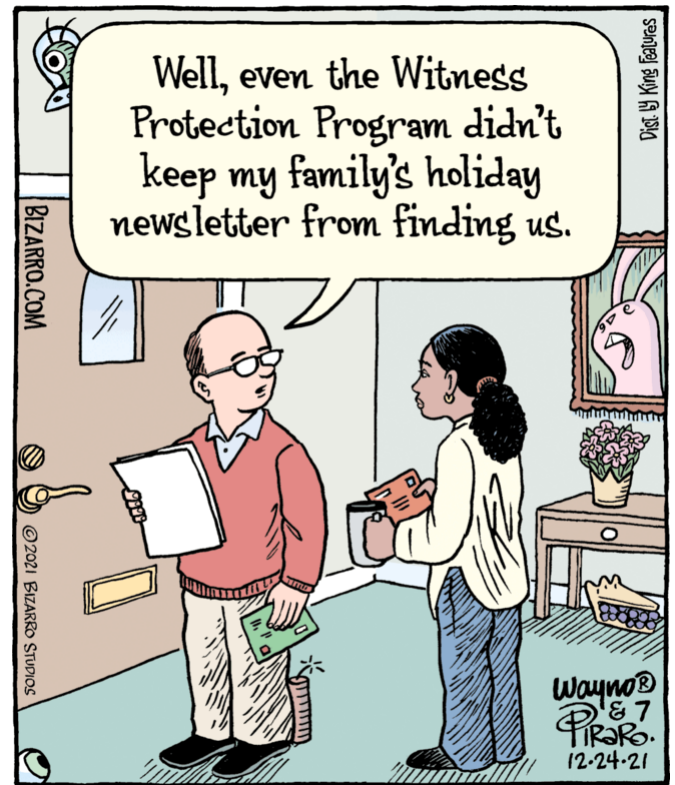


Beyond the Fringefan [#541]

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN this year has followed his usual December practice of having as little to do with holiday observances as possible, other than lighting Chanukah candles and eating a few latkes (purchased from Chap-a-Nosh near the Avenue M subway station). Most of his free time was taken up with digging through the 150 or so cardboard boxes of various sizes that held all his and his lady's earthly possessions, trying to find the things that were most urgently needed 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](http://www.nycadre.org))). Much remains unfound, so search and rescue operations are continuing as he finalizes **Beyond the Fringefan** #541, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 21, #12 (e-APA-NYU #217) and other front-end loaders, published December 2023 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above from *Bizarro* by Wayno and Piraro, 24 December 2021. All uncredited material copyright ©2023 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.



INSECT ASIDE: When I sent out the previous chapter of the bedbug saga, we were barely back in the Cadre, surrounded by boxes, and hopeful that the bugs had been expunged. We've been back in the Cadre for a month now and are still surrounded by boxes and hopeful that the bugs have been expunged.

The replacement for the broken TV arrived on Friday evening, 1 December, and we hooked it up without problems. It was another week before our electrician from down the block was able to come down and fix the wiring for our thermostat—he'd just had carpal tunnel surgery, and his helper was out sick—but the job got done, and I'm no longer turning the furnace on and off using the emergency cut-off switch.

We've opened an awful lot of the boxes just to hunt in them for missing items, without fully unpacking them, again because Kevin from the exterminators had advised us to "just unpack what you need" until the house has gotten a clean bill of health. I've bought a lot of supplies that I know we have plenty of

but can't find; presumably they'll get used eventually. There are only a couple of perishables that seem to be missing—I remember a Vidalia onion or two in a hanging basket in the kitchen. In the worst case, I presume we'll find those the hard way by smell before too long.

Meanwhile, though, we've bought a number of hooks and brackets to replace things that the movers managed to break off the walls. The base station for our cordless phone setup, and the responder unit for the "I've fallen and can't get up" call system, are missing in action, and we've bought replacements for those. (We can return the fall-call box to the service company for a refund when and if it ever turns up.) A couple of bookcases in the basement that got water damaged a while ago seem to have succumbed during the moves, and won't stand up straight anymore; we'll need to get some more of those.

(I've also concluded that the Universe is threatening me with more unpredictable disasters over the next few years, so I need to get rid of a lot more of the possessions I've accumulated so that there'll be less to move the next time. I'll be dumping more old audio and video cassettes as we dig them up, and there will be lots more books I can drop off at FISTFA (if they seem to have fannish appeal) or perhaps at a Little Free Library that I found last summer while bicycling to visit Donna at the rehab. If anyone needs coffee mugs, I can let you have a couple of dozen once I find the box they're packed in.)

Kevin came by, a few days after we returned to the Cadre, with some "volcano traps" a/k/a "pyramid traps," and set them up at the legs of our beds and a couple of other strategic locations. These are about two inches square and almost an inch high, with rough-textured, sloping sides and a sheer crater in the middle. The bugs are attracted by the warmth of the bed, climb up the sides of the trap, and then fall into the crater. Presumably by inspecting the traps regularly, we'd find out if any bugs were still in the house, and in time to zap 'em before they had time to spread and reproduce again.

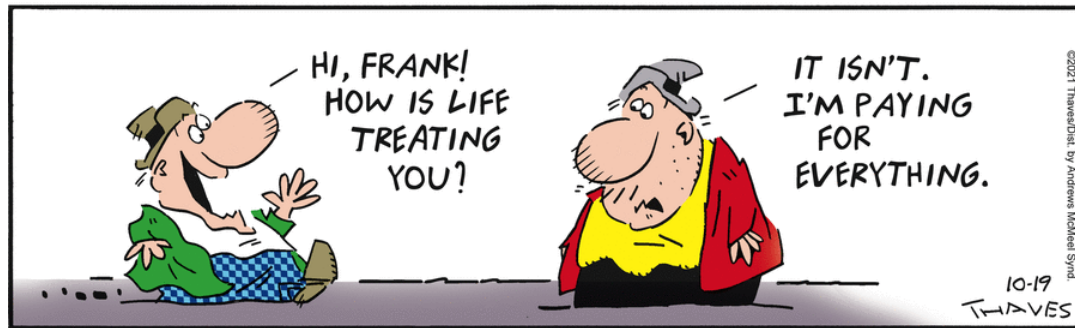
So on Sunday, 10 December, Ethan found something in a trap in the Wreck Room. It didn't look like the bedbugs we'd seen, but he took a picture and sent it to Kevin...who was on vacation and didn't respond until Wednesday morning the 13th. Kevin said it was "a bed bug nymph" and recommended having his team come back the very next day to re-treat the upstairs. Fortunately, this time we didn't have to check out of the house, but merely get up about four hours earlier than usual and stay out of the upstairs all day. This involved logistical planning only a bit less elaborate than an invasion of Normandy, but we did it. But that restarts the clock on the 30 days before we can get the bug-sniffing dog to certify that we and the Cadre are clean; now we have to wait until mid-January.

HELP! I NEED SOMEBODY: We'd been told last summer by the social workers at the hospital and the rehab that Donna would not be eligible to get a home health aide under Medicare; if we were poor enough to be on Medicaid, it would be covered, but we're not. (There are apparently convoluted methods of putting all our assets in someone else's name that might enable us to qualify, but I'm not at all sure of their reliability and legality.) So we said, OK, what happens if we agree to pay for an aide out



(Speed Bump by Dave Coverly, 17 May 2010)

of our own pockets? We were put in touch with an organization called Z Best Homecare, which sent a nurse to evaluate Donna and then agreed to send an aide for four hours a day, three times a week, and bill us.



(Frank and Ernest by Thaves, 19 October 2021)

We've now dealt with five different aides. Three were from the West Indies and spoke English with such thick accents that communication was nearly impossible. We'd tell them what we needed done, and they'd go and do what *they* decided should be done. One got lost on the way here and literally never showed up. One arrived with her husband; she seemed to be speaking Creole, and he was trying to translate for her, but his accent was as thick as those of the first three. We finally got one aide, named Deb, who was actually born in New York and spoke fluent Brooklynese, and things seemed to be looking up—though she was almost as old as us and a smoker to boot.

That was when we found the bedbug nymph and had the upper level re-treated. Kevin the exterminator suggested that they should do canine inspections of the homes of anyone who was coming here regularly, to be sure they weren't bringing bugs in. He offered to do it for free, and Deb the aide accepted the offer. They found no bugs in her apartment, but when they left, she called the agency and said she wouldn't be coming back. She claimed that the dog handler had said she had a "50 to 75%" chance of bringing bugs back to her home from the Cadre if she continued working for us. Kevin denied that his dog guy would ever have said such a thing, and opined that "It must have been a vast misunderstanding," but it doesn't look as though Deb the aide will be back, so I'm back to being a full-time caregiver.

A LITTLE SONG, A LITTLE DANCE, A LITTLE SELTZER DOWN YOUR PANTS: I mentioned lastish that we'd gone to see the revival of *Spamalot*, and Mercy van Vlack asked via email, "But what didja think of *Spamalot*? Was it Disney Python? Was there Tim Currrry as Arthur?"

The short answer: I liked it. I thought it was OK.

One of the lacunae in my aesthetics is a lack of appreciation for choreography. Whether it's ballet, modern dance, figure skating, or folks bouncing around on a Broadway stage, while I may appreciate that it took a lot of effort and practice to coordinate it all, it doesn't hit me emotionally the way a good song will. So production numbers in a musical don't bowl me over. Knowing this about myself, I don't generally go to see musicals; going to see *Spamalot* was a gift from Ethan and Ashley, which was thoughtful and appreciated by me. (How could they have possibly thought I'd be into something based on Monty Python? It's uncanny how they figured that out.)

All of the above is to say that Your Mileage May Vary if your aesthetics do not have the same gap as mine. *Spamalot* contains a lot of production numbers, and I found them wearing after a while. The film on which it was based contains a two-minute song, "We're Knights of the Round Table"; that got blown up into a ten-minute extravaganza here which I thought wasted about eight minutes. Disney Python?

Yeah, kind of. Though they didn't try to clean up the language. ("He's the king!" "How do you know?" "He isn't covered with shit!")

Outside of the production numbers, I enjoyed it a lot and was glad to finally see it, almost half a century after the *Holy Grail* film. I don't know any of the actors, but Tim Curry wasn't among them. Several, including King Arthur, were African American, which gave them a chance to do a double and triple take in response to the French knight's pronunciation of "knight" as "k-niggit."

So I guess, in Dorothy Parker's words, people who like this sort of thing will find that it's the sort of thing they like. [Follow-up: it turns out those are not Dorothy Parker's words. They're sometimes attributed to Abraham Lincoln but seem to have originated with the pseudonymous 19th century author Artemus Ward. My apologies.]

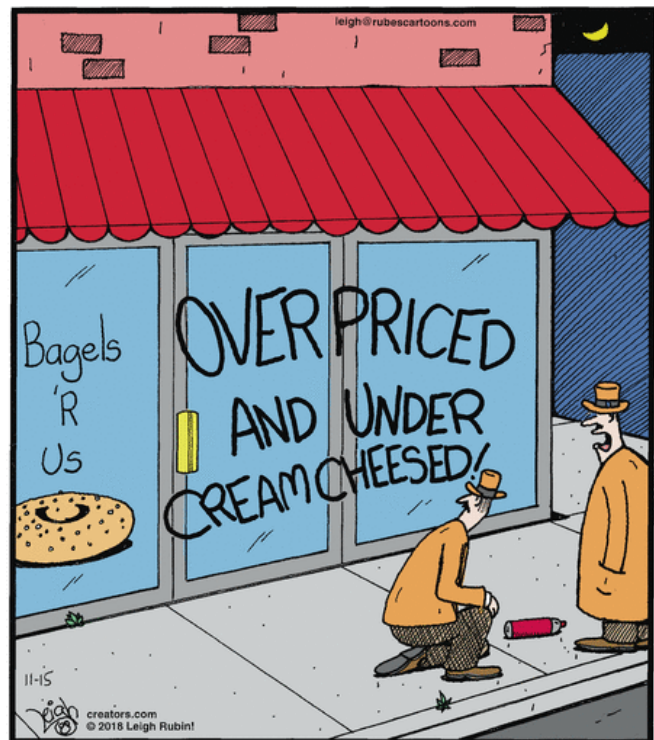
Fringe Reception: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 21, #11 (e-APA-NYU #216)

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):
(¢APA-NEWS) "I [Zoom] on my smartphone, hand held, not really feasible for long meetings, so I limit it to once a year for Seder & a July 4th party, sorry." One Zoom call that encompasses both a Seder and a July 4th party sounds like a pretty long meeting to me. /*/ (¢Nelson) "Do you think you might be personifying (sexualizing ?) your cars too much?" Is it sexualizing when sailors (or starship crew) refer to their vessels as "she"?

ICONOCLAST (Joel Nelson): I wrote last month that "It would be nice if [RPI's] website listed the [Reunion] attendees from our class year, but no such luck." Since then I've learned that the alumni page for our class year does indeed have the full list of names—65 if I'm counting correctly (and omitting the non-alumni spouses who were there). I recognized 12 of the names (and none of the faces in the group shot of some 32 folks) and would have wanted to hang out with three or four of them had I made it there.

e-APA-NYU #215 VERSUS MY ISP'S SPAM DETECTOR (Chas Belov): As I noted by e-mail, it seems appropriate to me that the e-apa be as open as its paper predecessor was. Anyone could request a spec copy, and anyone with a copy could show it to anyone else. There was no way any contributor could be sure that his words would never be read by person X or by a member of group Y. I acknowledge that Internet distribution does change the scope of availability; as the saying goes, "don't say anything online that you wouldn't want plastered on a billboard with your face on it" (attributed to tech entrepreneur Erin Bury). There is, of course, an

element of "security through obscurity" in that the likelihood of The Wrong Person purely randomly stumbling on something you've written, that it would be embarrassing to you for that person to know, is vanishingly small—but it's never zero. I'm sorry if this knowledge makes you feel inhibited about posting your likes and dislikes here, but I understand. /*/
(¢Blackman) I like bialys as an occasional variation from bagels. But it appears to me that bagels from bagel bakeries have gotten bigger over the years (a side effect of their mainstream



"This is no ordinary act of vandalism. It's obviously a schmear campaign."

(Rubes by Leigh Rubin, 15 November 2018)

acceptance?), while bialys haven't, so if the price apiece is the same, you get less for your money with bialys. Fun fact: did you know that bagel bakers and bialy bakers had two different unions through most of the 20th century? /*/ (¢me) I see that both you and Joel have expressed interest in Zooming; I'll want to explore this further, but I'm putting it on hold for a bit because the last two times I tried to use Zoom on my laptop, the app couldn't seem to access the built-in camera. When I think I have this issue resolved, let's try

it. Would Tuesday evenings from 8 to 10 Eastern time (same as the IRC chat) work for you? /*/ (¢Camp) I think most or all of us grew up believing that "broken neck" automatically meant "ruptured spinal cord" and hence "paralyzed from the neck down." So it was a shock (though a gratifying one) to see Donna still able to move despite the injury. I've been saying "broke a bone in her neck" to try to avoid that misunderstanding.

And that wraps it up for 2023, yet another stressful year in what now seems an unending series. The new year promises to be at least as stressful, so please be supportive...to whatever extent you can.



(Brewster Rockit, *Space Guy!* by Tim Rickard, 29 December 2017)

>Portions of the preceding always liked Tommy best.<