

Beyond the Fringefan

[#553]



"I DON'T WANT TO START THE YEAR OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT, SO I'M STAYING IN BED ALL DAY."

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN has survived another Xmas season but is still feeling pretty inertial at the start of the day, waiting (as many seem to be) for the next several shoes (political and medical) to drop. The 4:30 pm sunsets aren't helping much either. You can find him sticking close by 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)) and wondering why he doesn't seem to be getting more organizing done. Well, at least he's still cranking out **Beyond the Fringefan** #553, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 22, #12 (e-APA-NYU #229) and other bed-sitter people, published December 2024 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above by Amy Hwang for *The New Yorker* (date uncertain). All uncredited material copyright ©2024 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.

THE HIP HOP NEVER STOPS: I spoke with surgeon Dr. D.M. and his surgical coordinator, and was disappointed to learn that the soonest they could schedule my hip replacement was 10 February of the new year. That's about a month more of moving like a crippled old man than I was hoping for, but I guess I'll manage. (I have a folding cane that used to be my mother's. I've been carrying it on and off for a few months, but have only begun using it with any frequency since the beginning of December. There are good days and bad days.) In answer to a couple of my questions, the doctor said I should figure on being unable to drive or bicycle for six weeks after the surgery. This will put a major crimp in my lifestyle, and we're currently discussing ways to work with this restriction. I guess I'll be learning to use Uber, and registering with a few grocery delivery services. FISTFA will just have to get along without me in February and maybe March. Fortunately, I'm not so social as to have many other engagements to worry about.

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?: My new audiologist, Dr. H.K., found quite an accumulation of wax in my right ear—so much that a couple of weeks of treatment with Debrox were necessary to soften the deepest layers so they could be extracted. She declined to guess how many years it had been building up. Despite the wax, it turns out that the hearing in my right ear is better than in my left. I'm now the proud possessor of a pair of hearing aids that are supposed to be capable of separating speech from background noise as well as restoring the high frequencies that I've lost over the years. (I'm also several thousand dollars poorer, since Medicare covers hearing tests but not hearing aids.)

I expect I'll be spending some time getting used to them. As of the first couple of weeks, my general impression is that they aren't doing much for making speech more understandable, but they're doing a great job of amplifying all sorts of high-pitched noises I wasn't particularly noticing before—squeaking floorboards, rustling paper bags, beeping alarms. But I haven't really been in a lot of conversations in noisy environments yet; the proper evaluation will probably be asking people I talk to a lot whether I seem to be saying "hah?" and "say what?" less over time. (Donna's impression after a few days is that I seem to be talking less loudly overall, as though I was previously having trouble hearing myself—something that would never have occurred to me.) I've heard a few singers making appearances on TV since wearing the aids, and I'm having as much trouble making out the words they're singing as before.

The aids are quite small, barely an inch long and thinner than a pencil. They go behind each ear, with a wire connecting to an earbud-like speaker that goes into the ear canal. The small size and light weight make them visually unobtrusive, but also create a hazard: Nothing is holding the thing in place but friction with the top of my ear (plus the earbud's resistance to being pulled out). The earpieces of my glasses (and the sunglasses that fit over them) have to fit there as well, and the headset I plug into my cell phone, and the ear loops of any masks I use to avoid COVID (or other) contagion. If I put a shirt on or off over my head, one or both of the aids can try to make a break for it—and because they weigh so little, I may not immediately perceive their absence. This in fact happened just three days after I got the aids; I was giving blood at a drive at a synagogue a couple of miles from the Cadre, removed my sweatshirt to give the medics access to my veins, put it back on afterward—and didn't notice until I was driving home afterward that my right ear was bereft of its hearing aid. I made a panicked call to the synagogue (whose office had already closed for the night), and fortunately, someone had found it and I was able to retrieve it the next day. But you can bet I'll be paranoid for the rest of my days about the prospect of suddenly and unwittingly losing a \$2000+ hearing aid.

BLINDED BY THE LIGHTHOUSE: We got Donna to the Manhattan office of the Lighthouse Guild the day before her birthday, on an official gridlock alert day. (The office is on West 64th Street, and it took us nearly an hour and a half to get there and longer to get back.) A nice lady named Dr. R.L. gave her eyes a thorough exam, and then wrote out a new prescription Donna can take to our regular optometrist to have new glasses made. She showed Donna some visual aids, but they were mostly just magnifiers: clip-ons, illuminated hand-helds, and boxes that sit on top of a book or tablet. She also noted that if Donna now only uses one eye to read (the macular degeneration in her right eye has reached that point), glasses can be made using frosted glass in one lens so that the garbled image from that side doesn't interfere. Donna has been experimenting for a year now with handmade paper sleeves that cover the right lens of her glasses for just that purpose. Overall, she wasn't much impressed.



(Broom Hilda by Russell Meyers, 31 December 2022)

Fringe Reception: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 22, #11 (e-APA-NYU #228)

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

The “I Voted Early!” stickers they were handing out this year didn’t have such good stickum; mine fell off the jacket I’d put it on before the day was out. The stickers from last year and the year before are still on it. /*/ Yes, it’s frightening how many different demographics seem to have voted in direct opposition to their self-interests.

You can’t fool all of the people all of the time, but 49.9% seems to be all you need. /*/ (¢self) “The hamsa illos refused to insert where I wanted them to. (My page break might have played a part.)” I occasionally find that MS Word inserts pictures in the right place on the wrong page. Undoing and moving the cursor to a different location before trying the insert again usually helps. (I also use “frames,” a holdover from older versions, to contain the pictures and captions; they seem better behaved than the newer “text boxes” or just inserting the picture directly.) /*/ Yes, there are laundromats as close as three



(Tina's Groove by Rina Piccolo, 2007)

blocks away from the Cadre. But if I’m doing a load or two every day, shlepping everything back and forth will eat up the majority of my time.

OLD FRIDGE vs. NEW FRIDGE (Chas Below):

Your zine title made me imagine Eric Burdon singing, “Old fridge, new fridge, feel all right/On a warm San Franciscan night.” /*/ If there was “ice in the innards of the fridge in the duct that transports cold air from the freezer compartment to the fridge comp,” that might have indicated a malfunction in the fridge itself, not an error in your defrosting technique. But now you’ll never know. /*/ (¢me) I don’t know about YouTube Music, but there’s plenty of P.D.Q. Bach on regular YouTube (and also some of Schickele’s non-P.D.Q. material, mislabeled as by P.D.Q.).

...and another year passes into the dustbin of history. I’m sure there have been times in the not-so-distant past when we could realistically hope for a good New Year, or at least a better one than the one just ending, but I’m having a little trouble mustering that kind of optimism right now. About the best I can do at the moment is to wish us all a New Year we can survive. Take care of yourselves.

>Portions of the preceding note that Inauguration Day

will be closely followed by the start of the Year of the Snake.<