

Beyond the Fringefan

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN salutes the nominally United States of America on the occasion of its semiquincentennial, an occasion that has probably sent more people running to dictionaries than any other in the past century. He fears, though, that if he were waiting for the country to be truly united, he'd be holding his breath until his face turned red, white, and blue. He's just watching the latest fireworks from Washington and the midwest from what he hopes is a safe distance 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[dot]nycadre[dot]org))). This is **Beyond the Fringefan** #571, for readers of **APA-NYU** Volume 24, #6 (e-APA-NYU #247) and others whose patience is flagging, published June 2026 as a combined production of Quick Brown Fox Press and Syscrash Consulting, both subsidiaries of **THIGAMAJIG**. Cartoon above by Glenn McCoy for *The New Breed*, 18 January 1991. All uncredited material copyright ©2026 by Marc S. Glasser. Member fwa.

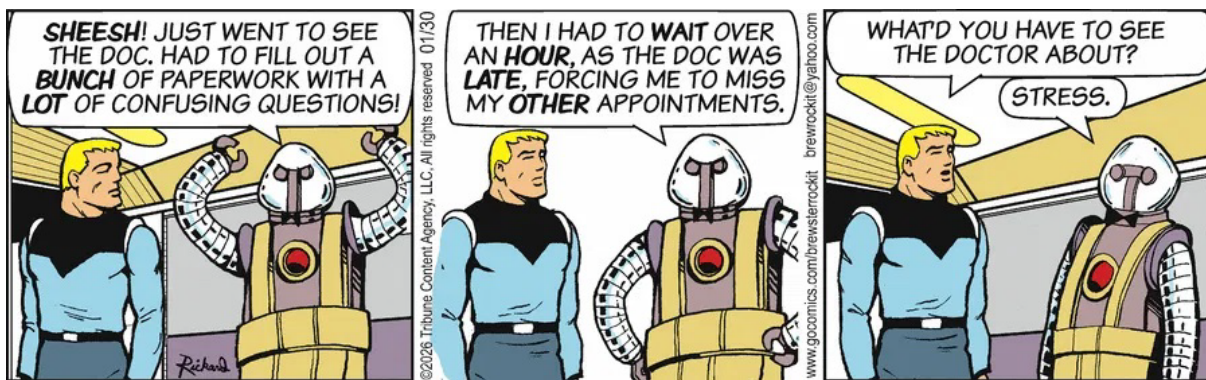


Lots of bad news recently. My old college roommate Joel Nelson, who'd been a regular contributor to APA-NYU for three decades or so, passed away last month. Unfortunately, I have no other details; his wife Joann called and left a very brief message, and I've been unable to talk to her ever since. (Their answering machine may be on the blink, but I believe at least one of the several messages I attempted to leave got through.) Joel was a few months older than me, and like me was a math major who found the increasingly abstract forms of higher math decreasingly fascinating as we went on; like me, he ended up working in computers (though he did a few other things, including driving trucks, before landing the job with New York State that became his career). I'd like to find out what did him in; other than the usual aches and pains that define our age bracket, he'd said nothing to indicate he was in less than good health. I hope he's ended up in the heaven he believes in.

Joel's family lived not far from Tute, and after graduation, I went back with him to his home, where he and I and one of his sisters spent an evening shmoozing and passing around a bottle or two of wine. It was the first time I'd gotten drunk, and the first thing I noticed was that people were speaking perfectly good straight lines, and I was unable to come up with the atrocious puns that were just waiting to be spoken in response. Scared the hell out of me. (The second thing I noticed was a strong desire to crawl off into a corner and take a nap.) That's a big part of why I don't drink.

Leo Sands was a Baltimore SF fan of all media, a sometime LGBTQ activist, and a long-time huckster at SF conventions, having joined his wife Kathy in the operation of her bookstore Tales from the White Hart. Kathy noted that he was “built like a linebacker” when they met; he was a hearty eater who worked off the calories as an avid folk-dancer. But after a leg injury which left him unable to dance, he continued to eat the same way, leading to morbid obesity, diabetes, and a variety of other conditions to which he finally succumbed at the age of 76. BSFS held a “wake” for him at the clubhouse in mid-June. We’ll miss him.

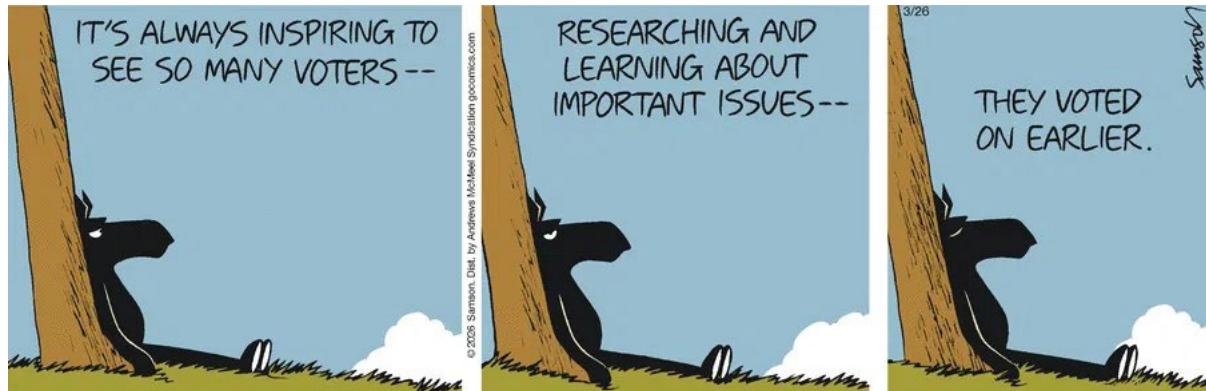
Thom Anderson was finding himself feeling fatigued and weak during his daily walks in May, which was not good, but what was worse was his tripping and falling on the sidewalk on Saturday the 16th, just a couple of hours before he’d be hosting FISTFA. We were able to get the word out to everyone not to show up, and Thom spent the evening in the E.R. They sent him home late that night, but his doctor called him back a couple of days later, reporting that the tests had turned up not only heart but also kidney issues. He was back in hospital for ten days, during which they put him on dialysis (which they swore was only temporary), implanted a pacemaker, and did a heart-valve repair procedure. He relocated in early June to a rehab center in the Bronx, where he remains as I write. On a more hopeful note, he’s starting to walk again after a couple of weeks flat on his back, and may eventually get back to being able to walk dozens of blocks daily, as he was doing as recently as this spring. But the dialysis continues, and the doctors are now saying he might need it indefinitely.



(Brewster Rockit, Space Guy! by Tim Rickard, 20 January 2026)

On a more pleasant note, I spent another day as a poll worker on 23 June. Once again, the job required me to be at the polling place at 5 am to put up signage and otherwise prepare for official opening time at 6 am. The polling place was one I’d worked at once before, the lunchroom of a grade school on Avenue M near Utica Avenue, just over a mile from the Cadre, about a twelve-minute bike ride. The hardest part of the day, of course, was getting out of bed at 3:30 am so as to be dressed and breakfasted and over there in time (I made it with seconds to spare). It was primary election day in predominantly Democratic New York, and the Republicans didn’t even bother running a primary. Democrat Kathy Hochul, the gubernatorial incumbent, seems to have garnered little serious in-party opposition, so no one had to vote on that office; that left only Congressional representatives and a few minor city positions, and though some Congressional seats in the state were significantly contested, the ones in the districts covered by my place this time weren’t. Hence it was a pretty quiet day; I estimate fewer than 300 voters stopped in during the 15 hours the poll was open. I was partnered at the information desk with a twenty-something woman named Leanne who was studying remotely at Empire State University (part of SUNY), and in between looking up districts for voters who didn’t know theirs (there were eight electoral districts represented at the place), we commiserated about the early wake-up time and the temperature: despite it being late June, it was a cool and cloudy day, and yet the school’s air conditioning was on full blast. By the end of the day, we were all wearing sweaters or jackets or both! (Still a great improvement over primary day a year ago, when we were sweltering in a windowless, non-air-conditioned gymnasium on

the Brooklyn College campus on one of the hottest days of the year.) Fortunately, with the small turnout, the shutdown at 9 pm went smoothly and quickly, and we got out fast enough that I made it home before 9:45 pm. Things will almost certainly be busier come the general election in November.



(Dark Side of the Horse by Samson, 26 March 2026)

Fringe Reception: Comments on APA-NYU, Volume 24, #5 (e-APA-NYU #246)

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):
(çmeçBelov) "I'd expect "es" to be code for Espanol." It is. "eo" is the code for Esperanto. Chas used the correct code for Esperanto in the main text of his colophon but then mentioned the wrong one in his explanatory note at the end. /*/
The old *Doctor Who* episodes that have been turning up in the past two decades have been individual chapters of four- and six-part serials; as far as I know, no complete stories have been unearthed in this century. (The BBC does have complete soundtracks for all episodes, and video clips or stills of most, and occasionally will produce a composite version of a serial using animation to fill in the missing parts. Where there are fans, there are ways.)

BEYOND THE FRINGEFAN (me): Ethan pointed me at a couple of websites (minutecryptic.com and parseword.com) that, for those unused to cryptic crosswords, provide a single cryptic clue each day, with detailed explanations available showing step by step how the clues are parsed and solved. I recommend them for anyone interested in the form.

(FLOTSAM vs JETSAM) vs (FLINTSTONES vs JETSONS) (Chas Belov): Your title reminded me of a 1960s *TV Guide* synopsis of an episode of *Gilligan's Island*: "The castaways hold a beauty contest after a disagreement over who is the fairest flotsam of all—Ginger, Mrs. Howell or Mary Ann." (Apparently, archive.org has things like the entire text of old *TV Guide* issues available for browsing.) /*/ I had not seen "it me" online or in a crossword puzzle right up until I



(Strange Brew by John Deering, 8 June 2026)

read your mention of it here. I don't like it (as if anyone who might be likely to use the phrase would care about my opinion), but now I'll try to remember it in case it comes up in a puzzle I'm solving. /*/ Haven't gotten many spams with emojis in the subject lines, just a few from the supermarkets whose loyalty cards I hold ("Hurry 🕒 ...Your Digital Savings are about to Expire!"). /*/ One of the recent ones telling me my anti-virus software had been auto-renewed at a price of \$484.77 was signed by "Webroot PC Protection • Billing head: Franklin Bullwinkle." I debated replying "But that trick *never* works!" but decided that would only encourage them. /*/ In the past week or two, I've gotten a bunch that promise to expedite my obtaining a concealed-carry permit. This is disturbing. /*/ And the ones

for “male enhancement” seem to be getting more and more violent: “zero mercy! Total domination — she’ll beg you to ruin her! She might not be able to walk straight tomorrow!” The temptation to draw comparisons to the big talkers in the present national politics is far too strong. /*/ (øme) The Metropolitan Opera is another one of the Mets. (The baseball team is actually not the worst in the major leagues right now—they’re still in the basement of their division, but their won/lost record beats that of the Colorado

Rockies and is more or less tied with those of three other MLB teams as I type this.)

JAMISON, TAKE e-LETTER (Mark L. Blackman):
Your description of the “Around the World” performance at your library (with the performers waving flags for the nationality of each song) reminds me of the old Wendy’s commercial with the Soviet fashion show (“Day-vear!...Evening-vear!...Svim-vear!”). /*/ Sympathies on your lack of improvement, not to mention the mobility restrictions imposed by the high diuretic doses.

One more reminder, though many of you will see this too late: the NYUSFS Fourth of July Ferry Meeting this year will be on Thursday 2 July. Hope to see at least a few of Youse there.

A pleasantly (rather than oppressively) warm summer to everyone, and please take care of yourselves. I’m getting sick of writing obits!

>Portions of the preceding think our Reflecting Pool makes other nations green with envy.<