



# BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN

**BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN** has lately been spending rather more of his time (and money) than he'd really like with auto mechanics, and will soon be spending rather more of his time (and money) than he'd really like with used-car salespeople (that would be any quantity greater than zero). Not for the first time, he's glad to live in a town where public transit makes it easier to get to one's job without than with the use of internal combustion. If you can catch a #2 train, you can find out for yourself by visiting him 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)). This is **Beyond the Fringefan** #469, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 14, #7 (e-APA-NYU #144) and other aspirants to upward mobility (or any other kind), published July 2016 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above from *Frank and Ernest* by Thaves, 23 September 2010. All uncredited material copyright ©2016 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.

**YOU TOUCH THE DISTANT BEACHES WITH TALES OF BRAVE ULYSSES:** Ten years ago next month, after we made a rather expensive purchase, I wrote in these pages of "the acquisition of a minivan they hope will last for a ten-year journey." Given that the vehicle in question is an Odyssey (by Honda), I was alluding to the time frame of the epic poem of that name (by Homer); but perhaps I should have asked for a longer term.

The CHECK ENGINE light on Daisy the minivan's dashboard has been clicking on repeatedly lately, accompanied by occasional hesitation and lurching from her transmission. Frankie the mechanic sent me to Ali the transmission guy about some of the codes generated by the car's computer. Ali replaced the transmission fluid a couple of times a few weeks apart, saying that the fluid was filthy, and added that using the air conditioning in Honda minivans puts extra stress on the transmission. (He didn't say what I could do about it, other than not use the a/c at precisely the times it's most needed.)

When the codes kept recurring, Frankie did some more research, and found a problem with clutch mechanisms on a number of Honda models Daisy's age; they wear down excessively fast, and the material that wears off them then clogs the transmission up. [This is a problem Honda knows about, and if I'd known about this in the first year or two we had Daisy, we might have gotten some free repairs, but the offer has long since expired.] Nothing can be done except to rebuild the transmission—an expensive job, and one we already had done a few years ago. Is it worth paying that kind of money again

to save a 15-year-old car from which we've already gotten 10 years of service? Frankie didn't think so; he suggested we start looking for a replacement.

Unfortunately, Daisy's state inspection expires at the end of July, so we need to get her to pass inspection one more time so we have a vehicle to drive while we try to select her successor. I'm trying a number of tactics recommended by Frankie to try to make the computer codes go away long enough to permit a pass.

In another (but much less pricey) matter of replacing something long accustomed, Donna's cell phone became dysfunctional last month, but it took a few days before she realized it: its sound-producing



(Real Life Adventures by Wise and Aldrich, 5 November 2015)

apparatus stopped working, and she just thought no one was calling her. (We still have a quasi-landline, and she was using that to make outgoing calls.) This was an eight-year-old flip phone, an LG 170; Donna has no interest in dealing with the learning curve to use a "smart" phone. (T-Mobile rejiggered its rate plans a couple of years ago, so unlike with some other cell providers, we weren't continuing to pay for the phone long past the point when it was fully paid for.)

Once we determined that the phone wasn't easily repairable, we tried to get a new phone from T-Mobile, and found that T-Mobile is now only offering one non-"smart" phone, an LG 450, and that's on back-order. We looked for that model online and found it at Best Buy, for half the price, which was good; problem was that most Best Buy stores in the area also showed it as back-ordered. By driving out to the Ceasar's [sic] Bay store in Bensonhurst—in what I still think of as the E.J. Korvette's shopping center on Bay Parkway—after work

the other Monday, I was able to pick up the last one in stock. We swapped the old SIM card in to the new phone, and voilà! It worked. The new phone is the same size and shape as the old and seems to work the same, so Donna's happy with it. Would that replacing a minivan were so easy and cheap.

## **FRINGE RECEPTION:** Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 14, #6 (e-APA-NYU #144)

AND...ONE MOTHER OF A SETBACK (Deb Wunder): Condolences regarding all this nastiness visited upon your body, not to mention the seven weeks (and counting) you've now been effectively incarcerated. Cabin fever is supposed to be for the winter! /\*/ I'm glad to hear that you're at least able to sit up again; being flat on one's back makes it difficult even to read books, much less surf the Web. /\*/ "Biopsy" is a frightening word to most of us because the only time we ever hear it is when cancer is suspected. If you had to have a spinal biopsy (which must have been painful), good that it was only to diagnose infection.

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):  
 "(why do office workers [in Texas] feel they have to wear cowboy hats & boots?)" Why do Brooklyn hipsters dress like lumberjacks? (And they're OK.) It's a voluntary uniform. /\*/ "a handful of Uzis wouldn't have changed the Civil War." Um, if that's in reference to Turtledove's *The Guns of the South*, which I'm in the middle of right now, it's not a "handful"; it's dozens of carloads of AK-47s, enough to equip pretty much every Confederate soldier. I find it plausible that that would have had some influence on the outcome. /\*/ "I replaced my long-expired ~NYPL~ card." Ten years ago I tried to do the same and was told I didn't need to; the NYPL

cross-registered my BPL card instead. Since then I've borrowed a couple of dozen books from the NYPL using my BPL card (including as recently as last week). I hope they haven't stopped that program. /\*/ (çme) I cheerfully accept being a square: at least I get to be perfect a few times in my life—at the ages of 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36, 49, 64, 81, and 100 (I should live so long). Moreover, 6 and 28 are called “perfect” numbers (a positive integer that is equal to the sum of its proper positive divisors), so I got to be perfect those times as well. /\*/ “Presumably the Russian banker at those poker games is an ante communist.” Nice one. I'd suggest you send it in

to Click and Clack if they were still doing new shows. (Difficult, what with Tom having died almost two years ago.) /\*/ (çCinī) “Btw, contrary to popular belief, the entire WIZARD OF OZ film was in color – Kansas is sepia.” One essay I read a few decades ago suggested that if they'd had the technology, the producers could have gone to color, as they did, when Dorothy arrives in Oz, but then gradually faded the color out as she comes to realize the place isn't so perfect—then gone to color again when she returns to Kansas with her new awareness that there's no place like home.

The Brooklyn Cyclones game (vs. the Aberdeen [Md.] IronBirds) some of us are attending in late July has been declared “Star Wars Night” per the team's Web site; I have little idea what that will actually mean, but as long as we get the traditional Saturday night fireworks after the game, I'll be satisfied. (The teams are currently tied for last place in their division, so clearly it isn't whether they win or lose....)



(Fox Trot by Bill Amend, 3 April 2016)

No, I'm afraid we won't be making it to Kansas City for Worldcon this year. —Oh, hey, I just discovered that one of the two bids for NASFiC next year is Valley Forge, Pennsylvania! That's certainly driveable (if we have something to drive in).

Stay cool and hydrated, and watch out for the heat dome (which is not the Cone of Silence). See you next month.

>Portions of the preceding will no longer be feeling Wobegon on Saturday nights.<