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Beyond the Fringefan [#528]

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN has once again borrowed a neighbor to fix up a part of 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)), but wishes he could also have borrowed a neighbor's home to sleep in during the process. Instead, he's staying at a motel while finishing **Beyond the Fringefan** #528, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 20, #11 (e-APA-NYU #204) and other home improvers, published November 2022 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above from *Hägar the Horrible* by Chris Browne, 30 September 2022. All uncredited material copyright ©2022 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.

NO-TRICK PONIES: For another year, not one kid showed up on our doorstep looking for candy on Halloween night. Oh, well, the kids' loss was FISTFA's gain.

ON THE FRONT LINES OF DEMOCRACY: I did my bit to help ensure free and fair elections this year. Fortunately for me, this is not Fulton County in Georgia, and I was never in any danger worse than that imposed by bicycling 3/5 of a mile in the pre-dawn chill at 5 am. (I was a bit discombobulated by the early hour, and forgot to wear my helmet.) I got up at 3:45 (!), had some breakfast, and made my way to a parochial school building on Glenwood Road (now being used as a pre-K center). It seemed that everyone there knew everyone else but me from previous years. I showed the coordinator my work-assignment card and was put to work setting up tables, hanging signs, and placing the drop box for absentee ballots. Everything was in readiness at the official poll opening time of 6 am.

My chief duty as information clerk was to sit at a desk just inside the door, welcome voters in, and direct them to the proper table for their election district (ED) within the assembly district (AD), where they would sign in and get their ballots. The polling place where I was stationed was handling four EDs, so this was a useful job. The Board of Elections had allegedly sent everyone a card earlier in the year showing their district; anyone with such a card could go directly to the table for the ED shown. But a lot of people didn't have their cards or said they'd never received them. Worse, a lot of people had cards from last year—and the districts had been redrawn in the interim (pursuant to the 2020 census results), so the districts on the cards were wrong.

No matter; that was my job, and that of Eula, the lady working alongside me at the table. We had a printed list of all Brooklyn streets, in alphanumeric order, with a table for each street giving ranges of house numbers, even and odd, and the corresponding ED and AD, as:

Brooklyn Avenue

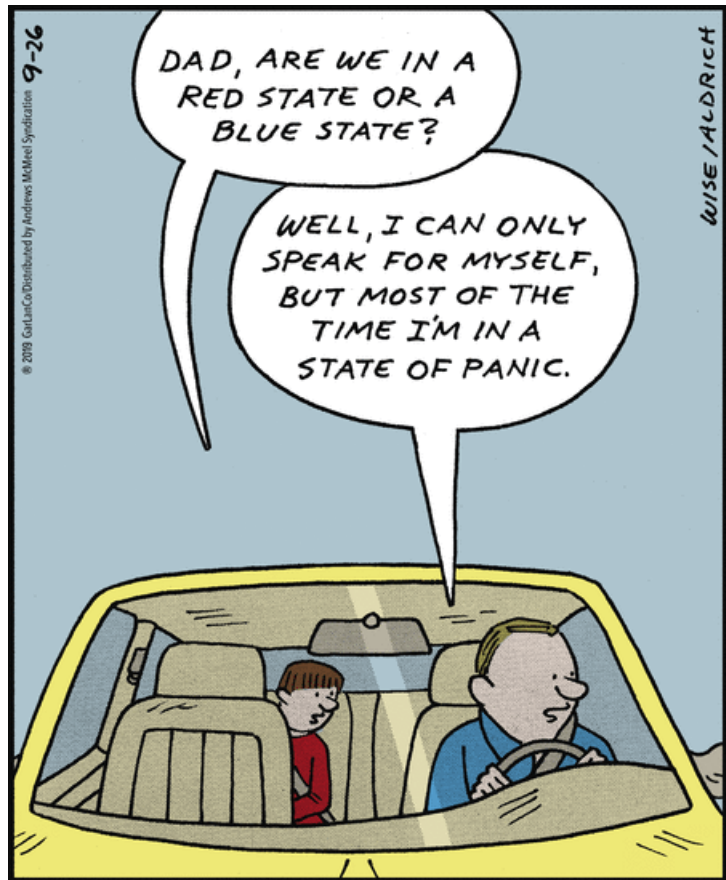
	ED	AD
1-399	45	58
401-1599	44	58
1601-2843	46	57
2-400	33	58
402-2000	44	58
2002-3600	46	57

(Note that district lines often run through the middle of a street, so that houses with adjacent numbers on opposite sides of the street may be in different districts.) I was already familiar with this format, because 'way back when, the U.S. Postal Service used to issue ZIP code directories for the various municipalities that worked the same way.

After an hour or so, I was given an abridged version that covered only the districts that were voting at our site, which was only a dozen pages and hence much faster to find addresses in. There was also a tablet computer that was loaded with the same information and that was intended to be our primary resource; but it suffered technical glitches at a few points during the day, so the printed directories served as a contingency backup. Eula took the tablet and I took the printed versions, and when there wasn't a queue, we'd both look up the address and see who got the district first. By mid-morning, we were pretty much neck and neck.

So that was pretty much what I did all day: sat behind a table with a couple of sheaves of paper, asked people their addresses, looked them up, and told them which table to go to. We had been carefully instructed not to do anything that could be construed as asking for ID, so when people tried to offer us their driver's licenses, we had to ignore that and ask them to give us their addresses out loud. We also had a pack of applications to offer to anyone who expressed interest in being a poll worker in the future, but I'm pretty sure that no one at all took one. There was a fairly steady flow of voters, with slight peaks during the lunch and dinner hours, but there were never more than three or four people on queue at our table. I'd guess we dealt with 300 or 400 people during the day.

The one bit of unpleasantness came when it turned out that a voter was at the wrong site and had to be redirected. We soon discovered that the Board of Elections had changed sites for one of the districts between primary day and Election Day, so maybe one in six voters who'd voted at my site just a couple of months earlier now had to go elsewhere. I could only express sympathy. (Eula was able to tell them that yes, it was true, and it had happened to her as well.) Fortunately, the site they were being sent to



(Real Life Adventures by Wise and Aldrich, 26 September 2019)

was only a few blocks away, so while there was a fair amount of grumbling, no voices were raised, let alone weapons.

People brought coffee and doughnuts in for us a few times, which was appreciated. Given the effect that coffee has on my kidneys, I also appreciated that there were bathrooms about twenty feet away from where my table was. We were given the option of one 2-hour meal break or two 1-hour breaks (but nothing later than 6 pm); since I was close to home, I took the two breaks, which gave me the chance not only to eat but also to check on Donna.

Our last voter of the day came in at 8:52 pm. The poll closed at 9:00 sharp. (Had there been a last-minute rush, we'd have taken everyone who was there at 9:00, no matter how long we had to stay, but no one who arrived even one second past the hour.) I took down the signs I'd put up, co-signed the envelope of absentee ballots (we'd gotten seven of them), folded up the tables, and was out of there by 9:30. It wasn't terribly exciting, but I'm pretty sure I'm going to try to do it again in subsequent years.

COME ON, COME ON, WON'T YOU GET ME TO MY ROOM?: Once again I'm at a motel in Brooklyn for a couple of days. Gratifyingly, this has nothing to do with any kind of infestation at the Cadre, other than that an awful lot of the Stuff that we moved out of the bedrooms two years ago during the bedbug incident is still in the garage and basement. It seemed a good time to get some long-overdue work done on the rooms. As noted the other month, my room has now been repainted for the first time in more than three decades. But I've wanted for some time to get my floor sanded and polyurethaned; the bare wood is old enough to produce a plethora of micro-splinters, which neither my feet nor my socks appreciate much.

Painting only requires getting all the furniture a couple of feet away from the walls and laying down a lot of dropcloths. Sanding and refinishing demands a lot more: every stick of furniture has to be out of the room. This requires planning and coordination, not always my strongest suits, but I finally got it together. We spent a Sunday moving the furniture. Well, first I had to pack up all the papers and memorabilia that were piled on every horizontal surface, and then we moved the furniture, which is now spread out among five other rooms (with the pieces of my bed leaning against the Wreck Room wall); I'm eternally grateful to Ethan and Ashley for doing virtually all the heavy lifting. Monday morning, I went with our handy neighbor Seymour to rent the sanding machine from Home Depot. The sanding (and vacuuming up all the dust) is followed by the application of the polyurethane, which has to dry overnight before the finish is applied on top of it; then the finish has to dry overnight before we can start moving the furniture back in. The upshot is that I have no place to sleep for three nights; hence the motel stay. I'm making trips back and forth to deal with Donna's needs and some of my meals.



(Speed Bump by Dave Coverly, 18 August 2020)

It will probably be the new year before we have my room restored to where I can find most of the Stuff that was there a week ago, and longer before I figure out how much of the Stuff in the garage and the basement I actually want to bring back up. Meanwhile, we'll be discussing redoing the drywall and the

floor in the Wreck Room. Like O. Henry's New York, the Cadre will be a great place if we ever finish it.

Fringe Reception: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 20, #10 (e-APA-NYU #203)

[Hard-copy] COVER (Terri Wells): That a joke about voter registration wound up on a collation sent out just before Election Day was a fortuitous coincidence; note that the original publication date was April 1992.

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman): "I decided to skip the ~BROOKLYN BOOK FESTIVAL~." So did I. Two months later, have you heard of anyone attending? If it dies for lack of interest, will that tell us anything about the state of reading today? /*/ (¢APA-NEWS) "It wouldn't be amiss to note how/where/when to send an MS Word zine for the hardcopy edition, and where not to." Um, the instructions for submission already read, "optionally, you may attach a file in MS Word or other format that allows for fancier formatting or included images." Is that not clear enough? /*/ (¢me) "Ah, so my next-door neighbor is an Information Clerk. Does that necessarily mean he's an Independent?" No, he could be affiliated with

anyone or no one. /*/ "I still miss the clunky lever machines; when you pulled the handle, you really felt like you voted. Now it's like the SATs." I miss those machines too, but they were old and wearing out. But since you mention them—I wonder what claims the election deniers would be making if we were still using them. /*/ (¢Nelson) "I had a Dutch friend named Roelof." Is that Roelof Goudriaan? I thought he was Belgian. (Don't tell him I said so.) I think I met him at a Worldcon once. /*/ "(Oh, and should the need arise, 'bulletproof' vests aren't.)" I thought the Kevlar vests *are* bullet-proof in that they can stop small to medium-sized bullets, but not impact-proof in that the momentum of the bullet is still conserved; rather than punching a hole through the body, the impact gets spread out over a larger area, often producing massive bruising and even broken bones, but still saving lives that would have been lost had the bullet penetrated.



I should be back in my newly floored room by the time this collation goes out. May everyone survive Black Friday, Cyber Monday, ~~Ruby~~ Giving Tuesday, and all the other inanely named days reaching into wallets across the nation. Keep your home well lit as befits the season, and Beware of Darkness.

>Portions of the preceding have been tucked in 'til the Sandman, he comes.<