

[BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN]

[#453] BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN has for a few months now been working on a major corporate rebranding—and is now finally getting past the habit of looking nervously over his shoulder for cowboys with cattle prods and red-hot irons. When not working at gunpoint, knifepoint or PowerPoint, he’s recovering at 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)). This is **Beyond the Fringefan #453**, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 13, #2 (e-APA-NYU #129) and others who say “Branding, you’re a fine job,” published February 2015 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. All uncredited material copyright ©2015 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD: My de facto employer, AllianceBernstein LP, asked all employees early last fall not to spread the word of the rebranding until the official unveiling on 20 January 2015, so I haven’t written about it here until now. No doubt it’s very meaningful to upper management, but to most of us in the trenches, it’s just meant a lot of work learning a bunch of new style rules and updating existing communications (written, audio-visual and Internet).



During the past few busy months I’ve thought about Winston Smith, feverishly rewriting all the old news to fit the new party line; but in fact the content has been unchanged. All we were doing was reformatting documents. There’s a new logo, which looks like a fraction in brackets. There are new fonts. There are new taglines (“Ahead of Tomorrow”). And there are a flood of new formatting details: new color schemes (I wasn’t too good at dealing with those); presentation titles in ALL CAPS; chart headlines left-aligned instead of centered; plus signs to be used as bullets; company name now to be abbreviated consistently as AB instead of scrupulously spelled out; daggers instead of double asterisks for the second footnote on a page; and on and on. One of the silly parts is that many of the documents we worked on through the fall had never been copyedited or proofread to begin with, and we were instructed *not* to correct any of the convoluted sentence structure, inconsistent usage, and cringeworthy grammar, but only to make sure everything followed the new style templates. (We *were* allowed to correct actual misspellings.)

Everyone in my group and quite a few other people involved in communications came in on M.L. King Day in spite of the holiday, to deal with last-minute fixes. Now the new logo has now been put up on the



(Real Life Adventures by Wise and Aldrich,
18 October 2012)

building—not to mention on the T-shirts, umbrellas, new ID cards and pieces of cake we were all issued—and a ton of press releases sent out, and presumably a Brand New Day has dawned for the company. Rah! (It should be emphasized that the rebranding work isn't finished and won't be finished for months to come, but will—we hope!—settle down to a more measured pace as the documents we've already converted become templates for new ones, and the writers and production people become more comfortable with the new formats.)

DOCTOR MY EYES: Donna has now had the cataract surgery in both eyes, meaning she's looking out through artificial lenses. Our regular optometrist, Dr. E., will soon be examining her and ordering some new glasses—probably progressive multifocals not unlike mine (until recently, she wore bifocals for general use and single-focus ones for the computer)—but in the meantime, she's muddling through with +2.75 reading glasses from a 99¢ store.

[FRINGE RECEPTION]: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 13, #1 (e-APA-NYU #128)

ICONOCLAST (Joel Nelson): (çme) “Emblem Health’ is currently my dental HMO.” Since getting Donna signed up, we’ve learned that Emblem is the product of the merger of GHI and HIP. HIP was a proto-HMO going back to the 1940s, and I was covered by it under my parents’ plan in the 1960s and under my own in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Neither Donna nor I remember being very impressed (though Donna and Ethan somehow survived their care during pregnancy and delivery). /*/ “The challenge is often finding a way to make the second look at a piece of work different from the first, so that one catches things one missed the first time.’ This is like adding numbers from the bottom up the second time around.” Exactly! It’s kind of hard to edit from the bottom up, though. Some of the things I’ve done are editing on paper once and on screen the second time; switching from Print Layout view to Draft view in MS Word; and switching from Final view to Show Markup view. Some editors suggest changing the fonts or the margins between readings. /*/ Your Green Christmas (free from snow, which I’ll endorse) is rather different from the “Green Chri\$tmã\$” Stan Freberg parodied in his 1958 single (which most radio stations, bowing to advertiser pressure, declined to play). /*/ Can you do a full job of shaving in the five minutes that the “quick charge” on your new shaver gives you? I guess you learn to if you need to.

JANUARY SUB-ORBITAL DENOMINATION:
2015 (Ariel Cinī): “I saw *The Interview* on

GooglePlay, and the North Koreans didn’t come and get me.” Would you have bothered seeing it if the hacking and threats hadn’t made it a hundred times more famous than it would have been on its own merits? I’m still leaning in the direction of believing that Rogen had it all planned. /*/ “I felt de-energised [at Philcon] and couldn’t find my indoor voice, so it sounded horrible much at the con except for my book reading and the filk events. That turns out to be a chronic leftover from the mini-stroke that happened in place of going to WorldCon in London.” If that was the cause, can you retrain yourself to develop a new one? (Can one of those half-dozen people in your head go to work on the problem?) /*/ Condolences on your travails with IKEA and the piece you bought from it that broke. Your tale of woe is the sort of thing that’s in the back of my mind anytime I contemplate buying anything large and/or expensive: something going wrong the day after the warranty expires, and then something goes wrong with each attempt to fix it, so that it costs several days’ work (and several days’ wages) to get it set right. It’s a marvel I make any large purchases at all (though somehow I do).

WAKING UP THIS SIDE OF THE GROUND (Deb Wunder): Or waking up at all. /*/ (çme) “Another thought: one could always sacrifice the computer itself to the gods - fire is a pretty good way of destroying things, last I looked.” A lot of computer parts don’t burn well, though sufficient heat can surely do damage. Yet hard disks and

flash memory are surprisingly resilient; there are companies that specialize in recovering data from hard drives that have been damaged in a wide variety of ways. It isn't cheap, so the value of the service depends on the value and the irreplaceability of the data on the damaged media.



(Tina's Groove by Rina Piccolo, 13 March 2014)

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):

I'm pretty sure the only context in which I'd heard of Virna Lisi prior to her obituary was in an old Don Adams "Would you believe..." routine. "Would you believe it, I had dinner with Raquel Welch! ...Would you believe lunch with Virna Lisi? ...How about pie with Soupy Sales?" /*/ I had no idea that Brooklyn College's teams were called the Bulldogs. The college's Web site offers no clue as to why. (Do they ever play against Yale?) /*/ "...the only spare bulb I had, a 38-W CFL, which claimed to be the equivalent of 90-W." That's odd; generally the 13W and 23W CFLs claim to be replacement for 60W and 100W incandescents, respectively. At that rate a 38W CFL ought to correspond to about a 150W incandescent. But I've found that the CFLs being sold at dollar stores often are labeled with odd wattages and equivalences, whose relation to the amount of light they actually provide is purely coincidental. /*/ "Silly, I know, but the word 'lumen' always makes me think of 'lupine' and Python's 'Dennis Moore' sketch." Sillier, it makes me think of the bovine digestive system. /*/ Um, the Word file you submitted for the hard-copy edition was missing some of the inserted photos you mentioned. /*/ "we didn't get to see the exhibit on the Verrazano Bridge's 50th anniversary." Considering the effort Robert Moses put in to prevent the bridge from ever accommodating transit, I'm surprised the Transit Museum even had such an exhibit. /*/ (¢Osband) "The video gave the carrier's [INTREPID] nickname as 'the Fighting I'; rather, it was 'the Decrepid', as it was hit so many times." No doubt it had both nicknames and others as well,

depending on when and by whom it was being discussed. In 24 years of active duty you can pick up a lot of nicknames, both affectionate and mocking. /*/ (¢me) "Look some time at a post-treatment report of charges (fortunately labeled 'not a bill') for fees that rate scientific notation." I have, many times, going back 20 years to my mother's last half-decade; my brother-in-law and I spent many fun evenings deciphering her reams of Medicare and GHI statements. (Good practice for now, I guess.) Amazing the difference between what the doctors and hospitals bill and what they willingly accept from Medicare as reasonable and customary charges—often a factor of 10 or more. /*/ "It does seem odd that when you had a fulltime job and a strict apa deadline, you got your zines done on time." Textbook case of Parkinson's Law. It may be relevant that in those days, I often stayed at work past midnight on the night before collation, getting my zine and the APA-NEWS finished and reproed—I was younger and better able to cope with sleep deprivation. It may also be relevant that the 'Net provided a lot fewer distractions then. /*/ "Do not meddle in the affairs of amphibians, for they are crunchy and good with peaches." /*/ "Have you heard back from Ivan?" Well, he's sent back thanks each time I've sent him a batch of scans of old SEK3 zines. (That's been subject to availability of time and a working scanner.) /*/ I think the only time the BPL takes book donations is the semiannual collection event, and that's only at the central library at Grand Army Plaza. /*/ (¢Nelson) "Yes, a coordinated potluck sounds oxymoronic, isn't spontaneous (not knowing which people & what food will be there is part of the charm) or 'fannish'..." Telling each person exactly what to bring might not be spontaneous, but that isn't what Lisa's been doing. She's been doing something I've often seen before in potluck situations: steering people in the direction of particular courses (A brings something with meat, and B brings a vegetable dish, and C brings a starch...). Ideally, each person's assignment is suited to hiser special preference or talents. "Who cares if there are 3 desserts?" No one, unless that's all the food there is. Many people care if there's no protein, or if the only available refreshments are likely to put them in a diabetic coma.

We've undertaken a couple of technological replace-and-upgrades around the Cadre recently. In the fall, the 15-year-old 25" CRT TV in the living room stopped responding to signals from any remote

control—this would not be a big deal for me, but with Donna’s limited mobility, getting out of the chair and schlepping across the room is no longer trivial—so we acquired a Samsung 32" LED HD TV (hardly any taller because of the wider aspect ratio). Then the decade-old inkjet printer/scanner in the front office—which hadn’t printed right in a couple of years—quit scanning as well. I’d been growing dissatisfied with the notion of a color inkjet for a while; if you don’t do much color printing, the color ink cartridges dry out long before they can get used up. It turns out that there are now color laser printers (laser toner doesn’t dry out) available for the home office for under \$300—I lucked into one from Staples for under \$160 including tax. So we now have a new scanner and a decade-old monochrome laser printer in the front office, the color laser printer in my room... and several hundred dollars’ worth of VISA bill due this month. (Well, the best things in life are free, but you can leave ’em to the birds and bees.) But it’s worth it to be able to work from home when the governor closes down the subways and the mayor instructs all nonessential personnel not to travel.

We in The City appear to have dodged the bullet fired by the Great Blizzard of January 2015. It behooves us to remember that there are six more weeks of winter ahead (irrespective of what any burrowing rodents may augur) and not to fall into a false sense of security. Be strong and courageous!

>Portions of the preceding run the gamut from A to B.<



(Speed Bump by Dave Coverly, circa 1998)