

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN [#564]

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN is once again enduring the indignities of home renovation 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)), a process that has already taken considerably more days than he'd hoped and feels as though it may ultimately cause his decline and fall. There's nothing he can do except sit amid the rubble and put out **Beyond the Fringefan** #564, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 23, #11 (e-APA-NYU #240) and others who are forum or againstum, published November 2025 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above from *Off the Mark* by Mark Parisi, 5 May 2010. All uncredited material copyright ©2025 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.



ROOMS FOR IMPROVEMENT: The Cadre is over a century old (and, we suspect, was not well treated by some of its previous owners), so it's been needing a lot of fixing up in the nearly four decades we've resided here. Over the past few years, we've had Seymour the handyman and his brother refurbish the three bedrooms upstairs—primarily tearing down and replacing old disintegrating sheetrock walls and ceilings and repainting everything, plus sanding and polyurethaning the floors. Next up were the dining and living rooms. The dining room in particular has had conspicuously peeling paint along the south wall, an eight-foot crack in the ceiling plaster near the stairs, and an occasional random chunk of said plaster letting go and falling like an autumn leaf. Donna has long wanted to fix the rooms up, and we finally had Seymour start on it just before Halloween.

There were three china cabinets in the dining room whose contents—some actual china and glassware, and a busload of knickknacks—had gotten packed up by the Thugs during the bedbug operation of two years ago. Ethan and I had unpacked much of the stuff and re-shelved it back in the spring, by way of getting some of the 200-odd cardboard crates out of the house, but now we had to empty the cabinets and pack it up all over again so that the entire contents of the room could be evacuated. (Poor planning, perhaps, but Stuff Happens.) Ethan did more than half of the packing work one Sunday, and Janelle the aide volunteered to pack a couple more crates once I'd bought them and some packing paper from U-Haul. Seymour and friends moved furniture into the living room while we were out at a medical



(Rhymes with Orange by Rina Piccolo and Hilary B. Price, 7 March 2025)

appointment one day, and then started knocking down (literally) the old plaster and sheetrock the day before Election Day. The banging continued nonstop for two more days and intermittently thereafter, and left piles of debris on the floor (which they eventually swept up, bagged, and carried out) and a layer of dust all over three rooms and up the stairs (which they eventually mopped).

As should be expected, things took longer than expected. Seymour found that some of the century-old wood behind one wall, including a couple of studs, was rotted and needed to be shored up. He was also out sick for a couple of days, on his own behalf and that of his wife. As of Thanksgiving, the dining room looks paint-ready, but by the time the walls, ceiling, and floor are all done, it will be into December. Donna has decided to wait until next year and after my recovery to think about doing the living room.

LEFT-HANDED COMPLIMENTS: I'm pleased to report that Donna's hand has healed sufficiently for the dermatologists not to want any further follow-up visits. There's still a bit of scabbing around the edge of the skin graft, but Dr. M.T. said it should fall off within the next couple of weeks. Mostly she needs to endure the itching there without scratching or picking at it. Covering it with a cotton glove helps.

I saw my orthopedic surgeon, Dr. D.M., just before Thanksgiving, and scheduled my second hip replacement (the right hip this time). The big day is set for Thursday, 22 January, and the location will be Maimonides Medical Center's main location in Borough Park. I'd hoped to do the scheduling sooner, but didn't want to until we'd explored the options some more for how to keep Donna taken care of while I'm in the hospital and the rehab.

We'd started last February with aides spending four hours a day at the Cadre, but it quickly became apparent that Donna needed more than that, and we'd gone to eight hours a day (four hours on Sundays) by the end of the month. Even with that, both Ethan and I were getting distress calls from her almost every night.

So in the waning days of summer, I started making calls to assisted-living facilities in the area to see whether it would be feasible for Donna to stay in one for a month or so. Many of them were not up for short-term stays at all, but one with two locations (Sheepshead Bay and Mill Basin) was willing to do a stay of 30 days at minimum. We went for a tour one day, and Donna thought it seemed like a very nice place—it didn't have the impersonal institutional style of the nursing homes she and I had been in for rehab, or the ones where she'd worked in the past. She said she could be comfortable if she had to go there temporarily, and that if the time comes when she needs assisted living long-term, she might even choose to move there.

But when we got home, she admitted that she'd still prefer to be at home if there was any way to swing it. Not only would moving her and her Stuff to the assisted-living place and back be a hassle (and necessitate acquiring an extra piece or two of furniture), but if she stopped using the services of the aides she's come to know and trust, the agency said they might not be available when she came back. This would be unacceptable, as we've finally, after much hassle, found aides with whom we are simpatico.

We talked with Janelle and Natalie, and both are OK with doing longer shifts for four to six weeks as needed. Janelle pointed out that she has a car and is only 15 minutes away, so in an emergency, Donna could call her and she could come over at night. (This I would call service above and beyond the call of duty.) With this assurance, Donna feels that she could manage better than she did last February. I hope she's right.

POLLS APART: I made it to my polling place, the gymnasium at IS 395/PS 109, on time at 5 am on Election Day and reported for duty as line management clerk. I spent much of the next hour as half of a team (with another line manager named Maude) trying to attach "VOTE HERE" and "NO ELECTIONEERING" signs to a metal fence in a high wind with masking tape that was past its prime and kept shredding on the roll. We managed somehow, then trudged inside and took our positions.

I guess they expected a crushing volume that day, because I was one of three line managers. Coordinator Gayle stationed one of us near the information table, a second one ten feet away at the door to the gymnasium, and the third another ten feet away in the school lobby. But at no point during the day did the line extend out the gym door into the school lobby. I was that third one for the first few hours, and did nothing more than greet people and point them toward the gym door. At least they gave me a chair.

But when I got back from my lunch break, I was promoted: now Maude and I were both sitting near the information table. For the rest of the day, more than half the time, we were doing the same thing the two information clerks were: looking people's addresses up and telling them which district table to go to in order to sign in and get their ballots. The difference was that the information clerks had a tablet computer to do the lookups on, and we just had my cell phone and the Board of Elections website. (I'd thought to bring a charged power bank, so my phone's battery wasn't in danger of running out.) The rest of the time, we were (1) telling people that if they already knew which table to go to (by having the FastPass tag supposedly mailed out to all voters the preceding month), they needn't loiter by us, and (2) pointing them at a QR code on a wall poster that led to the same Board of Elections website, so that the tech-savvy could look up their own addresses and save time. (It might have saved time if there'd been a long line, but the website wasn't really geared to naïve users, and the people who did their own lookups had to be coached each time on where, in the long and cluttered results page, to find the one datum they were seeking. Really, it was simpler and faster to let us do the looking up.) But we soldiered on for the rest of the day, and having us there doing the lookups may have been the reason the line never got too long. Coordinator Gayle seemed impressed by our performance and thanked me at teardown time (and let me leave at only about 9:25), so I'd be perfectly happy to work that location again in the future.



(Brewster Rockit, Space Guy! by Tim Rickard, 25 September 2024)

There was a change this time to the large signs at the ED/AD tables: besides the ED and AD numbers, they now sported geometric figures in color. Table 043/58's sign had a green square. Table 002/41 had a red circle. Table 005/41 had a yellow circle. Or so Maude informed me, anyway; my protanopic vision was not registering all the colors. But where I was telling people that table 007/41 was the one in the corner, Maude was advising them to go to the table with the orange triangle. I guess some people's eyes were just glazing over at the profusion of numerals, and the color and shape coding was helping. Hey, whatever works.

My eyes were glazing over for a day or two after Election Day, but I think my body had recovered from the sleep deprivation by the weekend.

FRINGE RECEPTION: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 23, #10 (e-APA-NYU #239)

JAMESON TAKE A LETTER vs. JAMESON
TAKE E-LETTER vs. ART LINKLETTER
(Chas Below): Careful there. Jamison was
Captain Spaulding's secretary. Jameson's is an
Irish whiskey. /*/ I haven't been mask-harassed,



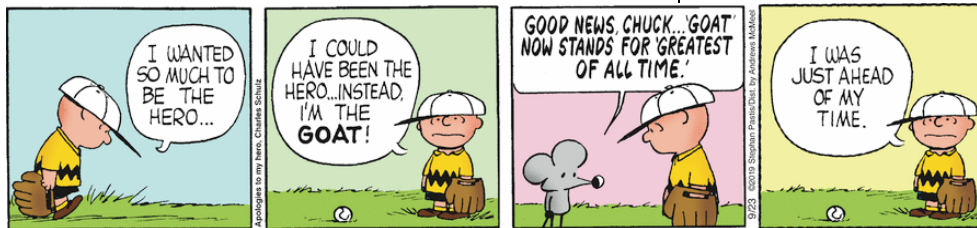
(Dark Side of the Horse by Samson, 19 May 2025)

though I mask fairly consistently when in shops and the like. I'd say that if the harasser is passing by in a car or on a bike, there's no point in trying to formulate a retort; it won't change your opinion or the harasser's. (I suppose that would probably apply even if the harasser is standing there. If the harasser seemed to want to engage, you could dispassionately state your reasons for masking and leave it at that. I might respond with something like "I'm old and asthmatic and therefore high-risk. You decide what risks you're willing to take, and I'll decide what risks I'm willing to take.") /*/ Per my old Pseudo-Roster files, Doris Bail's first APA-NYU contribution was in collation #159, which would have been in August 1988. /*/ (¢Blackman) The problem I have with finding things is that I clearly remember where I left the thing, and it's not there. I'll try several other places where I "might have" left it, in full awareness that I didn't, and sure enough, the missing thing isn't in any of those places either. After I go out and buy another one, the missing thing reappears, exactly where I remember leaving it. This has been

happening to me for decades, leading me to believe there are indeed wormholes in space-time. /*/ (¢me) I know the difference between vegan, vegetarian, lactovegetarian, ovolactovegetarian, and pescatarian. I was remarking on the fact that, though fish are every bit as alive as cows and chickens, the rules of kashruth consider them parve (neither meat nor dairy), and therefore, some Jews don't stop to think of fish as violating a vegetarian diet—hence the description of the food at the reception as "vegetarian" when it included salmon. /*/ I wonder if any *Star Wars*-oriented conventions have included a party featuring bubble tea and called it a Boba Fête. /*/ I mentioned zip-lining because my grandnephew's bar mitzvah reception two and a half years earlier had been held at a sort of indoor amusement park, called Urban Air, which did indeed feature zip-lining. I noted in my January 2023 zine that I was undoubtedly twice the age of anyone else who tried that ride. /*/ "Sad that 10 people get APA-NYU but only 4 regularly contribute. Guess the others are on the waitlist." I used to say, back in the days of the paper apa, that the APA-NYU waitlist consisted of all the people who were taking copies, and we were waiting for them to contribute. /*/ "I've always been skeptical of making fun of politicians I disagree with over pronunciation issues." The *New York Times* ran an article last month on why many Americans find Zohran Mamdani's name hard to pronounce. If it's an honest mistake, I can gloss over it, but certain politicians keep mispronouncing their opponents' names so consistently, despite having been corrected, that it seems obvious that it's deliberate, a kind of trolling. /*/ (¢self) "I have a rule: no news during breakfast. I might need to extend it to during breakfast prep but I'd kinda like to know whether the world has ended." Or as

Pete Seeger sang, “I get up each morning and dust off my wits,/Open the paper and read the obits./If I’m not there, I know I’m not dead,/So I eat a good breakfast and go back to bed.”

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman): (¢me) “I thought bat mitzvahs were at age 12.” Come to think of it, that’s what I learned decades ago, too. But Hannah was born in 2012, so she’s definitely 13. Apparently while the Orthodox tradition sets the age of majority for girls at 12, most Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist communities now use 13 for both sexes (in the name of gender equality?). /*/ “But certainly someones else have been writing the [*Peanuts*] tv specials and there was the theatrical show.” The writing on the first several TV specials was credited to Schulz himself (though there was doubtless input from producer Lee Mendelson and his staff). Others were



(*Pearls Before Swine* by Stephan Pastis, 23 September 2019)

credited on the later ones, and the stage musical *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* was credited to John Gordon (book) and Clark Gesner (songs)—neither of whom I’ve ever heard of otherwise. /*/ (¢Nelson) You actually received the back brace the scammers promised you? I’m

amazed. Have you tried wearing it? Does it seem to do you any good? /*/ (¢Belov) “I find knowing potential side effects vital. Apparently one antibiotic I was given was causing depression & mood swings, explaining why I was so sad & frustrated by my shortness of breath.” We look up any new meds Donna is prescribed, to check for side effects and interactions, so we know what to watch out for. The Mayo Clinic website is good for information like that.

ICONOCLAST (Joel Nelson): (¢Belov) “Glad the chairs are working for you. Do you know of any that provide a surface for eating?’ I’ll soon be bringing a chair into the house that will serve as a table.” Once a year or so at Aldi, they sell for \$10 or \$15 a tray table, made of bamboo, about 14 by 20 inches, with legs that elevate it by about 8 inches but fold flat underneath when it’s not in use. Since I now eat the majority of my meals

while sitting on my bed, I find this extremely useful. /*/ Two years ago, the Cadre Conveyance’s alternator failed, and I was able to drive about 95% of the 2.7 miles to my mechanics’ service station before the battery died completely. (Bishop the mechanic brought a booster pack down to where the car was sitting, and got it the rest of the way there.) That you were able to get 33 miles of driving out of your battery with no alternator suggests that your prayers were indeed answered.

Time to go hibernate until the dining room and the new hip joint are ready. Have a wonderful winter observance of your choice.

>Portions of the preceding would be climbing the walls, if they could find the walls.<