

# beyond the fringefan

[#457]

**BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN** isn't trending on social media—or if he is, he doesn't know about it because he never logs on to them long enough to find out. He's being anti-social right now (see last month's closing disclaimer for further information) 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)), so don't try to write on his wall or he'll call the Information Police. This is **Beyond the Fringefan** #457, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 13, #6 (e-APA-NYU #133) and other friendsters, published June 2015 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, 17 April 2015. All uncredited material copyright ©2015 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.



**I HEAR YOU SINGING IN THE WIRE—I CAN HEAR YOU THROUGH THE WHINE:** I should have figured that any project that involved the cooperation of Verizon would not run smoothly (or cheaply). Someone from Verizon came by in early May to install our “dry loop” connection using one of the old phone jacks—he did all his work on the outside wiring and never actually entered the house to test the connection at the jack. When I plugged the DSL modem into the jack later in the day so that Ace Innovative’s tech guy could test it, he reported that it was functioning, but weakly—not enough signal strength to run full DSL service.

This necessitated a return visit from Verizon, in which the tech confirmed that the signal was fine at the point where the wire entered the house, but weak at the jack. That was as far as he would go; Verizon isn't responsible for diagnosing or maintaining our inside wiring. What's particularly galling (even though I no longer have a gallbladder) is that until just about a month ago, I'd been paying Verizon a few extra bucks a month to cover inside-wire maintenance, in anticipation of just this sort of scenario...but that ended as of the day we switched the main Cadre line to VoIP. Isn't that special?

There was nothing left for it but to pay a technician to find and fix the problem with our inside wiring to that jack. Ace was willing to send one of its people out for about a third of what Verizon would charge (and I'd trust the Ace guy more), but by the time we could agree on a date that wouldn't require me to give up a day of work, it was the first of June. So Eugene from Ace came by at the

appointed time and, rather than try to diagnose the problem with the existing inside wire, simply ran a new inside wire from the back wall (where the line enters the house) to the front office (where the DSL modem and the router have been for a decade).

So now we're where we thought we'd be a month ago, getting our DSL service using a dry-loop connection, and waiting for Verizon and Ace to switch the old "office" number to the VoIP, whereupon we can (really, no shit) stop paying too much good money to Verizon.

**I CAN SEE ALL OBSTACLES IN MY WAY:** We continue to learn the fine details of the American health-care delivery system the hard way. Donna got a new pair of glasses in March as follow-up to her eye surgeries in December and January; Dr. E., our optometrist, said that Medicare covers a pair of new glasses in such a situation. Then a month later, he sent us a bill, saying Medicare had refused to cover it. Why? Well, the new plan Donna's been on (since we spent weeks trying to figure it all out last fall) is not a "Medigap" plan like her old coverage under my JPM retiree plan, but a "Medicare Advantage" plan. It functions as an HMO, meaning it pays nothing for practitioners who are out of its network.

Prior to last New Year's, Medicare was officially Donna's primary coverage, and the Medigap was her secondary coverage, filling in the gaps left uncovered by Medicare (hence the name). But one of the things no one told us is that when you have a Medicare Advantage plan, that plan becomes your primary coverage, effectively replacing rather than supplementing Medicare. (Presumably, Medicare passes your Medicare premiums on to the Advantage plan for its troubles; but that's a can of worms I don't think I need or want to know any more about.)

So even though Medicare would otherwise have covered the new glasses, it doesn't, because Emblem is Donna's health plan. And Emblem doesn't cover them, because Dr. E. isn't in Donna's network under Emblem. Medicare doesn't have a problem with that. Now we know who's being taken Advantage of.



(Non Sequitur by Wiley, 9 January 2012)

Now, we are also paying a company called VSP (whose network Dr. E. *is* in) for vision coverage, and had we known about this Medicare wrinkle, we could have applied to VSP for coverage of the new glasses—but VSP won't approve them now because its protocols call for pre-approval only. So the tuition for our newest lesson in health-care economics has been the cost of one pair of glasses.

As often happens, when we think we have medical troubles, a bunch of stuff happens to our friends to remind us that we ain't seen nothin' much at all. Our best wishes go out to Toni Lay, recovering in upstate Manhattan from not one but two strokes; Mark Blackman, who went to see his cardiologist last week and two days later underwent a quadruple bypass; and Josh Kronengold, now home from a hospital visit engendered by a seizure of (pending further tests) undetermined origin.

**fringe reception:** Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 13, #5 (e-APA-NYU #132)

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):  
 “using Marc’s & Abby’s style, he’d be Dr. .l, or Alif.” Not unless he only writes his name in his native language, rather than transliterating it into the Roman alphabet. (The doctor I share with Deb is Russian, but I don’t refer to him by his Cyrillic initial.) /\*/ “Delany convulsed the audience by sharing a bad, & bombastically condemning, review of the book [*Through the Valley of the Nest of Spiders*] that excoriated it for its ‘outrageously gratuitous sex’ (citing among its perverse proclivities drinking from condoms & ‘nude nose-picking’).” Um, does that mean Delany asserts that those activities *don’t* appear in the book? /\*/ What is “Kaminisky” that you said was discussed at the April FISTFA? /\*/ “‘American PharOAh’ is misspelled.” It’s pronounced “Throatwobbler Mangrove.” Are you getting a feeling of déjà vu here? The name was selected from submissions in a social-media contest, and there seems to be some dispute as to who transposed the letters. As the submitter of the winning entry remarked, “Horses can’t spell,



### Celebrity horse mixers

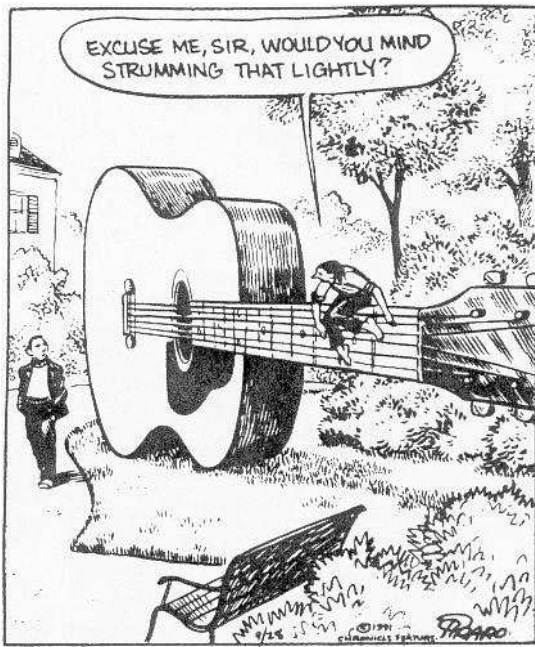
(Rubes by Leigh Rubin, 1 September 2009)

anyway.” But even if the horse were a person, isn’t a person’s name spelled the way that person chooses to spell it? Should Justice Harry Blackmun have had to change the spelling of his last name to match yours? Which one of us has to re-spell his first name, you or I? /\*/ (¢Cinī)  
 “Subway ridership is way up (as crowded trains & buses show), so theoretically the MTA is raking it in and didn’t need to increase the fare.

Theoretically.” Um, no; city transit operating costs have gone up much faster than fares, and the subways have required subsidies since the 1950s. If more riders mean more trains are running, then greater subsidies are required. (It should be noted that perhaps if the MTA had at some point stopped to reorganize its management rather than maintaining intact the bureaucracies of the half-dozen or more organizations incorporated into it in 1968, it could have improved efficiency and saved a lot of money.) What I haven’t been able to find out is how the current state and city subsidies per ride compare with their levels in the 1960s. /\*/ (¢me) Back in ’87, a couple of weeks after we declared NY-CADRE to be our telephone mnemonic, Ozzie pointed out to me that it also spelled out MY-BAD-SF. I never forgave myself for not having noticed that on my own; still, I think “the Cadre” makes a better name for the household. /\*/ (¢AHODR) Oh, come off it. Why single out the Ancient & Honourable Order of the Drowned Rat? Fandom and groups like it are full of sub-sects that glory in their ironically obscure titles and rituals. Explaining the Order’s obscurities is no more difficult than explaining the categories of Hogu awards, or the differences between Fifth and Sixth Fandoms. And I say this with all the authority vested in me as Herbangelist High Priest for Brooklyn; Lunatic Fringe of the *Illuminatus!* Nut Cult; Discordian Pope Leo the Cowardly; Chas Clone #70½; Lick Thighspreader of the GetHigh Knights; and a victim of a heresy trial of the True Faith of the Sacred Cat, Mota of Mars. Not to mention, of course, the e-S.A.A.C. and the former O.S.A.A.&C.

SEX\* ON VIDEOTAPE (Ariel Cinī): Suspicion of glaucoma, latent tuberculosis, potential osteoporosis... sounds like a list the Department of Homeland Security might compile when trying to justify a warrant for surveillance. My condolences to you, and especially to your wallet.

ICONOCLAST (Joel Nelson): “Two generations after my father’s one there are still folk having trouble finding their way around Coldbrook.” Even with GPS and the ready availability of Google Maps? Surprising. But folk indeed like maps. I remember enlarging Brooklyn maps using the photocopiers at work so that I could paste on labels calling out the locations of my home and the nearest subway stops and



(Bizarro by Dan Piraro, 28 September 1991)

highways, to accompany printed directions. (The version for the last few BeyondtheCons is still on the side of the wardrobe in my room.) /\*/ (¢Cinīī) ““Moxie®”? That still exists?” Yep, especially in New England, which is why one can find it at Boskones and Arisias. For unexplained reasons, Freebird Books in Gowanus, Brooklyn, site of the Fall 2014 Shikar of the Ancient & Honourable Order of the Drowned Rat, also sells it. /\*/ ““pair of E-strings’ Aha, a 12-string one, right?” No, Abby’s mandolin has the standard eight strings, tuned as pairs in four tones. /\*/ (¢Blackman) ““the US progressed faster and overtook ex-Great Britain as a world power by dropping ‘u’ from ‘honour,’ ‘colour,’ etc. and ‘me’ from ‘programme.’ So that’s how it happened!” Imagine how much further we’d progress if only we would start using lifts to get to our flats instead of elevators to our apartments.

Late again, in spite of best intentions. I’ll get this thing submitted and then go tune up for ConCertino, the 25<sup>th</sup> Northeast Filk Music Convention, in Boxborough, Massachusetts, the third weekend of June—about the only travel outside the metropolitan area I have planned for this spring and summer. For those who don’t make it up there, I’ll hope to see youse on the Ferry on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July. A happy Solstice to all!

>Portions of the preceding didn’t invent the subjunctive mood, but they wish they had.<