

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN

[#444]

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN is slogging through the third month of 2014, grasping as if for dear life at its teasing hints of warmth that are yet insufficient to melt the last of the heaps of snow that have lain for weeks like unwelcome guests on the lawns up the block from the N.Y. Cadre (1088 East 40th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11210 (☎(718) NY-CADRE; ☑↔☑ nycadre [at] alum [dot] rpi

[dot] edu; ⚡http://www [dot] nycadre [dot] org)), springing forward to save what meager daylight he can, and eagerly anticipating the alleged cruelty of April. How are you all doing? Are we having fun yet? This is **Beyond the Fringefan** #444, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 12, #3 (e-APA-NYU #119) and other forced marchers; published **Trudge** March 2014 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above from *Real Life Adventures* by Wise and Aldrich, 1 March 2014. All uncredited material copyright ©2014 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.



THE ROAD GOES ON FOREVER AND THE PARTY NEVER ENDS: My apologies to those attendees at FISTFA who were relying on me to provide them with rides home in Daisy the minivan on 15 February. In spite of the steadily increasing snow, I left the Cadre, drove off, and was halfway to the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel (which I will continue to call that until I shuffle off this mortal coil; what on earth did Hugh Carey have to do with the tunnel that it should suddenly bear his name? But I digress) when Daisy's CHECK ENGINE light blinked on and stayed on.

CHECK ENGINE lights are among the great nuisances of modern automotive engineering. Okay, I understand that today's car is much more complicated than that of a few decades ago, and coordinated by a computer more powerful than the one that got Neil Armstrong to the moon, and so vast numbers of things can go wrong with it, often requiring diagnosis by a suitably trained professional. But when the stupid light goes on, it could mean that your emission control system is a touch out of whack, and you can keep driving until you can get back to your mechanic next week to have it adjusted; or it could mean your alternator has failed and your battery will go dead within the next five miles of driving. You don't know until you get to your mechanic, who plugs his computer into the car's computer, gets a read-out of one or more alphanumeric codes, and then looks the codes up in another computer. Rational system design would suggest that the CHECK ENGINE light at least be accompanied by a severity code, ranging, say, from zero, meaning "Call your mechanic for an appointment as soon as convenient," to 10, meaning "Stop the car NOW, bail out and run away as fast as you can!" But nooooo...

Anyway, being unwilling to risk being stranded in upstate Manhattan in mid-blizzard, I decided to turn around and get home while the getting was good. I was able to bring Daisy to Frankie the

mechanic on Monday, and using techniques of enhanced interrogation, he persuaded her to reveal the elusive codes. They point to the evap system, part of the emission control measures added to internal combustion engines around the turn of the century; this system is dedicated to capturing gasoline that evaporates from the fuel tank, reliquefying it and returning it to the tank so that it doesn't escape into the atmosphere. I'd never known about this system, nor about the problem it was designed to fix, until about five years ago, when we had a series of similar codes from Daisy, which ultimately resulted in our having to replace a few pieces of the evap system at a cost of several hundred dollars. For the moment, though, Frankie recommends hanging loose and seeing how soon the light comes on again; the vehicle remains driveable, and if anything real is wrong, I have until our next state inspection in July to deal with it. (As of 26 days later, the light has not—knock dashboard—gone on again. Was it some freak occurrence engendered by a unique combination of momentary skidding and temporary clogging of some orifice by impacted snow? I may never know.) The trips to and from the March FISTFA were accomplished with minimal drama.

My perma-lance assignment at AllianceBernstein has just eased into its third year, with all parties still apparently satisfied with one another's performance. May it continue thus for a few more years! Meanwhile, it seems The Kid is implementing plans to change employers as of this month; I'll have more details next ish.

FRINGE RECEPTION: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 12, #2 (e-APA-NYU #118)

D'AL THYANN, FASHI FENA (Ariel Cinī):
Congratulations on *The Touching Lands'* *Dance's* arrival on Amazon.com. A search on the title also turns up *The Organized Seer*, which has it as a subtitle, but not *The Family Forge*, which doesn't—perhaps you should add it? /*/ **“But I'm still not good at sales, and I never will be.** And in the interactive meritocracy of the Net, this is a continuing problem.” Boy, do I hear you. My attempts 12 years ago at getting a new start on gainful employment via online networking yielded a close approximation of nada. How many review copies have you sent out to influential types who might produce some favorable ink (or pixels)? /*/ “In response to a Linked-In panel where a writer wants to make up a Matriarchal Culture: View the TV series *All That Glitters* from the 1970s (yes, you'll have to watch television!) This show takes place in a modern matriarchal culture (either another universe or another planet; they don't specify), and you can see how all your issues were handled then.” I had no recollection of the series—a five-day-a-week quasi-soap opera created by Norman



“Bob, the ‘check engine’ light just came on.”

(Close to Home by John McPherson, 21 March 2008)

Lear after the success of *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*—but from cursory research, it appears that the show wasn't intended to be realistic (basically it just reversed all the standard gender clichés), nor was it received very well (it lasted 13 weeks). Probably not the best model to use if the writer wants to create something plausible. /*/ Um, does Nina B. have a computer which can open RTF files, display JPEGs and play MP4s? (If so, she's keeping it a secret from most of us.) If not, I hope the CD-R you gave her strikes her as pretty to look at. I'm not sure how much I'd pay for one like it, but you might try donating one to the Interfilk auction at Contata and seeing what sort of interest it provokes.

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):
My sympathies on your attack by ransomware, and the loss of all those files. You'd think they'd attack someone who could afford the ransom. I guess the software isn't that smart yet. Do you have any idea of what files you've lost, and which can be restored from copies you've sent other people or reconstructed from printouts? /*/ (¢Nelson) “Btw, Green Arrow was named after a

NYC Subway signal (as was Green Lantern).” Right—and the Flash was named after a NYC subway pervert. I see more green arrows on automotive traffic lights than on the subway. (But I followed the Blue Arrows to the World’s Fair 50 years ago.) *// (çmeçNelson) “ct Joel> Hey, aside from the little screen, phones & tv remotes don’t look all that different.” Funny you should mention that. I’ve been investigating a replacement for my Android; one of the selling points I’ve heard about for a few current models is an app that lets you use the phone as a TV remote. *// “Re ‘applet’, why not ‘subapplication’, akin to ‘subroutine’?” I dunno; too many syllables, maybe? I didn’t make up the word. *// “At some point, owning mementoes or being a quirky or eccentric, harmless pack rat was recast into being a hoarder – or HOARDER (I blame that tv show) – a label which seems to fall between meth lab operator & terrorist.” I suspect we’re in a cultural phase in which the media are constantly on the lookout for eccentricities they can demonize, and then use to sell papers or attract audiences. Perhaps the Crazy Cat Ladies will be next; I’ve already seen ASPCA newsletters asserting that it’s practically impossible for one person to take proper care of a dozen cats at once, so that having more than that in the house constitutes de facto cruelty to animals. (Hmm, but some eccentricities are made

loveable, like being a family of bearded Southern bigots who manufacture duck calls. Go figure.)

ICONOCLAST (Joel Nelson): (çme) “Christian hymns translated into the Cherokee language... described on the album blurbs as ‘traditional Cherokee songs.’ so that it wouldn’t scare people away.” Oh? There’s an extensive market for Christian music (Christian pop, gospel, much of country music). I daresay you’ll find far fewer people scared off by Christian music than by traditional Amerindian music—unless, of course, it’s been misrepresented as something other than what it is, by people who don’t include truthfulness in the Christian virtues they practice. *// “[My snow blower] ran out of gas. I refilled the gas tank, but the fuel hose came lose. Before I realized that, I kept trying to start the blower and keep it going until the pull start cord broke.” Should’a’ called Click and Clack. Can the start cord be replaced? *// “My right ankle nowadays makes me use a bicycle when delivering the newsletters. This was a kneesaver this month because many driveways had big, thick patches of ice that would have caused me to slip and damage my knees had I been walking instead.” I’d’a’ thought the risk of the bike skidding and damaging a whole bunch of your body parts would be a greater danger. Can you do anything to improve your right ankle?

OH ME OH MY, LOVE THAT COUNTRY PI: We math majors have of course been celebrating Pi Day on the 14th of March (3.14) for many years now. I’d figured it was too much of a geek thing to get commercialized, and I was probably right. But early this month, I started receiving mail (both postal and e-) from my alma mater, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, or RPI, with the last two Roman letters in the logo replaced with the Greek letter, entreating me to celebrate Pi Day by making a financial contribution to my beloved Rπ. So I guess I’ll log on to the school’s Web site on Friday and make a donation of \$3.14. I wonder if I can send the money out of my PiPal account...

We appear to be on for Lunacon; I probably won’t be traveling out of town much after that until Contata 7, the 24th Annual Northeast Filk Music Convention, which will be held in the Hyatt Morristown in New Jersey on 20–22 July 2014 <www.contata.org>. Thank whatever ghods may be for Daylight Saving Time, savor each additional Fahrenheit degree, and watch for robins (and batmen, too).



(The Argyle Sweater by Scott Hilburn, 8 February 2013)

>Portions of the preceding ain’t a-Marching any more. Or they wish they weren’t.<