



## BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN [#454]

**BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN** wishes this snowy season would hurry up and finish; it would be sweetish to be able to walk outside without wearing those clunky waterproof boots. But does the weather ask his advice? Nor way. Oh, well, at least he gets a couple of work-from-home days out of it, so he can sit in front of his laptop with his coffee and danish, and work on this zine 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** #454, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 13, #3 (e-APA-NYU #130) and others with whom these dumb puns will get him in dutch, published March 2015 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. In case it's germane to the discussion, the cartoon above is from *Frazz* by Jef Mallett, 5 February 2011. All uncredited material copyright ©2015 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.

**FACE ON THE CUTTING-ROOM FLOOR:** You can tell that the rebranding is complete at old AB (previously known as AllianceBernstein): they've now decided that they have to cut costs (presumably to make up for all the extra spending that the whole operation entailed). The extra people hired expressly for the rebranding, who knew their gig was time-limited, have long since moved on to other things.

My boss, Charmae, told us a few weeks ago to be prepared for a possible cutback on hours in the near future (which, since everyone working for Charmae is a freelancer paid on an hourly basis, means correspondingly less pay). The initial proposal was for us all to work seven-hour rather than eight-hour days during the quarterly peak months—that would reduce my total hours (and pay) for the year by about 5%, and it didn't take long after Charmae told us about it before I was reconciled to the idea (especially if it meant I could sleep an hour later).

Apparently someone a couple of levels above Charmae decided heesh had a better idea, because on the last Thursday of February, my coworker Andrea came back from an afternoon meeting and informed me that she'd just been told it was her last day at AB. I offered my sympathies, as did several other people who stopped by her desk over the next hour while she packed up her stuff. (It's only been four years since I received a similar notification with similar lack of warning one Monday afternoon at W+K, so I knew a little about how it feels.)

Over the next day or so I learned that a few other people on the floor (but no other proofreaders) had also been let go. Losing Andrea was a shock, though, because she'd been here the longest—seven years to my three—and had been taking on the most responsibility in the group. I don't know the logic that went into this decision, but I'll miss her.

**PRESBYOPIA IN DISGUISE, WITH GLASSES:** Donna now has her new prescription glasses; she went for ordinary bifocals after all, rather than progressive multifocals. This choice may be related to her having asked me how long it takes to get used to progressives; I told her, based on my actual experience fifteen years ago, that the doctors all tell you it'll take a day or two, but it took me three months until floors and walls stopped looking curved.

**AN OBSTRUCTION OF BUREAUCRATS:** I wrote in November, "The next hurdle will be the first time Donna visits a doctor or gets a prescription filled in January." Both of those hurdles have been navigated successfully, but Emblem threw us a couple of curves in mid-February. We got a letter informing us that Dr. H., Donna's PCP, would no longer be part of the network as of 25 March, and the next day we got a letter informing us that Donna's second cataract surgery (which was done on 5 January) was not covered because the ophthalmological practice hadn't gotten it precertified. (That's bureaucratic certification, not medical certification; it was getting medically certified for the second surgery that pushed it into the new year rather than letting us get it done before the end of December.) Interestingly, these two letters bore different logos (Emblem and HIP), return addresses, and customer-service phone numbers.

A call to Dr. H.'s office revealed that he was not in fact getting thrown off Emblem's network; this was an error on Emblem's part apparently engendered by someone's misconstruing the notification of the retirement of Dr. S., Dr. H.'s partner in the practice, last spring. Dr. H. has informed Emblem that he plans to remain in practice, and Emblem (when we called the phone number in that letter) noted it on our files that Donna's visits to him remain covered.

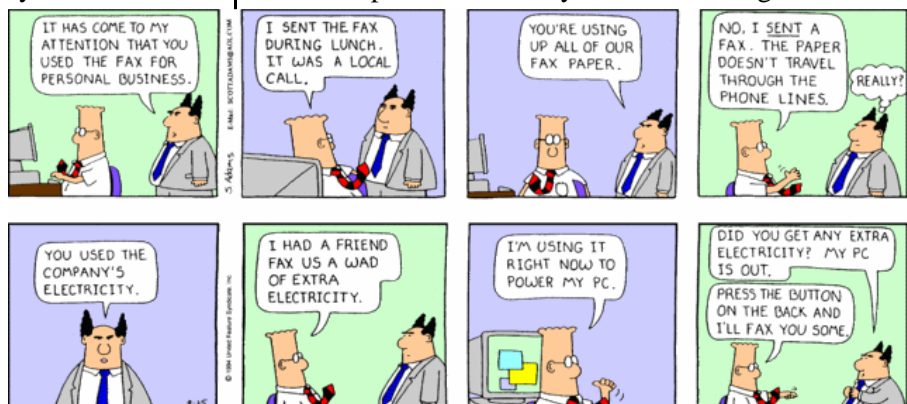
The issue of the cataract surgery may take a bit longer to resolve, but Emblem assured us that we won't be liable for any of it. We gave the ophthalmology people all of Donna's updated information in plenty of time before the turn of the year, so it was their responsibility to jump through Emblem's hoops to get the precertification done (as they had previously done with UnitedHealthcare). Thus Emblem says they have no right to bill us for the cost of the surgery. We'll see what we hear back from them. **Follow-Up:** Over the subsequent weekend, we received another statement from Emblem, confirming that it had paid the anesthesiologist's bill for that same eye surgery. Go figure.

## FRINGE RECEPTION: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 13, #2 (e-APA-NYU #129)

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

If the new group using the Lunarians name is as poorly organized as you claim, it'll be interesting to see what kind of con it puts on a year from now. /\*/ (¢hard-copy cover)  
 "Well, the months & issue numbers of the 2 volumes match up now. Was that your secret plan behind the delayed e-disties?" No, though it occurred to me that the late collations made the covers more temporally apt. But missing another month now would be disastrous. /\*/ (¢APA-NEWS)  
 "I ate once in a Tel Aviv restaurant nominally owned by Mandy Rice-Davies." Let me guess: the menu included Mandy Davies rice. [b'dum-bum!] /\*/  
 "NYUSFS meetings almost make the In

Memoriam list." Not until we stop meeting on the Ferry. /\*/ (¢me) "wasting company electricity"? Did they make you shut down the computer whenever you weren't using it for



(Dilbert by Scott Adams, 25 April 1994)

company business? /\*/ Sorry, I explained "HRA" in my October zine after I first learned about it, but haven't repeated the definition since. It stands

for Health Reimbursement Account. Up till now, as an employment and then as a retirement benefit, JPMChase has offered me and Donna health coverage at a lower price than we'd be paying in the market, by paying part of the cost directly to the insurance company. For Donna's share now (and for my share once I go on Medicare in 2017), JPMChase deposits that amount of money into this account instead, so I pay the insurance company the full market price for each month's installment. Then I apply to get that expense reimbursed out of the account, until it runs out sometime in mid-year. I'm sure there are accounting or tax reasons why this makes sense for JPMChase. \*/ "Max," said a family AK, 'a good Jewish name. I'm surrounded by Jeffreys!' Jeffrey (originally Geoffrey) is a French-Norman name, but I've known more Jeffreys who were Jewish than who weren't. And how about Irving? That's a Scottish name, but how many non-Jews does either of us know who go by it? \*/ (Wunder) "Musicians seem to love all music, a far broader range of appreciation than their fans have. It's why Dylan could team with Johnny Cash and Kanye with Sir Paul." It may have been part of how rock'n'roll got started, as country/western and R&B musicians backed one another up and traded influences. \*/ (self)



(Off the Mark by Mark Parisi, circa 1999)

"From a meme on Facebook: 'After I drink coffee I like to show the empty mug to the IT guy to tell him that I've successfully installed Java. He hates me.'" It's an old joke (between 15 and 20 years). \*/ The MTA doesn't use the

IRT, BMT and IND designations in public communications anymore, so fewer and fewer people will have any idea what they mean. Since the BMT and IND systems use compatible equipment, and

many routes now comprise track from both, the distinction between them has lost a lot of meaning. (The MTA mostly uses "A Division" for the IRT tracks and equipment and "B Division" for the BMT and IND these days.)

ICONOCLAST (Joel Nelson): (me) "my insurance decided that starting in 2015 I should go to a drug store instead of a supermarket for my drugs." Mine decided the same thing in 2012 or so; turns out the drug coverage component (Caremark) was owned by a drugstore company (CVS). But Donna's new insurance does not impose a similar restriction. \*/ "I attended a jazz vespers.... a jazz piano player, playing the piano, obviously, but also talking about how much or how little uncertainty people preferred in the jazz they listened to." If the pianist is accompanying hymns, I'd think you'd want minimal uncertainty. It's hard to keep singing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" while the pianist is veering off into an extended improvisation on "Drop-Kick Me, Jesus, Through the Goalposts of Life." \*/ "I quickly got used to hobbling [with a broken bone in the left foot]. I taught myself to lead with the right foot going up stairs and with the left one going down." When Donna was hobbling after hip surgery, the mnemonic she learned was "Good goes to heaven; bad goes to hell." Congratulations on your successful healing.

SEX\* AS A MEMORY (Ariel Cinii): "I've been... waiting for a hundred thousand total strangers to goto Amazon.com and buy up copies of *The Telepaths' Song*, *The Touching Lands' Dance*, *The Organized Seer* and/or *The Family Forge* by Ariel Cini." May it be so. \*/ "I also celebrated nine years of celibacy." Celebrated? Congratulations or condolences, as seem appropriate.

...AND HIDING UNDER MY ELECTRIC BLANKET (Deb Wunder): Makes sense to me. Going out only when necessary in this weather can be a highly rational course of action. Pity I don't get to work from home more. Fortunately, temps in the 40s and even a 50-degree day or two are predicted for the first half of March. Hope!

And hope is what I'll leave you all with as we keep slogging through the slush. Be sure to turn your clocks forward and enjoy the extra daylight while we wait for our teeth to stop chattering. See you next month. Peace and long life (and farewell, Leonard Nimoy, patron saint of geeks everywhere)!

>Portions of the preceding are dreaming of a white Purim.<