



"We know nothing. We'll be back in five minutes with nothing more."

Beyond the Fringefan [#539]

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN is distressed by pretty much all the breaking news he's been hearing lately, about war in the Middle East, shootings in New England, and election deniers taking control of Congress, and wishes he could do something about it (besides send a little money), but he's got about as much as he can handle right now dealing with First World problems that affect him, his wife, and the structure they live in—namely 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)). He may be spending a few days in a motel by the time you read **Beyond the Fringefan** #539, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 21, #10 (e-APA-NYU #215) and other news junkies listening to junky news, published October 2023 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above by Shannon Wheeler for *AirMail*, 12 April 2020. All uncredited material copyright ©2023 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.

THE BUGS ARE BACK IN TOWN: The Cadre was certified bedbug free in May of 2021, with the testimony of a bedbug-sniffing dog whose olfactory skills we hired. Nonetheless, after having spent a full year, hundreds of hours, and thousands of dollars turning the place and our lives inside out, we've been paranoid about the creatures ever since. (One consequence of that is that there are dozens of bins of our Stuff in the garage, and some in the basement, that we packed away then and have been afraid to drag back in ever since. There are books, papers, CDs, tapes, and craft supplies that may not be unearthed in our lifetimes.) But as they say, just 'cause you're paranoid, it doesn't mean they *aren't* out to get you. It's now started all over again.

I thought I felt something crawling on me when I got up to pee in the early morning of 7 October. I brushed it off my back when I got back to bed and found a tiny black thing that was smaller than the bedbugs I remembered from three years ago. I could barely see that it had legs. I didn't see any others like it in the bed, so rather than panic Donna unnecessarily, I saved it in a Ziploc bag until Ethan came over the next day. He also thought it different from what we'd seen back then, but we agreed it would be prudent to change my bedding and inspect carefully. And what we found when we inspected was a cluster of bugs nesting on a pillow (not one I'd been sleeping on) and lots more of them between the mattress and box springs. At that point it seemed pointless not to tell Donna. She remarked that she'd thought she felt something on her in her bed, but wasn't sure (and her vision isn't reliably good these

days for seeing such tiny things). Ethan and I had changed her bed earlier in the day and hadn't seen any obvious evidence of the critters.

We ran all my pillows through the dryer at maximum heat for an hour each to kill any bugs, and over the ensuing day I laundered all my clothes and bedding (hot cycle). We also spent a couple of hours with a heavy-duty steamer that we'd bought three years ago, steaming my mattress, box springs, bed boards, bed frame, and the adjacent walls and floors; that dealt with the visible infestation, for the moment. What to do next?

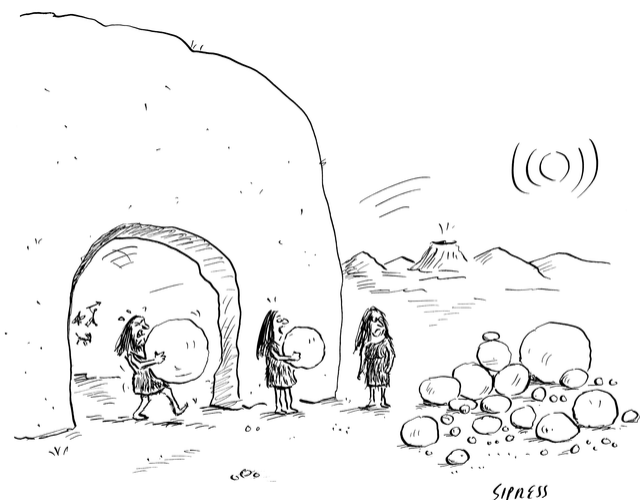
Dealing with the various exterminators and prep companies in 2020 had stretched our patience and endurance to their limits, and now both of us were three years older and tired, I was three years more arthritic, and Donna was nursing a broken neck. I said aloud that rather than go through all this another time so soon after the first, I'd be inclined to burn the house down, with us inside it. Possibly in response to this remark, Ethan began contacting exterminators himself and asking questions.

One distressing and unanswerable question is whether this is an altogether new infestation (and if so, where it could have come from, given how little we've traveled lately), or whether somehow, the people we dealt with three years ago missed just a few bugs, which went deep enough into hiding to elude the bug-sniffing dog, and have been quietly plotting their comeback all this time.

Two days later, a rep named Luis from IPS Movers (in Woodside, Queens) came by and took a look around. He said his company does not only ordinary home moving but also bedbug "prep," which includes packing up all the moveable stuff in the house, loading it into trucks which are then fumigated with a gas called Vikane, then bringing it back after the exterminators themselves have done whatever they're doing to the house. The packing is labor intensive and therefore not cheap, but again, we're old and tired, and paying someone to do the heavy lifting is sounding more and more attractive.

The next day, we got a visit from a bug-sniffing dog named Mika, along with Herbie, her handler, sent by M&M Pest Control (based in Long Island City). Another rep from M&M named Kevin also showed up to do visual inspection. We knew we had the bugs, but Ethan felt it would be useful to know where they were—just my room? Down into the basement? Out in the garage or even in the car? Herbie said that Mika found evidence of live bugs in all three upstairs bedrooms, but mostly my room, and only a couple of dead ones downstairs—and those could have been the result of my carrying bedding down to the basement to get laundered. Better news: the garage and the car were clean.

Luis and Kevin said that their two companies were used to working in coordination, and in a couple of days we received their plan: We'd reserve a motel room for several days (there's now a decent Holiday Inn Express half a mile from the Cadre). IPS would come, pack everything up, and take it to be fumigated. We'd move out. M&M would spend two or three days treating the whole house with intense heat supplemented with chemical sprays. When they were done, we'd move back in, and IPS would bring everything back. Allegedly, it would only have to happen once, and the whole process would take about a week. Total bill would be in the



"We're decluttering."

(David Sipress for *The New Yorker*, 9 January 2017)

tens of thousands of dollars. That's a pretty big piece of change, but... How much did we spend in 2020 and 2021? Less out of pocket, for sure, but if we counted the vast hours of work we put in then and computed their value at minimum wage (not to mention paying a certain Ms. Braun for her labor in getting us organized), and added in the months of angst, I'm not sure which way the scales would tip.

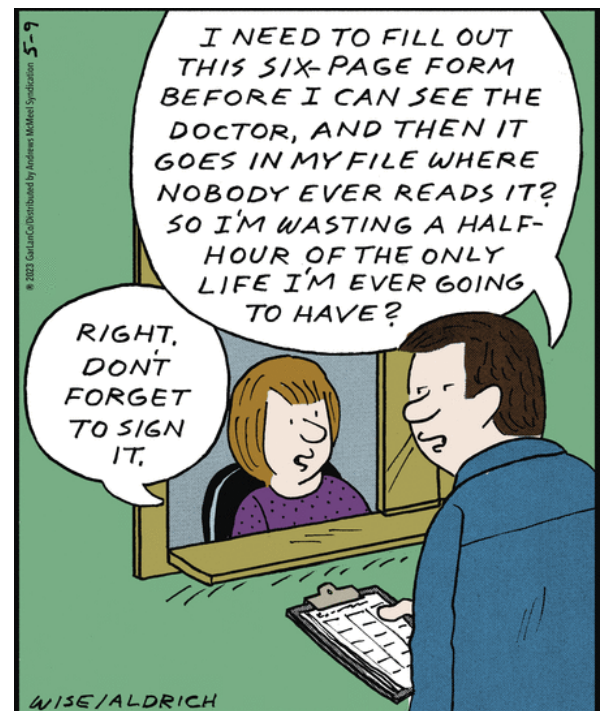
Just for laughs, I called Terminix for a quote. I got a call back from Jose, who gave us the initial evaluation back in 2020; he remembered the house. Terminix's deal seems to be the same as what the company was offering then: we'd first have to pretty much jettison everything in the house that isn't furniture. Then Terminix's people would spray everywhere, then come back in two weeks and spray again, then come back in two more weeks and spray again if they found any evidence of further infestation, and then repeat until they were sure it was clean. During that time, we'd be living out of a suitcase, even if it was for months. And if we then brought anything back into the house that had been in the house before, all bets would be off; if we found any bugs after that, Terminix would take no responsibility, preferring to blame us for bringing the infestation back. This would be true no matter what we'd done, or had someone else do, to our belongings in the interim.

So since we do not intend to throw away all of our remaining Stuff in one swoop, it looks as though we're stuck with the expensive but (we hope) faster method. We're now trying to figure out when to start the process, scheduling around our medical appointments, a couple of trips Ethan needs to take out of town, and my possibly doing poll work in early November. I hope to hell the whole deal is over by next collation. Watch this space.

GETTING IT IN THE NECK: When people ask lately how Donna is doing, mostly what I say is "about the same." We get updates on the healing of her neck only when she gets new x-rays or CAT scans, which happen at intervals of a couple of months. Between those times, we just have to keep on doing what we're doing and hope that it's helping. We got the electrical bone-stimulating machine on 11 October, and she's been using it for the prescribed half-hour every night. It beeps when we start it up and when it shuts itself off, but she doesn't feel much of anything when it's on, so we have no way of knowing if it's speeding the healing.

She is at least getting regular visits from Dr. A.A. the PT guy, and having weekly phone sessions with Robin the shrink. And just last week we got the first visit from a home health aide named Geraldine. It was also her last visit; she didn't show up on Wednesday, and told the agency that she was leaving on Friday. We got a different aide on Friday, named Carol. (Medicare is paying for the PT and the counseling, but we're paying out of pocket for the aides.)

Friday also saw her seeing a new doctor, an ear, nose, and throat lady named Dr. N.C. We thought the intermittent vertigo Donna's been having might be related to the ongoing sinus congestion that's been bad since summer, and maybe Dr. N.C. could diagnose something treatable; but she said it didn't look to her like an infection. She thinks the vertigo (as well as the varying mental fog) could be a consequence of the calcium issue that's already been identified, and wants



(Real Life Adventures by Wise and Aldrich, 9 May 2023)

us to get more scans to make sure that Donna doesn't have a tumor in her parathyroid. Watch this space. (I believe she's also submitting a lengthy zine this month that will begin chronicling her misadventures of this year from her viewpoint.)

As I noted last month, I'm in for new dental fun. My current dentist, Dr. E.K., was unable to determine using x-rays exactly what was causing the vague aches in my upper right jaw, so he sent me to a specialist, Dr. B.G., who has a 3D scanner called a CBCT (for "cone beam computed tomography," in case you were wondering). (Dr. J.G., my former dentist and editor in chief of the dental journal for which I copyedit, has now retired from active practice.) Dr. B.G. studied the images the CBCT produced and said that my tooth #3 (counting from the upper right wisdom tooth) was dead and rotting and would have to come out; he sent me to the oral surgeons, Dr. D.H. and Dr. G.H. (a father-and-son team) with all the scan data on a flash drive.

Dr. D.H. looked at the images and noted that not only was tooth #3 dead; #4, just forward of it, had a cracked root and would cause trouble very soon if it wasn't already doing so. And so Dr G.H. shot me full of Novocain (or something like it) and yanked out both #3 and #4 on the first Friday of October. The pain over the next few days was manageable with acetaminophen and then faded, so I never needed the Oxycodone that Dr. G.H. kindly prescribed. The real bother is that with a two-molar gap on the upper jaw, I can't chew on the right side at all, and will continue to be unable for most of a year (until the site heals, and the implants are placed, and they "take," and the new crowns are placed on them)—*if* all goes well. Watch this space.

In technological news, I lost the gamble I made this summer when I paid \$75 to replace a piece of my mobile phone (that held the microphone, USB port, and headphone jack); after three months, the new headphone jack failed completely. I spend more time listening to audio via the headphones than making phone calls, so this left me in an untenable position, which I resolved by purchasing a new phone. It's another Samsung Galaxy, model A14 5G, and looks and behaves almost identical to the old one. It does



(Carpe Diem by Niklas Eriksson, 1 June 2023)

have four times the internal memory, which will be helpful, as the old phone's internal memory was so full that I couldn't install any new apps and had to delete some old ones to make room for updates in others.

Fringe Reception: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 21, #9 (e-APA-NYU #214)

COVER (I Abra Cinii): I may never know why Abby chose to draw my head as a map, nor what all the shapes of the land masses are supposed to allude to (though the area surrounding my ear appears to be the shape of Brooklyn and Queens, with Manhattan and the Bronx to the north, and I see a map of the U.S. at the back of my neck). I was flattered at the time and still am.

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman): (¢self) *MAD* magazine once showed someone carrying a sign reading "Make Merrill Lynch clean up all that bullsh!" /*/ (¢Belov) I attended at least half a dozen Balticons at the Hunt Valley Inn. I'll miss the place. (Or as an aging New Yorker, am I supposed to complain only about the loss of buildings here?) /*/ (¢Nelson) "It's not always heartening to go where everybody knows

your name. The quantity of my prescriptions led to the pharmacist greeting me by name.” The quantity of Donna’s prescriptions led for a while to the CVS pharmacists greeting me by *her* name—“Oh, Mr. Camp, how’s your wife doing?” Now they scan the CVS code on my phone and see both our names come up on their screens. /*/ I have a problem with being where everybody knows my name and I can’t remember half of theirs. This has happened at far too many cons.

X vs. Y (Chas Belov): “I notice now when I try to edit my zine, certain settings only display the odd pages of APA-NYU PDF.” Are you in the Print menu of the Adobe software? That’s a useful setting if you need to print double-sided on a printer that doesn’t do it automatically: select the odd sides to print, then flip the printed pages over, put them back in the feeder, select the even pages, and “print in reverse order.” I do that when printing out hard copies of the APA. /*/ “Away in a case/[unwritten line]/There in the case/Sat some rugelach for his wife.” How about “At the bakery line”? In the original (“White Room”), that line doesn’t rhyme. /*/ (¢APA-NEWS) I suspect the song you don’t remember is “Sorrow,” which was a bigger hit in England.

George Harrison quoted its opening line (“With your long blonde hair and your eyes of blue”) in the coda of “It’s All Too Much.” /*/ (¢self) “My new title which I settled on with my boss is Digital Accessibility & Inclusion Coordinator and Founding Web Manager.” Aw, c’mon, you should’a’ come up with something that made for a snappier acronym, like Web Executive, Inclusion Reviewer & Digital Overlord.

ICONOCLAST (Joel Nelson): “I miss Doctor Who; those bits are worthy of viewing soon.” If you don’t receive the BBC America channel, find a friend who does and see if you can take up temporary residence at his/her place. The 60th anniversary of the show’s premiere is coming up in November, so there should be tons of reruns leading up to an anniversary special on the 23rd of the month. /*/ (¢Belov) Most people around here still use the term “traffic circle.” Roundabouts are in English pop songs. /*/ (¢me) I’ve fallen into the habit of starting Nerdle with $15+67=82$ and then $90*4=360$; that establishes where the equal sign is (sometimes by elimination) and all of the digits to be used, and confirms or eliminates two operators. There may be more efficient opening guesses, but I haven’t thought of them yet.

The number of people who have responded to my inquiry in these pages last month concerning Zoom meetings is exactly zero as I write this, so I guess there’s no interest. Oh, well, it was just a thought.

Miriam Benson recently noted on Facebook that someone seems to be selling old apa collations on eBay—she posted an image of APA-NYU #54, and a bit of searching also turned up APA-NYU #57, an issue of Donna’s and my zine for APA-69, and one of the late Anni Ackner’s APA-NYU zine *The Journalist at the End of the Universe*. There was no information on who was selling or buying these, or what kind of money was changing hands in exchange. And to think I’ve recycled dozens of those.... Well, I hope whoever bought them is finding them entertaining and enlightening.



(The Argyle Sweater by Scott Hilburn, 2 July 2021)

As always, may the Great Pumpkin bring you all plenty of treats, and don’t forget to Fall Back next Sunday (sunset at 4:30 pm, yugggh). May Election Day not be too scary this year (no major offices up for grabs around here, just a few judgeships and a couple of ballot questions about town debt limits). And try not to get into any fights with those relatives (you know who they are) at Thanksgiving dinner. I’ll be back and (I hope) once more bug free in a month.

>Portions of the preceding think it’s time to replace the Speaker of the House
with a good pair of headphones.<