

Beyond the Fringefan

[#514]

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN recently realized that as of this month, he has resided for fully half his life 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)),

having moved into the place in January of 1987. This would probably be cause for a celebration of some sort, if the house were in shape for a celebration, and if its inhabitants were up to preparing for one, and if the general state of public health were conducive to getting a bunch of folks together indoors...but circumstances being what they are, he'll just quietly note this milestone here. This is **Beyond the Fringefan** #514, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 19, #8 (e-APA-NYU #190) and other homebodies, published September 2021 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, 2 November 2017. All uncredited material copyright ©2021 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.

It isn't as if the house were falling apart, but it's definitely needing a random assortment of work. The fluorescent fixture in the downstairs bathroom and the exhaust fan in the upstairs bathroom conked out last month, within a week of each other. Assorted weeds have managed to push up through the bricks in the front walk, such that a few of the bricks now pose tripping hazards. We haven't painted any of the rooms in decades; now's probably a good time, with much of the Stuff still in storage in the garage and basement. I'd really like get the floor in my room sanded and polyurethaned, if only to give my socks a fighting chance at a long and hole-free life. But all of this requires finding someone can do the jobs at a reasonable price—I was never very handy, and while Donna was, three decades ago, she sure can't manage it now. And painting (and especially finishing floors!) requires intricate logistics to get furniture out of the way while still leaving us places to sleep. We're making inquiries.

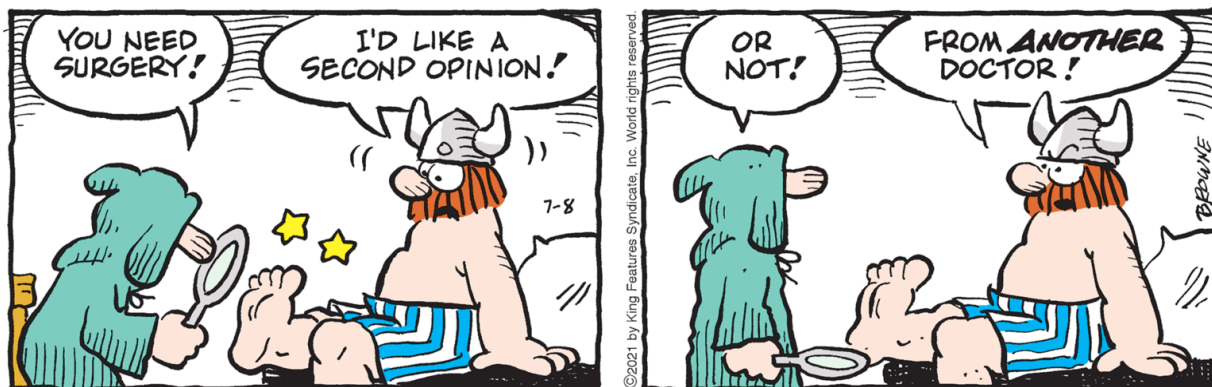
YOU'RE IN HERNIANDO'S HIDEAWAY (oy vey!): After Dr. I.B. confirmed my self-diagnosis of a developing hernia last month, I did some more research on the 'net, and learned that most men with hernias who opt for "watchful waiting" end up getting surgery within a year or three—so I read up some more on my options. The go-to surgical technique these days is laparoscopic, which is of course fast and

minimally invasive; but laparoscopic hernia repair is performed by reinforcing the hole or weakness in the abdominal wall with surgical mesh (which then remains in the body for life).

Now, if you type “surgical mesh” into your favorite search engine, half the resulting hits will be from medical information sites, and the other half will be from ambulance-chasing law firms. In the half-century or so since plastic polymer mesh became a popular surgical tool, there have been horror stories and lawsuits involving infections, adhesions, immune-system rejections, and other complications arising from such surgery. (More of them have involved women than men, but both sexes have had their share.) Several brands were taken off the market, and doctors swear the current crop don’t develop the same kinds of problems, but there are still questions about how thoroughly they’ve been tested and how long after surgery the problems will show up. So lots of people, some of whom I trust, have advised me to avoid mesh-based surgery at all costs.

I was pointed, by a couple of people, in the direction of a mesh-free hernia repair surgery called the Shouldice technique (after its inventor). Its practitioners say it takes under an hour and can be performed on an outpatient basis. The problem is that it’s hard to find a hospital that does it. In the eastern half of North America, I was only able to find two: one founded by Dr. Shouldice himself just outside of Toronto, and one in Stony Brook on Long Island about 60 miles east of here. My inquiries at the Stony Brook medical center confirmed that Shouldice surgery performed there would be covered by Medicare (and my Medicare supplement plan). So I made an appointment for a consult with a Dr. S.S. (not Shouldice) there, who performs this surgery (apparently all day three days every week year-round). He’s busy, as one might imagine, so it’ll be a month before I get to see him, and another month before I can get the surgery done if I choose to do it there. Again, this isn’t an emergency situation; the developing hernia is annoying and slightly uncomfortable, but it isn’t posing any major risks to my health yet, and hasn’t stopped me biking five or ten miles on any nice day.

Just to hedge my bets, I also talked with Dr. L.T., a surgeon who’s recently affiliated himself with my PCP. He’s a young guy, maybe 30, but he says he’s done the laparoscopic hernia-repair surgery (with mesh) over 200 times. He pointed out (as I’ve read online) that non-mesh surgery has been shown to have a significantly higher rate of recurrence of the hernia. He also acknowledged, as I pointed out in response, that if I were to have the non-mesh surgery and then suffer a recurrence (months or years later), I could still have a second repair done and let them implant the mesh that time.



(Hagar the Horrible by Chris Browne, 8 July 2021)

So my agenda at the moment is to talk to Dr. S.S. at Stony Brook, and if he inspires my confidence, have him do the Shouldice surgery as soon as convenient. The logistics will be a bit tricky—they won’t let me drive or be alone for 24 hours after the procedure because of the anesthesia—but with the help of filial volunteer labor, I think we can work it out.

HESITATION BLUES: The hosts of FISTFA remained cautious and kept it suspended again for September, while still hoping for the pandemic situation to improve in the last months of the year. I'm not making any bets at the moment. We haven't dined out since the dinner with my niece and brother-in-law in mid-August, and are back to occasional take-out. (Steve and Coren seem to have had excellent timing in moving to Pennsylvania when they did; their former house in Canarsie is two blocks from the waters of Jamaica Bay and almost certainly got its basement flooded out by Ida.)

Fringe Reception: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 19, #7 (e-APA-NYU #189)

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):
(cme) "When I was at CARE, I couldn't even get my father, who had recently died, off our direct mail list." After my mother's death, I called a number of businesses to ask them to delete her from their mailing lists. Most were cooperative and even offered their condolences, but the operator at the Bally's health club chain said they couldn't do it unless I sent them a copy of her death certificate! /*/ "You may want to spell it out more in the Announcements that 'send posts via e-mail' means in text and as a Word attachment." That sounds like a good idea. /*/ "I once got an evaluation from my supervisor of a job I did as 'Mediocre'." At Manny Hanny in the '70s, evaluations were done on a five-point scale on which the middle point was labeled "Fully Adequate." But if you scored no better than Fully Adequate in all areas, it was a mark against you, and you got no raise, or one that didn't even keep up with inflation. The action (or inaction) spoke a

they'll go after it. Probably they've stopped going after Windows 98 and Win XP by now, but plenty of people with money to steal are still using Win 7. The question is more whether those people are savvy enough to keep their anti-virus software updated and to avoid clicking on links in e-mails from Nigerian princes.

PUTOFTTUITIVENESS vs ASSOONASPOSSIBLENESS (Chas Belov): As you've noticed, I'm a habitual putter-off and deadline pusher. The way Groups.io works has imposed a slightly different deadline if I want the collation to come out during its nominal month, so unless I change my habits and start getting my zine done earlier in the month (which I've been telling myself for a decade that I'm going to do), midnight the next-to-last night of the month looks to be it. /*/ I actually dined in at only two restaurants in Brooklyn (plus one in Manhattan) this spring and one in the summer; I'm now back to ordering for

pickup. There are a couple of reasonably nearby sushi places I've liked that offer all-you-can-eat deals and are still in business, but I regret that I didn't make it to either one. Wait'll Next Year! /*/ (cme) I haven't heard of specifying a blade number when getting a haircut. Valentino usually asked me how much I want to take off—an inch, an inch and a half, two inches. It seemed to work for us. (He still hasn't come back from Florida, by the way. I think I may be out of luck.)



(Dilbert by Scott Adams, 21 April 2007)

lot louder than the words. /*/ (cBelov) "I've read that hackers don't go after antiquated systems"—if they think they can make money out of it,

That's about it from me 'til the frost's on the pumpkin spice and the roof gutters need unclogging. A happy Indigenous Peoples' Day to all, and watch out for Europeans bearing blankets.

>Portions of the preceding have been looking for some straight-from-the-Shouldice advice.<