

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN

[#551]

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN and his lady have now voted, early and absentee respectively, and can do little more but watch anxiously from 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)) as the hours tick down to Election Day and the commencement of the volleys of accusations, counter-accusations, and threats. At least he'll be busy all day on The Day and won't have time to think much about it until he gets home at 10 pm or so. This is **Beyond the Fringefan** #551, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 22, #10 (e-APA-NYU #227) and other poll vaulters, published October 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, 3 November 2020. All uncredited material copyright ©2024 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.



I was pleased to see, when I went to early-vote last Sunday, that turnout was heavy enough to form a few minutes' waiting queue at the door. I have my poll work assignment for Election Day, and will be in the same place as on primary day in June, at a parochial school about three-fifths of a mile from the Cadre. Again, this is good, as it will allow me time to bike home during lunch and dinner breaks and check in on Donna.

October started off with our washing machine breaking down. Again. The last time (four months earlier), it had washed OK but refused to spin dry; this time, it was balking at any kind of motion of the tub or agitator. I contacted Dial Appliance Repair and the guy came by on Tuesday the 8th, but after taking the machine apart, he informed us that the motor was leaking oil and the machine was probably at that point where it wasn't worth fixing. He recommended going to P.C. Richard and getting a Maytag or Speed Queen machine as a replacement, along with the longest service contract (8 years) they offered. Time was of the essence—we now need to do a washload just about every day—so I went to P.C. before the day was out and ordered a machine that they promised they could deliver within two days.

Most of the new machines are “smart”—Wi-fi enabled so that you can start the machine from an app on your phone—but we had no desire for that. Why add complexity to the operation, not to mention more potential exposure of our network to hackers? Besides, starting the machine up by remote control doesn't do much good unless the machine can load and unload itself and carry the laundry up and down stairs, features they haven't yet implemented. The new machine does seem higher-tech than the late

lamented 25-year-old one; you start it with a push button rather than a knob, and the first part of the cycle turns the tub slowly back and forth while the machine estimates how full it is and tries to balance the load better. It also has no agitator, but rather something a good bit smaller called an impeller; I don't know if that makes it any more or less effective at washing clothes, but it does increase the tub's capacity.

I also had to replace a car key—which doesn't sound like much of a big deal, but the carmakers have turned what was once a simple piece of etched metal into a sophisticated electronic device with multiple push buttons and a radio-frequency ID that the car recognizes and won't start without. The plastic housing for all that stuff—the head of the key—gradually wore away at its fastener, until it would no longer grip the piece of etched metal that fits into the door or ignition, and I had a metal piece that I couldn't turn and a plastic piece that wouldn't fit. (Fortunately, I'd made sure to have a spare. I've only locked myself out of a car once in my life, but that's plenty.) I knew it wouldn't be cheap to replace, especially since only the dealer can do it, but I was a bit shocked when the price exceeded \$300. For a freakin' key. [Follow-up: Bishop, my mechanic on Coney Island Avenue, says I didn't need to go to the dealer after all; he knows someone who could have replaced the key, hardware and software and all, for about half what I ended up paying. Dang.]

Donna continues to feel out of sorts both physically and mentally. We're switching to having home health aides here six days a week: Robbie on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and a lady named Endy from a different agency on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The doctors are experimenting with removing some of the 20-some meds from her daily regimen to see if it helps reduce her edema and improve her alertness. (There may be other emotional things going on; we're still exploring them.) Many thanks to Fred Cookinham for offering to Donna-sit while I spend the third Saturday evening of the month at FISTFA.



(Rina Piccolo and Hilary B. Price for *Six Chix*, 26 May 2023)

FRINGE RECEPTION: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 22, #9 (e-APA-NYU #226)

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):

May you have bathroom walls again soon. /*/
“there are bits of Bristol, England in Manhattan;”
I did not know that. Thanks for mentioning it. Per the Atlas Obscura website, during World War II, “U.S. and Canadian merchant marine vessels steamed across the Atlantic to keep the British defenders supplied against Nazi Germany’s assault. ... When they arrived, the supply ships delivered so much cargo, with nothing to bring back, that they needed ballast to stabilize them for the return journey. The men and women of Bristol, many of whose homes had been utterly destroyed by the Luftwaffe’s air assault, loaded

these ships with the rubble of their city. ...

[T]hese literal chunks of England returned to the U.S., where merchant marine vessels offloaded them into the East River The resulting landfill created the area known as Bristol Basin, quite literally built from part of England.” /*/ “Now to see about a Covid booster.” I got one with minimal waiting time at a Walgreens on Cortelyou Road in mid-September. Ask at the pharmacy where you got your previous ones. /*/ (ccover) “Is it a home or a Con Suite?” It was a home, and the hurried, harried hostess pictured was Jackie Nieves. /*/ (cAPA-NEWS) I had a slight preference for WCBS’s “all-news” style

over WINS's, but in the later years CBS seemed to be broadcasting sports (not only baseball but randomly football, and even basketball and hockey) games whenever I needed information (especially weather and traffic), so I switched to WINS more and more. /*/ (çme) Hoople, besides being the Major in the old *Our Boarding House* comic strip, was also the town where the University of Southern North Dakota is located. (Peter Schickele was a professor of musical pathology there.) And an obscure 1960s novel titled *Mott the Hoople* inspired Ian Hunter to rename his band after it. /*/ (çself çBelov) "With the change in weather, I never seem to be dressed right." That's New York autumn (and spring). Aren't you used to it after all these years? Layers!

DR. SPOCK vs. MRS. SPOCK (Chas Belov): I believe the slogan was "Never underestimate the power of a woman," and it was an advertising tag line of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. /*/ Congratulations on completing a book of *New York Times* Wednesday crosswords. I usually do the Sunday ones in several short stints, so I have no clear idea how long they take me. /*/ Ink? As a math major (and one with less than maximally legible handwriting), I've used graphite for everything, unless specifically told to use ink, going back to grade school. It would never occur to me to fill in a crossword or any other kind of

puzzle in ink. /*/ "Heaven help me, though, if two of these head-scratchers cross each other." Blogger Rex Parker, winner of several crossword tournaments, calls such a situation a "Natick"—from a puzzle he was doing in which "N.C. WYETH" (the early 20th century painter) crossed "NATICK" (the exurb of Boston). /*/ (çme)



(Brewster Rockit, *Space Guy!* by Tim Rickard, 19 May 2023)

"Hopefully, Ms. Krist's spinal problems are as long gone as the computer floppy disks that still serve as the save icon." Regrettably, Ms. Krist passed away over a decade ago; I don't think her spinal problems were a cause. /*/ The disclaimer about "brat" was a reference to a viral social media post by the British singer Charli XCX shortly after Harris replaced Biden as the Democratic presidential candidate: "Kamala Is Brat." It was all over the news and talk shows for a couple of weeks; no one over 25 had any clue what it meant. (Few had any idea who Charli XCX is. I confess to being among those in the dark about both those topics.) Search the Web and you'll find all the discussion of the meme that you could ask for, and more.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed that Halloween will be the scariest thing we all have to deal with in the next month, and that we'll soon have much to be thankful for. Enjoy the sugar rush, turn your clocks back, and then be sure to go out and vote, and do your best to get your friends to do so as well. See you in the dark a month from now.

>Portions of the preceding have a concept of a plan.<