

**It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas:** "Dolls for Janice and Jen and boots and pistols for Barney and Ben?" C'mon, folks, that's gender stereotyping...

**Santa, Baby:** Oh, yeah. Sung by a gold digger, black-mailing, hooker...

**Frosty the Snowman:** Sexist! Where's the snow woman?"

**Do You Hear What I Hear?** Blatant disregard for the hearing impaired...

**Jingle Bell Rock:** "Giddy up jingle horse, pick up your feet!" Clearly animal abuse!

# PLANETCLICK YANKS

**THAT'S A MORON  
COLD SNAP  
SOUNDS OF  
SCIENCE  
CREEPY PEOPLE  
BIRDSEX  
NUTS  
BLOOPERS  
FAULT  
HARD  
LIFE  
MOBILE**

**The Hanukkah Song:** Don't force your religion on me!

**Grandma Got Ran Over by a Reindeer:** Getting away with a hit-and-run is not a good thing...

**Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas:** Make the yuletide GAY? Wow, just wow!

"A 'failson' is a privileged son of wealth who is equal parts incompetence, stupidity, and arrogance."  
~ **Phil's Phunny Phacts**

## Helpers

**O**ona Austin for an enchanting getaway on Fox Island, host **Louise Palanker**, for a stimulating appearance on "Things I Found on the Internet" [**SEE MORE**] ... **Joan Allemand**, **Allison Barenbrug**, **Kenneth Wilhite, Jr.**, **Melinda Peterson**, and **Ted Bonnitt**, my

partner in what we hope is a new podcast called "Phil & Ted's Sexy Boomer Show!" Guests so far included **Jamie Alcroft & Danny Mann**, **Larry Hankin & Paul Willson**, **Phyllis Katz & Rob Lewine** and **Anna Mathias & Alan Shearman**... Set your ears for 2020. And congrats to my *Cookie* co-author, **Brad Schreiber**, on his latest opus, **Music is Power**. (More on this next year.)

And finally, here is an excerpt from the **EXCELLENT BLOG** by our dear friend **Spider Robinson**, who wrote the foreword to a new year's Firesign Theatre release:

"Meanwhile, in addition to *Where's My Fortune Cookie?*, I also strongly recommend Phil's regular (and as such things go aromatic giggle-bomb) **Planet Proctor**, a short but cocky compendium of levity with brevity.

"At **PLANET PROCTOR** you will find an archive of highly silly intelligence and highly intelligent silliness going back to 1996, available for plundering. And a subscription will keep them appearing in your Inbox as either Word documents or .pdfs without further effort on your part."

"An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered." ~ **G.K. Chesterton**

**"We the people, elect leaders not to rule but to serve." ~ Dwight D. Eisenhower**

Visit the new **FIRESITE** and the old **BOOMERS**

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