



Beyond the Fringefan [#526]

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN is gearing up to work at a polling place on (and before) Election Day, doing what he can to keep things honest. Will it help? He can't say. Given the length of the workday, he hopes the locations he's assigned to will at least be close to his home 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** #526, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 20, #9 (e-APA-NYU #202) and other members of the elect, published September 2022 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above from *Brewster Rockit, Space Guy!* by Tim Rickard, 8 November 2016. All uncredited material copyright ©2022 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.

RUN IT UP THE POLL AND SEE WHO SALUTES: I kept checking <ElectionDayWorker.com>, as I said I would last time. A day or two after collation, it began listing training sessions for the job of "Information Clerk." This is someone who puts up the indoor signage before the polling place opens, and then sits at the first desk inside the door to make sure voters are in the right place and to direct them to the proper districts' sign-in desks. More important to me, it seems to be one of the few jobs available to a poll worker who is not a registered member of a political party; most of the others are assigned in pairs, one Democrat and one Republican, who will presumably keep each other honest. My perception is that this unfairly enshrines those two parties in an elevated position above all third and fourth parties; who keeps the Democrat and the Republican from screwing with the votes cast for the Green party, the Working Families party, and even the The Rent Is Too Damn High party? I wish I knew whom to ask about this.

The Brooklyn training sessions were held in one of the courthouses downtown. I signed up for one of the afternoon/evening sessions that started at 4:30; it ran three and a half hours plus a quick quiz at the end (which was open-book, so of course I aced it). I've indicated my availability for Election Day itself; it's a 16-hour work day, from 5 AM to 9 PM (euhhh!). I've also said I'm available for some of the early-voting days, which have much shorter hours and will probably help me ease my way into the routine. I've yet to hear back about which polling location or locations I'll be assigned to. Meanwhile, I'll keep reviewing the 110-page Information Clerk Manual.

SICKAGO: We didn't get to Chicago for Worldcon on Labor Day weekend, but a few thousand other fen did. Unfortunately, several of those reported symptoms of or positive tests for COVID during the convention or shortly after. One couple I'd hoped to spend a lot of time with were symptomatic the first day of the convention, and had to self-quarantine in their hotel room for the whole duration of the event. No fun for them at all. (The fact that they were symptomatic on the first day means the convention isn't to blame, though the town of Chicago may be; they were touring for a few days pre-con.)

Total COVID cases reported as of the Saturday night after the con: 60. This compares with 22 at a similar point after Discon III last December, a convention which for various reasons only had about 2/3 as many people in attendance. That looks like about twice as many cases per capita at Chicon as at Discon, a trend I don't like much. It motivated me to get myself boosted with the new bivalent vaccine (tweaked to be effective against the omicron variant as well as COVID Classic) the second week of the month. Donna's been feeling under the weather for other reasons lately, but hopes to get her bivalent booster soon.

NOT MY DEPARTMENT: Apropos to nothing in particular, Ken Gale e-mailed last month that he'd stumbled on a website called <www.beyondthecon.com>, which, he noted dryly, is "Not fannish." It belongs to an anti-vax group that held a "COVID CON" last year, asserts that COVID can be prevented by proper nutrition and "natural medicine," presents stories of people who say they suffered injuries and illness caused by being vaccinated, and is filing a petition to "Demand a grand jury investigate the CDC for criminal fraud & willful misconduct." In case it isn't already clear, said website is *not* connected in any way, shape, or form with me or with the BeyondtheCons I hosted from 1975 through 1995.

Fringe Reception: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 20, #8 (e-APA-NYU #201)

JAMISON, TAEK e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):
I taek it that was a typo in the title. /*/ "On the



(Susan Camilleri Konar for *6 Chix*, 31 August 2022)
hottest day of the year, some ~"BOOKCASES"~
(sideways milk crates tied together) either
collapsed or emptied out." I tried to use some for
record cabinets when I moved my LPs to the
basement a few years ago. It worked about as
well. Perhaps if they'd been the old-fashioned

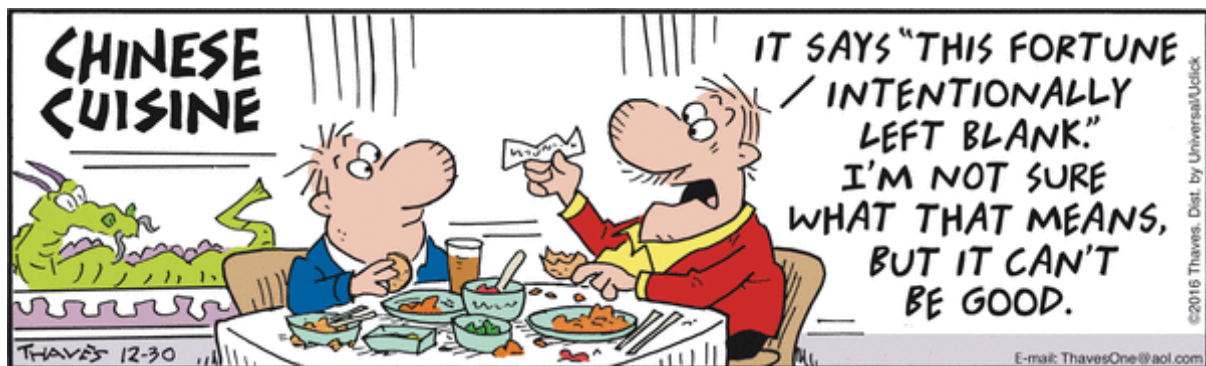
metal crates... /*/ (¢APA-NEWS) "Collation is
likelier toward the end of the month." Yeah,
maybe I should correct/update that one. /*/
(¢self) "For years, THE WIZARD OF ID had a
doctor who looked like Groucho." And a lawyer
who looked like W.C. Fields, i.i.r.c. /*/ (¢me)
I'm familiar with "MS Word stubbornness" when
positioning illustrations. Using "frames" (which
newer versions make harder to do, omitting them
from menus and help files) often helps, but I've
still found myself having to try a few different
ways of telling it where the picture should go
before it gets it right. /*/ (¢Belov) I rode the
BART on a San Francisco trip in the mid-1970s
when it was new. A couple of years later I rode
the also-new D.C. Metro; I remember noting the
similarity of the fare cards and wondering if one
system would accept the other's cards.

LATER vs. NEVER (Chas Belov): "I'm plotting out
a longest bus trip possible on public transit as an
armchair-travel exercise for National Transit
Month (September)." At an Albacon six years
ago, I attended a talk called "Travel by Transit: A
Trip Across the US via Local Transit." by a guy
who'd attempted just that—local and commuter
bus/trolley/rail lines only, no Amtrak or

Greyhound. Unfortunately, he'd had to cheat quite a few times by getting rides from friends or taking taxis from the end of one line to the start of another. He planned to write a book about it. I don't remember his name, but the con pocket program (still up on line) gives his last name as Freedman. (Not the same but in a related vein, I had friends in the 1970s who perused MTA schedules to plan the most efficient trip that would pass through every subway station in the city on a single fare. I think it ran about 26 hours.) /*/ (¢me) “¿How big is Chinatown that taking the wrong bus would take you far afield from where you planned?” Manhattan's

Chinatown has been spreading out over the years, absorbing territory that was formerly considered part of Little Italy or of the (Jewish) Lower East Side—there are now a lot of blocks with signs in three or four languages. Per the Gmaps Pedometer site, the distance between our intended destination that night (on Pell Street) and the restaurant where we actually ate (on Allen Street just above Delancey) is about seven-tenths of a mile—not an excessive walk for the fairly able-bodied, but unappealing to a bunch of aging fen who'd already been out for several hours and would have to spend another hour subwaying home afterward.

GUESS IT DOES SLEEP AFTER ALL: The *New York Times* recently reported that even though businesses in this town are recovering from the knockout blow they suffered at the hands of the pandemic, their recovery lags behind what's been seen in many other cities. And in what I fear may be a sign of the oncoming apocalypse, restaurants that used to be proudly open 24/7 are now closing most nights of the week—including the venerated shrine to cheap fried rice and midnight lo mein in the basement of 17 Mott Street. Yes, friends, Wo Hop now closes at 10 pm. And Veselka on Second



(Frank and Ernest by Thaves, 30 December 2016)

Avenue shuts its doors at 11 pm weekdays and midnight Fridays and Saturdays, so plan your pierogi binges accordingly. Katz's Deli on Houston Street, where Sally faked an orgasm for Harry, is still open 'round the clock on weekends, thank Ghu, but is reportedly mobbed as it absorbs the crowds the other places have forfeited.

A POINT TO PONDER: I ran across a quotation just this week, in an acrostic puzzle that ran in the *Wall Street Journal* a few years back, that I must keep in mind as we continue our efforts to declutter. It's (edited down a bit) from *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean:

My parents valued books, but they believed that you read a book for the experience of reading it. You didn't read it in order to have an object that had to be housed and looked after forever. The reading of the book was a journey. There was no need for souvenirs.

As the High Holy Days proceed, may we all be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life for a prosperous, healthy, safe, and free New Year. As hurricane season proceeds, spare some thoughts and perhaps some financial help for the people in Puerto Rico, Dominica, and Florida who seem to be taking the brunt of it so far. And as election season gears up, make sure you (and everyone else you know) are registered and ready to do the right thing come 8 November.

>Portions of the preceding had five vaccinations and got a second card free!<