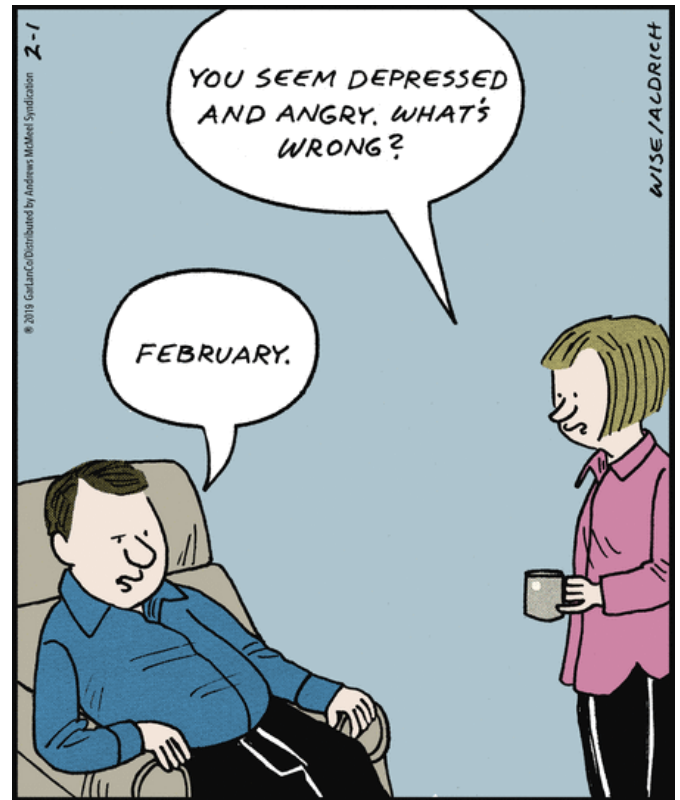


Beyond the Fringefan

[#543]

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN is having an unremarkable February, which probably is unremarkable—it's usually just an unremarkable month. In between his wife's and his own medical visits, he's mostly dealing with bureaucracies on the phone 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)). He'll probably feel somewhat more enthusiastic after we Spring Forward in a couple of weeks and the days begin to seem a bit less bleak. Meanwhile, he'll hack out **Beyond the Fringefan** #543, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 22, #2 (e-APA-NYU #219) and other grim hangers-on, published February 2024 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, 1 February 2019. All uncredited material copyright ©2024 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.



FOUR LEGS GOOD, SIX LEGS BAD: We got another visit from a bug-sniffing dog (Goosey) and her handler (Rick), sent by the company "Dr. Sniff," on Monday 26 February. The verdict: inconclusive in my room (a dead bug that may have been still there from the last treatment), but definite smell of live bugs in Donna's. We didn't turn the mattress over to search for visible bugs; Rick didn't think that was necessary. Rick recommended full treatment of both bedrooms this time—each of the last two times, they've only done one room. I *really* wish this were over. (Late follow-up: the exterminators at MMPC want to send their own dog before doing another re-treatment. I don't know if they have reason to distrust Dr. Sniff's dogs' judgment, or are trying to find a pretext to save themselves money and effort. This could get interesting if the dogs disagree; dog fighting is illegal in this state.)

INCIDENTALS: After four months, Dr. D.H. the oral surgeon took some new images of my mouth, and pronounced the site of my dual extractions fully healed and ready to start the implant process. Unfortunately, the images also turned up an abscess above another tooth nearby, necessitating an unscheduled root canal procedure. (I had been about to ask him about the odd lump that had developed in my gum over that tooth. I guess that was my answer.) Fortunately, I was able to get the root canal done the very next day, and it was as painless as any root canal I've ever undergone (and I've had quite

a few). On the negative side, that's another couple of thousand dollars out of pocket. I guess I picked the wrong year to discontinue my dental insurance (not that it would have offset very much of the expense anyway; the premiums were about \$750 a year and it had a maximum payout of \$1500 a year). Well, as my parents used to say, it's only money.... The implants are scheduled to go in just a few hours after this gets collated, so by the time you read this, I should be embarked on the next phase of my dental adventure.



(from *Rabbits Against Magic* by Jonathan Lemon, 21 December 2023)

WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS: Since Donna lost most of a hundred pounds a few years back, she's been able to fit into a standard wheelchair rather than the heavier, extra-large one that we got two decades ago and that was showing its age. We acquired a used standard-size one a year ago (thanks, Kathy!), but it's a bit worn too. The social workers at the hospital and the rehab told us we were entitled to a new one at Medicare's expense, so we said yes, please. From September through early February, we were treated to a series of calls from three different agencies, each of which swore that Donna's new wheelchair was on its way. (One said it was ready, and all we had to do was drive out to Farmingdale to pick it up. That's 40 miles east of here in Nassau County. We said no can do.) Finally, I got home from the February FISTFA to find the chair in a crate on the porch.

The only hitch was that the chair had no seat belt. This was a deal-breaker; we've hit enough bumps in the street and even inside buildings, causing Donna to pitch forward, that the risk of her ending up on the floor is just more than we can accept. We were in fact astonished that they're even making wheelchairs without seat belts anymore. But when I called the supplier, I was told that the seat belt was an accessory that the doctor had to order separately. OK, we had the supplier contact Dr. T.H., Donna's PCP, to get his OK. Problem solved? Nope; the supplier called back and said that insurance regulations required Donna to make a telehealth appointment and speak to *its* doctor, before the seat belt could be approved. So we made an appointment—another week's delay—and waited for the doctor to call or send us a link. Nothing. We called the supplier back to ask how we were supposed to keep the appointment with no contact information, but all we got was someone's voice mail. And there the matter stands. We've been told that Medicare will supply a standard-size rollator, too, but I'm not holding my breath.

On the plus side, things seem to be working out pretty well with Robbie from next door as Donna's health aide. We just need to get him to understand that Donna really doesn't want a lot of idle conversation, no matter how sociable he's feeling...

LET IT SNOW?: We've had three snowstorms so far this season, none of which left more than traces on the ground after 24 hours. The radio meteorologists reported accumulations of about an inch the first two times, but on the morning of 17 February, they claimed that as much as 10 inches had fallen on Coney Island, just two miles south of here. Still, looking out my window, I saw just a couple of inches, and by the time I left for FISTFA at 6 pm, the streets were perfectly clear and there were just patches of snow on lawns and car roofs. I do miss the look of the city with a fresh layer of snow (it lasts about a day before it gets filthy), but as a 71-year-old with arthritis, I don't miss having to shovel the stuff.

Fringe Reception: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 22, #1 (e-APA-NYU #218)

COVID vs RSV (Chas Belov): "At the moment, I am, that I know of, one degree of separation from one person who has died of COVID (in 2020) and, alas, zero degrees of separation from one person who has died of RSV (in 2024)." Um, as I

understand the term, the only person from whom you are zero degrees of separation is yourself. Nonetheless, my condolences. I intend to keep masking among strangers and to keep my vaccinations current. /*/ (cBlackman) "Re

FISStFA, ¿Are mallomars going away?” Nabisco stops making them during the summer months because the (real) chocolate coating melts. Then they get reintroduced in October with fanfare, and many of the supermarkets have them at sale prices for the first week or so. /*/ “I do not get the attraction of escape rooms.” At their best they’re a kind of logic puzzle which can be fun to solve; also, they can encourage teamwork if the puzzle has several components that require different skills. I’ve been in two different ones, both as “team-building exercises” my last boss took us to a couple of years apart (both before COVID). I thought the first one (which involved basic astronomical knowledge, math, and cryptography) was much more fun than the second (which amounted to little more than a series of number puzzles). /*/ (¢self) “Just like when they have an LG commercial on the radio, I think LGBTQ+.” When I hear a commercial (usually on a podcast) for the ZipRecruiter employment app, I think of Abe Zapruder, the guy in Dallas whose home movie of the JFK assassination has been at the center of much of the controversy.

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):
 “Manischewitz Concord Grape (‘too terribly sweet’)...” I recall trying some Manischewitz wines with “Cream” in their names back at my parents’ Seders in the 1980s and finding them still sweet but much less sickly so. /*/ (¢me) I’ve been wondering if bedbugs have been on the rise overall since COVID began because people were more worried about infections than infestations. This might have caused some to miss the evidence of their presence, and may also have

made it harder to get exterminators to come to treat houses. /*/ Thanks for the reprint of the Richard Bowes report. I was able to read the story “There’s a Hole in the City” online. (The references to the *General Slocum* disaster were strangely resonant, as I’d only learned about that a year or so ago, on a *Bowery Boys* podcast.)

ICONOCLAST (Joel Nelson): (¢Blackman) “‘8:20 on clocks’ What is that about?” I think he was referring to the practice, in advertising clocks and watches back in the analog day, of showing them set to 8:20. There are urban legends about why (e.g., allegedly it’s the hour when Lincoln was shot), but the essential reason is that it puts the hands in a pleasing symmetry that usually doesn’t block any brand names or logos that might be on the clock’s face. /*/ “I was driving slow enough...that my phone tracking app showed me as bicycling 4 miles and taking 22 minutes to do so.” What phone tracking app are you running that deduces what mode of transport you’re using? If you’re stuck in traffic and crawling along at less than 5 miles/hour, does it decide that you’re walking? (That’s one way to get your steps in.)



(Speed Bump by Dave Coverly, 24 May 2015)

One gratifying thing in February: Jon Stewart’s back on *The Daily Show*, albeit only one night a week. This may lighten the painful slog to Election Day, just a bit. (I was confused to read that New York State has its primary elections on 25 June but also has “Presidential preference primaries” on 2 April. I don’t see what benefit the extra set of votes will provide, other than extra paychecks for poll workers.)

So for those who celebrate the vernal equinox or St. Patrick’s Day, may your March be green. For those who celebrate Purim, may you *not* end up green from too much wine or too many *hamantaschen*. And let’s try not to support dictators, not even for one day.

**>Portions of the preceding want 29 February in the Year of the Dragon
 to be the Day of the Leaping Lizard.<**