

THE ALL-NEW

LIGHTNING BOLLING

VOLUME 3

WAR GODS & THE IRISH - 2017

NUMBER 8

PATRON OF IRELAND, ROMAN GOD OF WAR, RED PLANET PLANS, "SPRING", AND DAYLIGHT "SAVING" TIME

WE ARE NOT AMUSED, 2017 EDITION

The first few months of the new administration in Washyourmouth, D.C., have been a spectacular epic fail.

Can you say "Mongolian clusterfuck"? I knew you could.

It's even getting to the point where satirists can't top the actual brainlock that these dweebs are putting out... Is Ivanka Trump being appointed as the head of a government task force on nepotism a joke headline, or the real deal? It's hard to tell anymore.

Well, while the United States of America still exists, I move on to other things...



WEATHER OR NOT...

THE SAGA OF "SPRING" IN MICHIGAN

The TV weatherman locally said that the first two months of the year were both warmer than normal here in Southeast Michigan... we were

about ten degrees (Fahrenheit) warmer than average in January, and about six degrees warmer in February.

March, on the other hand, was about four degrees colder, and we had a wide range of weather conditions.

One day was over 70°, and two days later we had snow squalls going.

You've heard the joke, "You can't have all four seasons in one month!" Michigan says, "Hold my beer, and watch this..."

Truer than I like to admit.



IDENTITY?

There was a documentary we watched on Amazon Prime recently, about a sexually abused woman who was ashamed of herself and her appearance, but spun unbelievable stories of sexual fantasy and surrealistic events into a career as a best-selling writer called "JT LeRoy".

Deceit piled on deceit, and this

made-up person, portrayed by the woman's boyfriend's sister, while the actual writer was portrayed as the "author's" manager, drew celebrities like Gus van Sant, Asia Argento, Bono, Debbie Harry, Matthew Modine, and Winona Ryder into the story of the stories.

I suppose it can all be explained in a literal, linear, uncomplicated fashion. But I think it would detract from the story as a whole.

"FUNNY" BOOK SHOWS

On the other tentacle, we watched *Deadpool* the other night.

I had been resisting seeing it, because I thought they might have put all the "funny" material into the clips that were out there on the interwebs.

Also, Megan is not exactly a fan of gross, lowball, fart and sexual hu-

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mor.

To our surprise, we both found it funny... all the good jokes had not been leaked in the trailers and clips on YouTube, and she was able to balance the grossness and offensive character of the characters with the humor of the situations.

Of course, *Deadpool* is based on the comic character of the same name, a “guilty pleasure” of many comic geeks everywhere.

Many people are surprised Megan liked the movies *RED* and *RED 2*, also taken from comics. The absurdist points of view are somewhat jarring to those who like early Silver Age comics.

There seems to be a reaction building to what is seen as the “comic book movie” glut in theaters and production schedules now... *Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice*, even though it made respectable money at the box office, was critically panned by many sectors of the audience. *Avengers: Age of Ultron* spawned its own disappointments, especially among those who wanted more character development among the familiar characters in the film. (Hey, Joss Whedon seems to agree with you... he took what is for Hollywood a long hiatus to recover from the emotional and physical strains of helming *A: AoU* that he attributes to working for Marvel Studios.)

Now, with *Logan* in release, and its elegiac take on Wolverine, Charles Xavier, and X23, the darker view of the heroic mythos seems to be catching on, unlike the reactions to *Man of Steel* and *BvS: DoJ*. The acceptance of Christopher Nolan’s *Dark Knight* trilogy shows something like this,

also.

Has the comic book movie trend peaked? Will the upcoming *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (guest-starring Robert Downey, Jr. as Tony Stark/ Iron Man and Michael Keaton as the updated, more techno-cool Vulture) beat the unacknowledged trend? Was Benedict Cumberbatch’s *Doctor Strange* cool enough to keep the Marvel movie fans going until then? Can *Ant-Man and The Wasp* repeat the humor (and the box office) of the first one?

I suppose we’ll just have to wait and see.

And, yes, I hate it as much as many of you do.



THOUGHTS ON HUMOR

Humor is a funny thing...

<ducking>

Okay, humor is a peculiar thing. Better?

Something can be mildly suspenseful, slightly scary, sort of mysterious... but it’s either funny, or it isn’t. There’s no in-between there.

I think it was Dr. Asimov who said that humor is a target that’s all bulls-eye. There’s no room for deviation.

And, on top of that, there are more kinds of humor than some may realize.

There’s sophisticated wordplay, puns, normal people doing absurdist things, absurd caricatures of people doing what we consider “normal” things in an abnormal manner, slapstick and pratfalls, fart jokes and embarrassing people, comedies of manners (“After you...” “No, please, after you...”), domestic misunderstandings, prop comedy, situation comedy

(most great TV shows from the 50’s onward), sketch comedy (*Your Show of Shows*, Rowan & Martin’s *Laugh-In*, Ernie Kovacs, Red Skelton, to name a few)... the list goes on.

Some are funny to most everybody, while some appeal to a smaller audience.

You may not be able to define it exactly, but it’s like the definition of “obscurity”...

You know it when you see it.

COLOPHON:

This is *The All-New LIGHTNING ROUND* Volume 3 Number Eight, sometime in March, 2017. (Assuming I get my stuff together...) 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 real journalists as opposed to fake Presidents. 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, warrants, subpoenas, writing awards addressed to George Lucas, one-liter bottles of club soda, and artwork (I can handle most formats) should be addressed to:

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Yes, I can be bought. Prices available upon request. The semi-annual sale is coming soon!

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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March 25, 2017

Dear Al:

Thanks for Lightning Round Vol. 3, No. 7, and some fast words in this here letter of comment. I can say something now, and it's taken me long enough to do...after 16 months of sending out resumes like crazy, I finally do have some work. I start tomorrow afternoon. That's right, Sunday. It is telephone solicitation, and I know how many people like that, but it is work, and it will tide me over until I find something else, and I have more than a few irons in the fire. 16 months of famine, and now, it is feast, with all the people who want to talk to me about a job. Fingers crossed, I will have daytime work again.

Daytime work is something to be wished, I warrant. I haven't had a "regular" job for longer than I care to remember, because the injuries I sustained back in the day still complain to me, especially in the bad weather. Good luck on that!

Politics...ick! It can be productive, and usually, it is just plain nasty. I have seen so-called Christian leaders do the most unChristian things to the people who voted them into office. Politicians need the reminder every so often that as representatives of their electorate, they are civil servants, and not special princes and princesses who answer to no one. The newsfeed that comes from the USA delivers fresh horrors every day. Healthcare...we all stand on the same side, but somehow, some are determined to

shut it down completely.

The conservative (used under advisement) Freedom Caucus was part of the vote that scuttled the AHCA, Paul Ryan's attempt to repeal the ACA (a/k/a "Obamacare") and replace it with something less effective and more expensive. And this ninnul is third in the line of succession to the Presidency, should something happen to DT and Pence. Ghod help us all...

Was page 2 meant to be partially empty? I get the feeling there was supposed to be another article there...

Well, there was... and I missed putting it there. Senior moment, perhaps? No way to tell.

My letter...as you say, with Betsy DeVos as the new head of the Department of Education, she seems to me the Angel of Despair. Is she really intent in shutting down her own department, and take the idea of an educational system away from all American children? Makes you wish there really were superheroes who could fly down and save the American Way of Life. More than once have I seen mention of another American Revolution. That may be what it takes. I have also read that as soon as DT45's breaking of the law becomes egregious enough, the Rethuglicans will dump Trump like yesterday's dinner, and install Pence as President, who will then try to remake America as a theocracy, while Congress continues to rip apart the fabric of American life. The world is sad for you, given how rampant ignorance at the highest levels intends to make millions of poor Americans even poorer. No one voted for that.

At least they thought they didn't vote for that...

Our own lives have been on hold for the moment...you might

have seen on Facebook that Yvonne's mother, Gabrielle, passed away yesterday morning. Now comes the will, and next month, a special service to remember her. This will give all of the Roberts and Duponts, and all family members, a chance to get together. Gabrielle will eventually be buried in Cache Bay, Ontario.

I never met her, but I offer my condolences and prayers (at least as much as a "relaxed agnostic" can pray) for you, Yvonne and her family in this time of transition.

Hope I made the next issue before April Fool's Day! Take care, hugs to Megan, and see you with the next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

And you did indeed make it, Lloyd. Thanks again!

SHAMELESS PLUG DEPARTMENT: YOU TOO CAN BE PUBLISHED IN A "REAL" SCIENCE FICTION FANZINE!

WRITE ARTICLES, LETTERS OF COMMENT, DRAW ART THINGS, THROW BRICKBATS, OR BITCH ABOUT ANY NUMBER OF THINGS!

The big things about efforts like this is finding material. Regurgitating events and meals of the past month (or so) is disheartening (not to mention disgusting, when it comes to the meals part).

If all you do is read this zine and chuckle occasionally, that's all well and good... but your support in other ways would be graciously accepted and appreciated.

Thus ends this episode of Shameless Editorial Begging.

You may now return to your regularly scheduled apathy...



{NOT QUITE}

THE LAST WORD...

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED "POLITICS"?

The current "administration" (I place the term in quotes because they do not seem to care about administering anything, only in amassing more wealth and making the lives of the people who aren't part of the one-tenth of one percent they belong to even more miserable) seems to be hell-bent on eradicating, without a trace, the forms and policies of the American constitutional republic.

Maybe I'm wrong... I sincerely hope I am, for all of our sakes... but that is the way things appear to be going. The tactics that "President" Bannon is using are similar to those of Heinrich Himmler in the early days of the Nazi rule of Germany; discrediting the press, appointment of administrators whose sole areas of expertise seem to be deconstructing the agencies they were appointed to head, the propagandistic appeal to the "base" of the Republican Party, which are the uneducated and under-educated whites who see equality for women and persons of color and lament their "way of life" being stripped from them, and who will be the first ones damaged by the policies this jackal pack are working to implement.

At trial in Nuremburg, in 1946, the following quote about the rise to power of the National Socialist German Worker's Party (abbreviated in German as *NSDAP*) was attributed to Hermann Goering: "Once we

achieved power, we intended to keep it."

I can't place the quote more accurately, but I can see its tendrils curling around the brains of Bannon, and Spicer, and Kushner, and Speaker Ryan, and Majority Leader McConnell... They are all trying to use the demented schmo who is their front man for their own insidious purposes.

In the meantime, the *soi-disant* "Opposition", the Democratic Party, is fractured, finger-pointing, faction fighting, and in fear of failure.

At least that's how it looks from here.

I will quote something I can attribute accurately...

"I have a bad feeling about this."



In case you hadn't noticed, I hate politics... especially American politics of the early Twenty-First Century sort.

I hate it... but I keep writing about it.

You know, it can be a frustrating thing, writing about something you hate so... The system seems bent on self-destruction, taking our republic with it, and, in turn, the rights, responsibilities, expectations, and dreams that old system fostered, however vain and utopian they seemed.

The democratic republic (which is what the United States of America is, by the way) is not the best form of

government. As was said once, "it simply beats the dog shit out of whatever comes in second."

Do we have room for improvement? Undoubtedly.

Does that mean abolishing the Constitution and the other parts of our government that have been refined and adjusted continually since 1789? Not only no, but **hell no!**

Things have changed, the Constitution has changed, because we as a people have changed. We abolished slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for conviction of a crime. We said the right to vote cannot be restricted by someone's race, color, or creed, or previous condition of servitude. We acknowledged the right of women to participate in the electoral process, and the rights of those aged eighteen or over.

We banned poll taxes, changed the start and end dates of the terms of both the President and the Congress, limited a President to two terms in office, and set forth the succession to the office of President in case of the death, disability, or removal from office of the incumbent.

Yes, things have changed. And you, as an individual, may not agree with any of them, or all of them. But they are still the overriding authority that holds our Union together.

I ask you to please remember that as things go on.