

THE ALL-NEW LIGHTNING BOLLARD

VOLUME 3 A MONTH WITH TWO FACES - 2017 NUMBER 6

WILL YEAR BE BETTER? TOO EARLY TO TELL JUST NOW. CAN'T SAY FOR SURE YET.

THE MONTH OF THE TWO-FACED GOD

The way classical education is neglected in the United States these days, it would seem to me that very few people would know where the name of the month of January is derived from.

In ancient Roman religion and myth, Janus is the god of beginnings, gates, transitions, time, doorways, passages, and endings. He is usually depicted as having two faces, since he looks to the future and to the past at the same time. The month of January is commonly attributed to his patronage, although Roman accounts do not explicitly bear that out.

It is the time when we look back at what we did (or didn't do) in the previous year, and look forward to what we hope to accomplish (or avoid) in the coming one. Janus, the Roman god who was gifted to see the past and the future, is to some a

cheery companion on their voyage into the future, and to others a grim reminder of what was left undone, or failed in the efforts to accomplish it.

So far, it's only the fourth of the month (as I type this), and not much can be inferred from the conduct of events in those first four days. We still reel from the losses that we felt, especially in the month of December... John Glenn, Bernard ("Calling Dr. Bombay!") Fox, Dr. Henry Heimlich, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Richard (*Watership Down*) Adams, George Michael (on Christmas Day, no less), Vera Rubin (astronomer who confirmed the existence of "dark matter"), Carrie Fisher, Debbie Reynolds, and William Christopher, the actor who played Father Francis Mulcahy in the TV series M*A*S*H.

Adding these names to the roster of those other people we lost earlier in the year makes it a truly dismal time.

And that doesn't take into con-

sideration the other events of the year... like the Brexit vote, the election of Donald J. Trump as President of the United States, various bombings, assassinations, nuclear saber-rattling, terrorist posturing (and anti-terrorist posturing, as well), movies, music, shopping mall mayhem, and a continuing demonstration of man's inability to coexist peacefully with man.

We are not amused...

I have heard some people claiming that these things are a sign of the coming Apocalypse. The end of the Mayan calendar for 2012 C.E. didn't do it; all the felgercarb we're going through now may not, either.

But I won't rule out the possibility.

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WHAT I HAVE IN MIND FOR 2017

I mostly gave up making New Year's resolutions many moons ago, since (as it seemed to me) no amount of wishing was going to make anything happen.

This is not necessarily a bad thing to realize, by the way.

What took me longer to internalize was something related to the above realization... no amount of wishing was going to make anything happen, but a considerable amount of doing would make things happen.

I just wasn't able (or willing) to put forth the effort required.

Clinical depression... it's not just for breakfast anymore.

Now, as the proud possessor of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Film, I need to "fish or cut bait", as they say. Get off the dime and get it done. "Try not. Do... or do not. There is no try."

So.

This is something I've been working on since late last year... and finding myself stymied at many turns. Writing non-fiction, such as these essays, a fanzine, instructional items, is as easy as it's almost always been for me. Words form in the wetware, course down the nerves to the fingers, and imprint themselves onto the phosphors of the screen with relative ease and speed. Few revisions are necessary to the product thus produced.

Turning to the fictive side of the street, however, is another story entirely... much like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* is to *Spaceballs: The Movie*. Ideas form, but seem to peter out somewhere between the brain

and the fingers... Throwing in a new idea I came up with in a rewrite makes sense... until it screws up something

The mad scramble to fix what now seems wrong, or stale, or passé... the descent spiral into cliché, or worse, cardboard archetype of less than two dimensions... until the final message on screen "Document has been changed. Save or discard changes?" appears, and the mouse click of doom to close the document, abandoning changes... and, apparently, all hope.

This seems to be something many creative types I've known encounter... maybe less virulent, maybe more so; it varies from individual to individual.

Maybe some people can just "motor through it", or "plow on regardless", while others end up wheel-well deep in the quicksand of creative blockage.

There are times when I find myself looking at the world through a periscope and a snorkel, trying to keep my creativity from drowning in the stifling muck of self-doubt and self-abnegation. For someone who has delusions of adequacy, it's a tough row to hoe.

And yet...

Within me, there are still forces grinding and grunting away... "A churning urn of burning funk", as James Taylor's version of *Steamroller Blues* describes it. Building pressure of unfulfilled creative potential, awaiting the right venting to blow forth in a concussive paroxysm of vision, which can then be channeled to either manuscript pages or screenplay pages, later to be made into a

visual extravaganza.

That's the hope, anyway.

Maybe I'm delusional; maybe I still have to just get off my duff and **do** something.

Maybe I'm living in my own little, pathetic world... but at least, it's comforting to realize that they know me here.



COLOPHON:

This is *The All-New LIGHTNING ROUND* Volume 3 Number Six, sometime after the First of January, 2017. Since this is a science-fiction fanzine, science and science-fiction WILL be mentioned, or even discussed in its pages. **YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.**

This is another Totally Superfluous Publication by Alexander Bouchard, who voted for Harold Stassen and Jed Bartlett. Slightly higher in Canada. Two spaces after a period (I'm old school, yo.). Edited by **Al Bouchard**. Published by **Megan Bouchard**. Resident mascot/distraction/cuddle kitty: **Babe Ruth Bouchard**.

eFanzines.com has copies, and others available by whim.

(I can be very whimsical.)

Letters of comment, subpoenas, lewd and lascivious propositions, leaked emails from the Friends of the Martian Space Party, one-liter bottles of club soda, and source code for the Russian nuclear defense system should be addressed to:

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Just when I thought I was out, I dragged me back in...

No fans were killed or maimed in the production of this fanzine. (*Minor injuries don't count.*)

The fifty-first year of STAR TREK, approaching the fortieth of *Star Wars*, and near the sixty-first of *Forbidden Planet*. Wow.

John Purcell for TAFF? Why not?

LOC'N'LOAD

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January 16, 2017

Dear Al:

It's taken a while, but I do work in relative order when it comes to electronic zines. When I get them, they go in a folder, and I work from the oldest file in the folder. And so, The All-New Lightning Round Vol. 3 No. 5 is the next up. Or, I could have what Carol Merrill is bringing down the centre aisle...

No, I will go with the zine at hand. I keep lists of what I need to do, want to do, and all commitments I have for the future, and loocing zines is in there somewhere. There isn't time to do it all, and do all the goofing off I want to do, too. I must manage my time better. Happy belated birthday... Yvonne's was on December 19. We've had our snow and cold, but right now, we haven't got either, but the weather forecast is calling for substantial freezing rain. Time to get snug, and wait out this mess.

Remember all those episodes of The Simpsons when the writers, in an attempt to make the situation as dystopian as possible, made Trump the President? Well, those writers are more prescient than they really wanted to be, and dystopia is here. He still got 3 million votes less, but still won the presidency, and he has gone forth to purposefully alienate Muslims, Jews, women, Mexicans and now, according to the news services (all fake, he says), he's pissed off the Germans, without even trying. Could there be a worse candidate? Don't answer that...

It does make me wish that with all he's done, in violation of umpteen dozen rules and laws, including your Constitution, a senior judge could come down with a major ruling, invalidating the election, and declaring that a new one must be run. With observers from neutral countries, of course.

Our next show is in Guelph the beginning of February, Genrecon 2017. Our two weeks in England were glorious. We'd return in a heartbeat, but we would need even more money than we had saved. I have a local community college's employment service helping me with my search, but if I had \$5 for every resume I had sent out, well, I could go back to England.

Trump is the epitome of the saying I see so much of this time of year... politicians are like diapers, they should be changed regularly, and for the same reason. I wish the Electoral College had done their job, but I would imagine few of those EC members would know the reason for that College.

Age... we're all of that age where infirmities crop up. It's a pain, but as long as we don't let those little aches and pains stop us from doing the fun things we like to do, we can still grow old disgracefully. I have often thought about exploring my own family tree, but the ancestry pages on line are a little too expensive right now. Maybe once I get working again. It would be great to full trace your lineage back to Louis Riel. Sixty? I am 57, and Yvonne retires at the end of this year. Time is flashing past us at the break-neck speed of one second per second, and we should be grateful it's not any faster than that.

All done, and off it goes. Many thanks for this issue, and see you with the next.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Lloyd:

Whatever system you have, as long as it works for you, is good enough. You are keeping up your end as one of Ontario's most prolific (as far as I know) loocers, an honourable title indeed. (Requiescat in Pace, Mike Glicksohn.)

As you may have seen since his inauguration, Trumplethinskin (I wish I could claim credit, but I got it elsewhere) is behaving like a dyspeptic juvenile chimpanzee, having tantrums on Twitter and flinging his own feces at various and sundry targets,

It almost makes me ashamed to admit I'm an American citizen. (That's when I start getting angry. Trust me... you wouldn't like me when I'm angry.)

I'm happy your steampunk vending is doing well, and Megan and I are both a bit envious of you and Yvonne having gone to England. Health and success to the both of you.

I'm a collateral relation of Louis Riel, his second wife being kin to one of my several-times-great grandparents, and, on the other side, Megan found me to be a collateral relation to "Light Horse Harry" Lee, one of Washington's generals, and to several signers of the Declaration of Independence, not to mention a certain R. E. Lee of Virginia, who commanded the Army of Northern Virginia for the Confederacy.

Wow.

As for age, we all do what we can with what we've got. After all, none of us will be getting out of here alive...

Thanks for writing.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM...

Guy H. Lillian III, with his opinionzine *Spartacus*; John Purcell, whose zines, *Askance* and *Askew*, I have downloaded from eFanzines, that benison of faanish archival goodness bestowed on us by Bill Burns (give the man a Hugo!); the usual suspects on FANEDS and FAANEDS, the Facebook fanzine editors groups; Henry and Letha Welch, of whom I can say that Henry just made partner at his law firm in the Bay Area, and their home on top of a mountain has been tenuously hanging on in the face of the torrential rains; many fannish and non-fannish friends who just finished enjoying ConFusion; and, last but not least, you people out there who still read what I write, whether or not you think I'm {fill in blank}.

{NOT QUITE} THE LAST WORD...

With all the demands on my time that seem to crop up with depressing regularity these days, it is becoming something of a chore to try to keep this zine going on anything resembling the monthly basis I had intended it to.

The pressure to maintain a regular schedule is, of course, self-imposed... sometimes it can act as a spur, a motivation to apply seat of pants to seat of chair and start typing until there are enough words to satisfy the ego and the editor inside.

Since I have been, for the most part, distanced from fannish activities - whether because of finances, health, or disinclination is not relevant - there becomes much less for me to write about.

I have never been a rabidly political animal, but having come of age during the last gasps of Richard Milhous Nixon, the Senate Select Committee on Watergate (alternatively known as Senator Sam and his Jug Band), the Enemies List, the Plumbers, CREEP (the Committee to Re-Elect the President), the Pentagon Papers, Daniel Ellsberg, Woodward and Bernstein, the *Washington Post* in its days of glory, and the Cheyenne-Stokes breathing of the war in Vietnam, I found myself avidly reading the Constitution, the (expurgated) version of the White House transcripts - fascinating reading, almost as absorbing as *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* by William L. Shirer - and following the hearings on television. This was the atmosphere that formed my political awareness.

Admission: When I first registered to vote at age 18 (the constitutional amendment lowering the voting age passed before my 18th birthday), Maryland (where I was living at the time) offered you three choices when registering: you could register as a Democrat, you could register as a Republican, or you could register as “Declines to Affiliate”.

This last choice had a distinct disadvantage that I noticed right away. In primary elections, where partisan ballots were cast to determine a party’s nominees, those who registered as “Declines to Affiliate” were excluded from participating. (The same thing is true in many states to this day; you must be a “registered Democrat” or “registered Republican” to vote in a primary.) So, if there were non-partisan issues on that ballot, such as local mayoral or city council races, school millages, bond issues, or sinking fund renewals, your vote was not allowed.

I’m still a bit cheesed about that.

And now, with the proliferation of “third-party” candidacies and single-issue campaigns, referenda and ballot initiatives that are trying to achieve various purposes from amending a state’s constitution to outlaw abortion, define life as beginning at “fertilization”, stipulating that marriage is a union between one “man” and one “woman”, ignoring the issue of a person’s gender identity as opposed to gender at birth, outlawing the teaching of the theory of evolution, promulgating the teaching of “creation science” as the one true path of man’s evolution, and other such things, political awareness and political activism is necessary now, more than ever.

Building a wall, however “great” it may be touted as, is never a solution. The Chinese found that out far in the past, and the only remains are one of the few tourist attractions visible from orbit. Banning immigrants is not an alternative, since it is hybrid vigor - the influx of new genes, new patterns of thought, that stimulates a nation to new heights of achievement. “America First” didn’t work in the 1920’s, since the blind eye we turned to Europe allowed the rise of nationalist, militaristic, vehemently propagandized Germany to fall under the spell of Adolf Hitler and his cronies. Six million plus Jews, Gypsies, Poles, homosexuals, dissidents, Catholics, and others guilty only of being “not Aryan” paid the price for this blindness. As did soldiers of Germany itself, its allies, its opponents (which, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, included the United States), innocent civilians (referred to as “collateral damage”), and the economies of most countries of the world.

The world, despite the claims of the current President and his minions of the “alt-right” (a dreadful neologism for the forces of white supremacism, racial hatred, and fascist control of the government), is all interconnected. A prime example of “chaos theory”, or “the butterfly effect”, demonstrates that a perception of paranoia and repression in Washington will provoke reactions in capital cities across the globe. Alliances sunder, adversaries exploit weaknesses, actual or not, and the world draws closer to the brink of Armageddon.

And, contrary to the belief among those who are trying to maintain some semblance of order, there is no “adult in the room” who can hold off the tantrums of this would-be tyrant.

Cheery thought, isn’t it?