

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN

[#466]

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN has been doing pretty much the same thing almost every month for 42 years now, but evades the criteria for insanity by not actually expecting any results. You can find him at his keyboard, as usual, at the N.Y. Cadre (1088 East 40th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11210 (☎(718) NY-CADRE; 📧↔️ nycadre [at] acedsl [dot] com; 🌐http://www [dot] nycadre [dot] org)), still trying to think of something clever to say; you can even send him a comment (via electronic or postal mail) to help pad out his page count.

This is **Beyond the Fringefan** #466, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 14, #4 (e-APA-NYU #142) and other creatures of habit, published April 2016 (the 42nd anniversary of APA-NYU) as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above from *XKCD* by Randall Munroe, 20 March 2016. All uncredited material copyright ©2016 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.



I've been having a few glitches with the alum.rpi.edu mail drop—e-mails not being forwarded but simply vanishing, and the tech people at rpi.edu denying that such a thing could possibly happen—so I believe I'll be switching back, over the near future, to using the acedsl address directly (as listed in the colophon). People should update their contact lists at their leisure; no rush, since I won't be closing the alum.rpi.edu account.

ANYBODY GOT A BIT O' MONEY, ANYBODY GOT A BIT O' MONEY?: Things seem to be settling down again after a hectic March (unsettled by more travel than I usually do in a month). I was worried we wouldn't get our taxes done on time, but thanks to yeoman service once again by Chris Quinones, it all got submitted over a week ahead of deadline. We now have to start making quarterly estimated-tax prepayments to New York but, surprisingly, not to the Feds. Other people have told me similar things, making me wonder if the state has something wrong in its withholding formulas.

We've gotten some of the boxes of books and Stuff out of the living and dining rooms and back into the basement, but we have quite a way to go yet. My attempts to find out the date of the Brooklyn Public Library's spring book drive have led me to the discovery that there doesn't seem to be one anymore; it's now an annual event held in the fall. Consequently, some of our load will probably be making its way to HousingWorks soon; what that organization won't take can probably wait until October.

We've also found some old board games we've decided we don't need, with titles like Probe, Darkover, Kensington, Vegas, Q*Bert [yes, a board game!], Inner Circle, Demons, and Pick-Up ["The Swinging Singles Bar Scene Wrapped in a Box"]. I don't recall playing any of those even when we used to do Games Nights. Anyone interested in giving these a home, or shall I put them up on Freecycle?

POST HASTE: I can recall announcing a dozen times or more in the pages of APA-NYU, over its 30 years of dead-tree distribution, that the U.S. Postal Service was raising its rates. This, I believe, is a first: as of 10 April, the USPS has *lowered* its rate for first-class postage, from 49¢ for the first ounce (which has been the rate for the past two years) to 47¢. (It turns out this was required by an agreement the USPS made with Congress when it last raised the rate.) A few years ago, such an announcement would have been ballyhooed all over the place, but I’ve heard barely a word about it. Perhaps it’s that the USPS was losing money even at the higher rate, and the rollback will only accelerate the hemorrhage. Perhaps it’s that increased attention might lead people to notice that the USPS quietly relaxed its standards for delivery time of first-class mail last year. Or perhaps it’s just that so many people use the mails so seldom anymore that the organization is faintly embarrassed that it has to remind them that it’s still there. [UPDATE: It’s a first for me, but not for postal rates in this country. The Post Office Department dropped first-class rates from 3¢ to 2¢ back in 1919.]

YOU JUST SIT THERE LOOKING CUTE, AND WHEN SOMETHING MOVES...:

In my report last month, I forgot to mention one thing I found a bit disturbing in Chicago: a decal I saw on the front doors of several buildings, including the hotel where we were staying. It featured a silhouette of a handgun with a superimposed circle-and-slash. Apparently it’s been legal in Illinois for a couple of years now to carry a concealed firearm pretty much anywhere. A business can choose to prohibit such items on its premises, but only by explicitly posting a notice such as that decal. So it would seem that whenever I stepped out of that hotel, I was stepping into a concealed-carry zone. This did not make me feel particularly warm and fuzzy.



Wednesday 20 April, 7 am: Just heard the following on the WCBS radio news, spoken without a hint of irony: “A CBS News poll reports that 56% of Americans feel that marijuana should be legal. That is an all-time high.”

FRINGE RECEPTION: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 14, #3 (e-APA-NYU #141)

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

Is it possible that the woman who took your cell phone, after answering it the one time, either switched SIM cards, or sold it to someone else who then switched them, so that she had a new cell phone but on her own account? (This would make it much harder to trace what happened to the phone subsequently.) /*/ (¢APA-NEWS) “I should acknowledge APA-NEWS’ In Memoriam list as one source of the listing in the Lunacon Program Book.” And a significant number of the names in the APA-NEWS In Memoriam list come from the lists you send me each month, so what goes around comes around. /*/ (¢me) “Even in the hospital last June, I was allowed to take off my heart monitor to shower.” But you were probably wearing it for a lot longer than 24 hours, so they could afford to lose that half hour of monitoring. (I was pleased to find that this year’s model of monitor was significantly smaller

and lighter than the one I had to wear three years ago. Moore’s Law seems to be still working its magic.) /*/ “I tried Greek yogurt at Lunacon, and while it’s better than regular, it’s not twice as good.” As far as I’ve been able to find out, Greek yogurt differs from “traditional” yogurt (it needs a better retronym) only in that they strain out most of the liquid whey, leaving a product with greater density and viscosity. Same ingredients, same cultures, and (since the package size is usually around 10% smaller) pretty much the same nutritional value. Not worth the higher price, in my opinion, but the yogurt makers have the public believing it’s somehow a healthier product, so no doubt the higher prices are here to stay, and will percolate over to the non-Greek stuff as well. /*/ “Octarine” always sounded like a citrus fruit to me. The name would fit element 117 much better if it were the eighth element in its column of the periodic table, rather than the

sixth. (But of course there will probably never be a seventh, let alone an eighth.)

ICONOCLAST (Joel Nelson): (øme) “‘most of the hardcore fans consider Duck Tales non-canonical.’ Sounds like at least that fandom has become a religion. Sad.” Well, not necessarily. “Canon” has been used in nonreligious senses for centuries—which isn’t to say that there *aren’t* groups in fandom that behave like religions (not to mention the various parody religions and holy wars, going back to GhuGhu vs. FooFoo in the 1930s). /*/ (øBlackman) “This year (2016) will see buildings of a certain genre demolished and replaced by supermarkets.” Oh? What do you know that we don’t? /*/ Neil Young wrote “Old Man” at the age of 24 and some months (as in the lyric), after he bought himself a ranch in Northern California, and found that it came with a live-in caretaker named Louis (and his wife Clara). Young hasn’t said how old Louis was when they met, but Young is 70 now and would

certainly be entitled to sing the song from the old man’s viewpoint (well, better than hoping you die before you get old...).



(Speed Bump by Dave Coverly, 12 September 2013)

Did I mention that my lovely boss Charmae is now allowing me to work from home one day a week during the off-months (everything except January, April, July and October)? This saves me the time and money that the commute would otherwise require, and permits me to sleep an hour later. On the other hand, it makes it that much harder to readjust to the five-day weeks in the heavy months. Everything has its price.

So as the days start to lengthen and I try to get back into shape for bicycle commuting, I’ll wish a happy and unleavened Passover to those who celebrate it, a festive Beltane to those who celebrate it, and someplace to hide that’s well insulated from political advertising to all. See you in May.

>Portions of the preceding expect, over the next few days, to hear a lot of doves cry.<