



Beyond the Fringefan

[#498] **BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN** hasn't gone out to see a horror film (or any other kind) in a long time, for reasons having more to do with stinginess, noisy crowds, and closed captioning than social distancing, but he can't deny that life is pretty scary these days. Some may define "these days" as "the past three and a half years," and he won't argue the point, but seeing everyone on the streets and in the stores wearing masks does have a way of bringing it home. He's bringing it home to 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)), and sanitizing it and washing his hands, and hoping he lives to enjoy the retirement he's been working toward, and maybe even get to go out and do stuff occasionally with unconstrained breathing. Meanwhile, this is **Beyond the Fringefan** #498, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 18, #3 (e-APA-NYU #174) and other horripilators, published April 2020 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above from *Pearls Before Swine* by Stephan Pastis, 20 January 2020. All uncredited material copyright ©2020 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.

KEEPING BUSY: I've had none of the commonly aired complaints this month about being stuck at home with nothing to do; I've been among the fortunate ones whose jobs allow us to work from home, so that's what I've been doing. And April has always been one of our four heavy months of the year at the company where I've worked since 2012—when all the quarter-end reports and presentations get prepared so that the portfolio managers can snow clients and prospects with how well (or, in this case, how not as badly as the market in general) our funds have performed in the past three months. That means we all work full time instead of splitting up the weeks.

This time, things were complicated not only by the new people in Nashville taking the primary responsibility for all the tasks (because next quarter-end, none of the New York proofreaders will still be on the job), but also by our having to do all our editing on screen, rather than printing everything out, marking it up on paper, and then scanning it back in. (**neep-neep alert** We've been editing most of the

non-quarter-end work on screen for a while, but PowerPoint presentations don't lend themselves to onscreen editing—there's no "Track Changes" mode as there is in Word. We have to convert the decks to PDF form and then use the Adobe Comment feature. **end neep-neep alert**) So for me, the days have been full. And even though I'm saving an hour's commute each way, my time when not signed on to work has been full too, thanks to the recent appearance of constrained occupancy limits at supermarkets and pharmacies, and the resulting waits on queues just to get inside.

Not that I'm complaining; I know how many folks would give a valued bodily part right now to still have a steady income. But I don't seem to be doing the binge-watching or -reading that's become the running meme of this episode in our history. So don't ask me about what's been happening in *Tiger King*.

The Kid has recently been occupying his time at home honing his skills with a sewing machine, making masks for friends and family to facilitate their following of safety recommendations. The one he made for me used repurposed bedsheets printed with *Star Wars* images. Fandom Is a Way of Life Preservation. (Have I mentioned that we're proud of him?) Regrettably, I've yet to find any variety of face covering that doesn't fog up one's glasses and get one's nose running after 15 or 20 minutes of wear.

Fringe Reception: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 18, #2 (e-APA-NYU #173)

[Erratum: I neglected to update this subheader last issue. It was comments to Volume 18, #1 (e-APA-NYU #172), *not* Volume 17, #6 (e-APA-NYU #170).]

ICONOCAST (Joel Nelson): "I compared the weight my bathroom scale showed with what the one in my doctor's office did, and determined that my bathroom scale was showing a half pound more than the doctor's one. So now I weigh myself at home and subtract a half pound." The readings I get from my bathroom scale are about five pounds less than those at the doctor's office,



(Real Life Adventures by Aldrich and Wise, 2 November 2014)

but I attribute that to the difference between weighing myself naked after getting up and peeing in the morning, and getting weighed fully clothed after breakfast. But as long as you pick one place, time, and situation to weigh yourself and do so consistently, you're probably OK. /*/ "I can already feel the benefits from the extra sleep." I hope they last past the end of the period of social isolation. /*/ "I'm in a nice demographic now - old enough to be allowed to shop during the seniors-only hour first thing in the morning but young enough to be free from the restrictions of Matilda's Law." I'm in the same group, but getting up early enough to be at the store at 8:30 am is not something I'm good at. I hope to psych myself up to trying it on a Monday or Tuesday in May and see if the lines are actually shorter.

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman): "...included Sam Cooke's (given a twist by Otis Redding) 'Sweet Soul Music'..." I had to look that one up, since I remembered it being performed by one Arthur Conley. You were right: it was originally credited as being written by Conley and Otis Redding, but the tune and half the words were taken from Cooke's "Yeah Man"; Cooke's partner sued and won. /*/ (¢APA-NEWS) The Elves', Gnomes' and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder and Marching

Society—the fan club in San Francisco—borrowed its name from a 1940s comic strip, *Barnaby*, whose title character was a small boy who had a cigar-smoking fairy godfather named O'Malley who belonged to the “Elves, Leprechauns, Gnomes, and Little Men’s Chowder and Marching Society.” *// (çmeçChas) “True, but why did the Grimms gratuitously have to put anti-Semitism into fairy tales’ fantasy setting?” If it was endemic to their culture, it may not have seemed gratuitous to them. Did they ever actually meet any Jews? To many Europeans of the time, Jews may have seemed just another variety of fabulous creature, like imps, elves, and demons. *// (çmeçyou) You’re right, bicyclists should not be riding on the sidewalks—I misread your comment as pertaining to pedestrians who step out into the street directly into the path of an oncoming bicyclist. That said, if vehicles block the bike lanes, which they still do with impunity, cyclists often have little choice but to hop the sidewalk (and go slowly and carefully!) for part of a block.

DOCTOR ORBIT vs. THE APOCALYPSE

(Charles Belov): The streets around here are empty, too—I had occasion to drive on the Belt Parkway early in April, and it’s positively eerie to see the Belt moving steadily at any hour, let alone at 4 pm on a weekday. But the stores seem as crowded as ever. *// “I burst into tears twice. It was so unnecessary, so selfish, so much greed and ignorance that put us here.” I haven’t been near tears. But if the crooks and con artists who knew what was coming and knew what to do and yet chose not to act on all the warnings—to belittle the danger and those who did express

entirely warranted concern—get voted back in come this fall, I’ll weep for our nation and our world. *// We’ve decided to order food in (or pick up take-out) every weekend indefinitely, and increase our tips, to support the restaurants that haven’t yet shut down and the people who work



(Speed Bump by Dave Coverly, 2 March 2006)

at them. (For a cheapass like me, that’s a sacrifice, albeit a minuscule one.) We keep finding out the hard way that places we’ve ordered from before are no longer open. *// (çme) The 39-inch flat-screen TV I bought for my bedroom three years ago has, from the time I set it up, been doing double duty as an auxiliary monitor for my laptop, thanks to the HDMI ports on both. Incredibly helpful for working at home.

Last month at this time, I expressed hope that by now, we’d “all have a better idea where this is going and how fast.” That doesn’t seem to have come to pass; we still don’t know how long it will be until a vaccine will be readily available, or even how effective it will be. We don’t know for sure yet that having had and recovered from COVID-19 makes you immune, or for how long. We don’t even have enough reliable testing kits to go around! That all those unknowns don’t seem to be resolving is what’s scary to me. We’ve all been patting ourselves on the back about how patient we’ve been, staying home and doing nothing, but conspicuous cracks are beginning to appear in our united front—some necessitated by people needing to make a living, and others encouraged by politicians who are gambling that it’ll make them look good. So as we move into the temptations of spring and summer, have fun, but don’t be foolish. Once again, stay safe, everyone.

>Portions of the preceding are idly wondering if Manhattan is still there.<