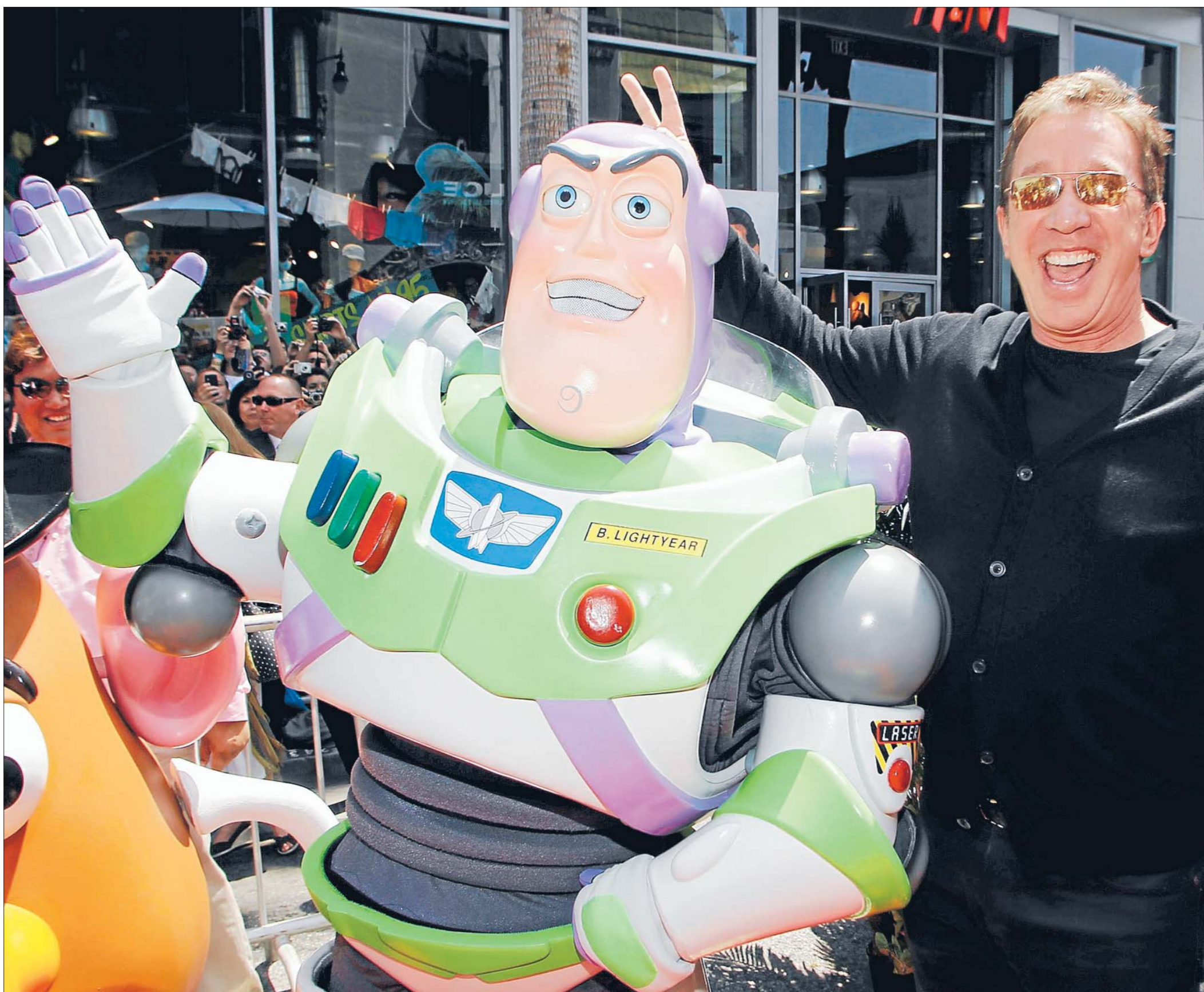


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The Southland Times

# Unwind



**Improved model:** Actor Tim Allen poses with the character Buzz Lightyear, whose voice he plays in the film, as he arrives at the world premiere of Disney Pixar's *Toy Story 3* at the El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood, California. Photo: REUTERS

## Press 2 to be diverted to India

**MATE**  
MARK WILSON



**I**F I could bill the offending companies an hourly rate for being put on hold or for wasting my life with automated help responses, I would be able to contribute generously towards Inveriggille's new gargantuan indoor/outdoor playground.

It could even have its own Mark Wilson commemorative flying fox, if you were still allowed flying foxes, which of course you are not as they are much too dangerous for today's children.

Recently I set my own new hold record while sorting out a travel insurance claim (which still is far from sorted).

The company in question eclipsed my previous record, a powerful 32 minutes, with a most impressive 46-minute effort. I had time for lunch with a friend before I even made it to second in the queue.

It would come as no surprise that Telecom held the previous record and probably holds top spot for most readers.

Once upon a time, going on hold was as bad as it got and, if the hold music was decent, then you could probably tolerate a few minutes rocking out to *Nature's Best*, but Telecom kept that CD on the hold rotation for so long I had nightmares about *April Sun in Cuba* burning a hole in my ear, and nature somehow entering me as I slept.

Now there are so many more avenues of annoyance to contend with simply to reach a help desk, customer support or even the company janitor. Before even having the privilege of being put on hold, we are now treated to the incessantly infuriating automated response, a sultry yet slightly robotic female voice asking you to select from some delightfully unhelpful options thus allowing them to better process your inquiry.

Press 1 to be put on hold for up to 45 minutes; press 2 to be transferred to India where the operator will have no idea what you are talking about and be harder to understand than Kenny off *South Park*; press 3 to be instantly disconnected, or press 4 to hear these redundant alternatives again.

"If you wish to talk to real person who speaks English and have your problem resolved this millennia, please hang up and book a flight to our head office."

I find the best way around this is to mash the keypad or yell obscenities at the phone in the hope the computer gives up and transfers me to a real person.

Cost-saving measures are blamed by companies for offloading call centres and help desks to Asia, but it saves them money only because they never actually have to help anyone - we all give up in frustration or simply don't make it through the automated response labyrinth.

I would pay extra to know that when I picked up the phone it was answered by a real person in real time who spoke English and knew the difference between Stewart Island and Sumatra.

# Toy Story 3 - all grown up

**I**N a screening room on the Pixar Studios campus, Lee Unkrich - director of the new *Toy Story 3* - is flipping back and forth with the click of a mouse between images of the Woody in the original 1995 movie and the one that will be on screens when the third and final film opens around the world this month.

The corners of Woody's mouth have smoothed. The collar on his cowboy shirt is less severe, and the stitching is now visible, as it would be on a real toy. The

"leather" in his boots and holster has a more realistic tone to it. And because nine years have passed in the *Toy Story* world since the last film, there are subtle but noticeable nicks and marks on Woody.

"We've made changes with the improvements in CG (computer-generated animation) over the years," says Unkrich, 42, who was co-director of 1999's *Toy Story 2*.

"Bob Pauley, who was my production designer, worked on *Toy Story*, and he was like a kid in a candy store. He got to

go back and fix the tonne of various little things he had really wanted to fix years ago.

"But we had to be careful that Woody didn't look like he had had some weird plastic surgery. He still had to be Woody."

When Unkrich and his crew started work on the third instalment, they knew they were being entrusted with what is probably the most valued part of Pixar's legacy. *Toy Story*, the studio's first feature-length film, set a benchmark for its next 15 years of work; *Toy Story 2* was

the rare sequel that was even better than the original.

"*Toy Story* represents, for most of us who have worked here a long time, the first movie we worked on, the first movie we ever got to make," Unkrich notes.

"It's a huge part of the heritage of the studio," which includes 11 straight critically acclaimed blockbusters in 15 years, from the original *Toy Story* and *A Bug's Life* through 2008's *Wall-E* and last year's *Up*.

Other than *Toy Story*, the studio has

avoided sequels - until now. Next year, new chapters of *Cars* and *Monsters Inc.* are planned.

"We had an idea for *Toy Story 3* right after *Toy Story 2*," Unkrich says.

"Right after 2, I was at (Pixar chief creative officer) John Lasseter's house, and he put his arm around me and said, 'Let's do it - right now. Let's make it.' He was ready to go."

Then came what Unkrich mildly refers to as "friction" between Pixar and Disney, at the time the distributor of Pixar films.

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