

THE ALL-NEW

LIGHTNING BOLLARD

VOLUME 3

PREDICTABLE RODENTS - 2017

NUMBER 7

GREETING CARDS, CANDY, PRESIDENTIAL BIRTHDAYS, AND A WEATHER-PREDICTIVE RODENT IN PENNSYLVANIA... OH, WELL. {NOT TO MENTION EARLY MARDI GRAS!}

WHY I HATE WRITING ABOUT POLITICS

ANOTHER EDITORIAL OF SORTS...

Politics is, by its very nature, a dirty business. Writing about politics in an informed manner, not just skimming the surface, requires the writer to get hip-deep (at least) in the muck and the mire, probing and searching carefully and thoroughly for those little, often overlooked nuggets of the truth.

Even the strongest of stomachs can only take so much... the most resolute, sharp-eyed, and persnickety hunters, gatherers, and miners for that elusive result can lose faith in their own abilities, or can only stand so much of the hysterical harangues of the obfuscatory minions of a (possibly) corrupt officeholder.

I hate writing about politics and politicians. Even though I'm told I

am good at it, I find little joy in it.

The necessity of pointing out the lack of clothing of the *soi-disant* Emperor, and the detailing of all the now-visible shortcomings of same is not something I enjoy.

It is regrettable, from my point of view, that so few people actually read, discuss, and think about why phenomena like the one we are currently embroiled in happen at all, let alone whether it was inevitable, preventable, or "just one of those things"... This makes it an answer that no one seems to question.

Well, enough riling my innards with this felgercarb... let us on to more pleasant things.



Over the past year or so (I misremember exactly how long it's been) I have been using and learning a combination editing and compositing

software from a company called FXHome, located in Norwich, UK. The software is called HitFilm.

The "express" version is free forever, with the option to buy upgrade packs or transition to the "pro" version to receive capabilities that are not available in the free version, like importing 3D objects or using advanced particle effects. (If you don't know what particle effects are, it doesn't matter... there are workarounds for most of the pro features, even though they're not as easy.)

I find this software a very good thing, replacing a separate editing software (like Adobe Premiere Pro) and compositing software (like

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial.....	1
Colophon.....	2
LoC 'N' Load.....	3

Adobe After Effects).

I'm sorry if you think I'm knocking Adobe... I am just not a fan of software that doesn't play well with others, even its own stablemates, and has insisted that you don't get software without having a constant Internet connection with them, so they can "upgrade" you at any time, screwing up whatever you're working on, and that if you don't pay your monthly/yearly "subscription", they reserve the right to shut your software down.

I was always of the opinion that if you buy it, you get the program code on a disk/CD/DVD or as a download file, and if you don't buy the next upgrade, you still have software that works, even if they no longer support it.

Am I **that** mired in the Cretaceous?



COLOPHON:

This is *The All-New LIGHTNING ROUND* Volume 3 Number Seven, sometime after the First of February, 2017. (Probably after the first of March...) 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 is a fan of Edward R. Murrow, Fred Friendly, Walter Cronkite, Bob Woodward, and Carl Bernstein. 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.

(It should be noted, I can be very whimsical.)

Letters of comment, subpoenas, lewd and lascivious prepositions, leaked emails embarrassing Vladimir Putin, one-liter bottles of club soda, and home phone numbers for 'El Chapo' Guzman should be addressed to:

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Yes, I can be bought. Prices available upon request.

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

John Purcell for TAFF? Why not?

LOC'N'LOAD

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February 28, 2017

Dear Al:

Thank you for Vol. 3 No. 6 of Lightning Round. It is indeed a new year, and given the date above, it's already two whole months in. I know what you mean about education...sometimes, when I say something on Facebook, I have to explain what I mean, something I thought was fairly straight forward.

There are times I despair of the educational system... especially since Betsy DeVos was confirmed to the Department of Mis-education.

We lose lots of people every year, but in this popular culture era, we lost an awful lot of familiar names and faces. We've had a few major names leave us this year, but it hasn't been like it was last year.

Some people are calling this year 2016: The Results Show. I can't find it in myself to disagree much... unfortunately.

Congrats on the B.A. in Film! It is difficult to realize what must be done, and then figure out how to do it, and then do it. I make lists for myself, so there's one-third of the battle.

I appreciate it. The degree was much harder to obtain than I might have thought; I succeeded in spite of, not because of, the university. Maybe not having taken courses in certain disciplines in the earlier 'teens of this century held me back. Maybe it was also my own arrogance. (Yes, I still had some. It was knocked out of me painfully.)

My loc...DT45 seems to have gone out of his way to piss off the

Australians, and now he's got the intelligence community against him. It will be interesting to see what they dig up on him. If half the stories I read online are true, there is plenty to impeach him with... someone just needs to step forward to lay the charges.

I sincerely doubt that it'll be soon, as little as that thought comforts me. The Republicans in the current Congress are perfectly happy to put up with 45 as long as they can get their nefarious plans rubber-stamped; when that's no longer an option, they'll dump him like the black water tank of an RV. We'd like to return to England for another trip, but given the costs of this past one, a future one probably won't come for some time. Our steampunk table is doing okay, but more and more, conventions are not doing it for us, and public craft shows and flea markets are.

That seems to be the way with many people we know who huckster in some form or another... despite how much people on both sides of the aisle in Congress (as well as in Parliament) crow about the economy growing, it ain't happening here.

And we both envy you the London trip; we would both love to go, but finances (and Megan's health issues) don't hold out much hope for the travel time required by air.

*If we could **drive**, on the other hand...*

I hope with some investigation, we may yet see a Watergate-ish investigation, court cases, etc., to clear up the current nonsense in Washington, or even, something the Supreme Court is playing with, declaring the November election null and void. These next four years will be interesting indeed.

The petition for the writ of man-

damus (the SCOTUS event you mentioned) has been scheduled, as I understand it, for a hearing before the eight judges. Whether or not it will be granted is highly debatable, but, as I hear it, not very likely.

Damn and blast.

I am having some trouble keeping my eyes open, so I will sign off here for the moment, say my thanks for this issue, and hope you're working on another one. See you then.

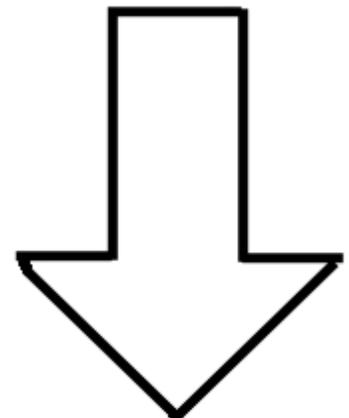
Yours,
Lloyd Penney.

Lloyd, you and Yvonne are two of our oldest friends in fandom, and we really do wish you two the best. I have been (and am still) pulling for you to find yourself as permanent party somewhere, and for Yvonne to be as happy as possible at whatever position she's doing now.

Always the best!

As for me, I always try to keep plugging, (Some days work better than others, as I feel certain you already know.)

Made it this far; let's see how the string runs.



WE ALSO HEARD FROM...

Not so many people as I'd like to have heard from... Well, what the hell, everybody has their own problems.



{NOT QUITE} THE LAST WORD...



They say February is the cruelest month...

{At least, I think that's what they say...}

It's usually the down and dirty dregs of winter, with no inkling of spring, except for spring training starting for baseball.

Grey, cold, snowy, with little hope, no visible prospects, and another four weeks of suffering until March comes in, and spring starts nosing at the door.

This February, though, has been an exception to most of these rules, at least here in Michigan. We have had three record high temperatures at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, the official weather station, in the last ten days or so. 65° or better is hardly what you'd expect in February, or the amounts of rain that have been pelting the Pacific Coast.

Some people would blame this on the coming of the Apocalypse; some would blame the 45th President. Personally, I think it's climate change, a conclusion he and his minions seem incapable of reaching.

The four weeks of February (four weeks plus one day in leap years) have never been a favorite of mine, as you may have guessed. When I worked outside all day, I had a standing requisition in for 65° and sunny weather, with a breeze of five knots or less. Rarely got it... more's the pity.

But that outside work had one benefit; I got to let my mind float free while I was working. Inside work was rarely, if ever, a time where I could do that.

And discovering that I was dealing with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as well as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) was not a real comfort; it explained things, but didn't help to cure them.

Now it seems that backstage crew at the 89th Academy Awards last Sunday was suffering from something, also... Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway, presenting the last award of the night, for Best Picture, were handed the wrong envelope by one representative of the firm of Price Waterhouse Coopers, the accounting firm that tallies the votes and seals them in the envelopes until they're opened onstage. That envelope, from a duplicate stack that was prepared for eventualities that have not come to pass to my knowledge, was for the previous award, Best Actress in a Leading Role, which was awarded to Emma Stone for *La La Land*.

This resulted in a situation known as a "Mongolian cluster-fuck". Stage managers, producers from both *La La Land* and *Moonlight*, the actual winner, Warren Beatty (who tried to take

some of the blame himself, a generous act), host Jimmy Kimmel (who tried to take all of the blame himself, another generous act), and other members of the back of the house crew were scrambling to sort things out and valiantly attempt to set things right - not an easy thing to do at the tag end of a four-hour or so live broadcast.

There are a few things we can say about this brouhaha... nobody died, no broken bones, no blood loss (except for the people in the booth sweating blood), and things were rectified, even in such an unsatisfactory manner as was seen.

Kinda makes you want to look in on next year's Oscar® telecast, eh?



Well, the month that's supposed to "come in like a lion and go out like a lamb" doesn't seem to be following the playbook this year.

And this surprises us?

This whole year has been out of whack. Somebody said about the people who've been dying since the first of the year that this looks to him like **2016: The Result Show**. Bill Paxton, from *Aliens* and many other movies, Mary Tyler Moore, Richard Hatch, Eugene Cernan, astronaut, Mike Connors, Barbara Hale, from *Perry Mason* and other things, John Hurt, from *Alien* and the *Harry Potter* movies, Miguel Ferrer, from *Robocop*, *Twin Peaks*, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, and many other things, and, to add insult to injury, the inspiringly (and sanely) insane Professor Irwin Corey, 102 years old.

We are not amused.

Yes, I know we all gotta go sometime... but, in my opinion, the wrong people **aren't** going.

They remain behind to pee in the punch, fling feces like demented chimpanzees, and blather on like they were vaccinated by a gramophone needle. (Look it up.)

Perhaps one day I will read of their passing... and crook a secret smile.



*WITH ANY LUCK,
THE NEXT ISSUE SHOULD BE OUT
BEFORE APRIL FOOLISH DAY*

(Or does that make me foolish, too?)