

THE ALL-NEW

LIGHTNING BOLT

VOLUME 4 SUMMER OF 2017 NUMBER 1

HOT TOWN, SUMMER IN THE CITY...
BACK OF MY NECK FEELING DIRTY AND GRITTY...

WHAT'S GOING ON...

SOME OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE THE LAST "REGULAR" ISSUE OF THIS ZINE

From the last distributed issue until now, I can't really say things have been dull.

Eventful, yes. The opposite of boring, yes. Even verging on "interesting", in the sense of the ancient Chinese curse.

But not dull.

Our vehicles have been something less than reliable, even to the newest one we've purchased to make things a bit better. Our Winnebago Lesharo, named "Pooh" (yes, it's a reference to a certain Edward Bear and his residence in the Hundred Aker Wood), has required particular and painstaking care and repair to restore him to even a semblance of operational condition... Our mainstay, the twenty-year-old Dodge Grand Caravan we named "Pearl" (pearl white, mini-van, hence "Mini Pearl" - Howwwdy!), has given us transmission and exhaust problems—like the exhaust pipe coming

from the manifold rusting off the front of the muffler, and then the heat shield between the muffler and the floor pan coming off... Not what we intended, at all.

So, a few weeks ago, we purchased a somewhat newer Dodge Grand Caravan - we like the space availability they give us, and the overall feel as opposed to other minivans or small SUV's we've checked out, and the price was within our range.

Irritation - the vehicle, which we've named "Freedom 7" (the van is supposed to restore our ability to be free, and it's our seventh minivan in thirty years or so; the tribute to Alan B. Shepard, Jr. was a byproduct) has what is commonly known as a "chipkey". This limits our ability to get new keys made, since keys without the chip will not allow Freedom to stay started. (We have backup keys for the door locks, but that's only if we get locked out.)

What has been something more than a mere irritation has been the

transmission is doing what is commonly known as a "slide-bump", where, during acceleration, the transmission's accumulator (as I understand it from listening to my Magic Mechanic Man) delays the clutch engagement in second and fourth gear. Slide, bump.

He is seeing a possibility that repeated flushing of the transmission fluid and replacement with Chrysler-spec ATF +4 (no Dexron or Mercon for these transmissions, no sir!) may cure the problem; if it doesn't, there are other things he can do short of a complete rebuild (quoted by a recommended, reputable shop at \$1750.00 plus tax).

From his mouth to the ears of whoever is the Deity of the Deck...



In the realms of transits across the Rainbow Bridge (known as

IN THIS ISSUE
Editorial.....1
Colophon.....2
LoC 'N' Load.....3

deaths to the less-imaginative sorts), many have passed over since the last note.

As mentioned in the box on Page Four, there was Richard Tucholka, well known Michigan fan, huckster, gamer, game publisher, entrepreneur (President and CEO of Tri-Tac Games), author (*Fringeworthy*, *Stalking the Night Fantastic*, *The Morrow Project*), Dorsai Irregular, mainstay of many a dealers' room in the upper Midwest for many years, and a friend.

Dr. Jordan Kare, scientist, filker, and well-loved member of the itinerant filk family, also passed. I didn't know him well, if much at all, but I feel the hole his passing left.

I can't much think of who else has gone of late, because I am getting too much interference from the general state of the world, and my attempting to concentrate on some film contests coming up.

I miss these people I know, and am sad for the ones I knew of.



As I alluded to earlier, I am trying to write and produce scripts and films for several contests that are coming up.

One of our local TV stations is sponsoring a contest for five to fifteen-minute-long films about a certain preselected theme they give you. This year the theme is "GOOD VS. EVIL".

Should be a cinch, right?

Well, Bunkie, it's not as easy as you were led to believe... the first thing is to come up with a script that nails the concept, which isn't derivative, too "on the nose" (says it all up front, without subtlety, subtext, or

any sort of finesse), has "cardboard characters", can be filmed quickly and cheaply (unless you're the son or daughter of a wealthy businessman, you only have a limited amount of money to work with), and can be put together by the deadline.

Think writing a fifteen-page term paper the night before it's due is hard? Try squared, cubed, and then some.

Plus, we've been thinking about going to Archon in St. Louis this year, which we haven't been to since it sponsored the NASFiC in 2007. Guess what? They have a film festival! (Gee golly gosh!)

Should we be able to go to Archon, we're also thinking of going to visit family and friends on the West Coast - this would depend of if we had a vehicle we could depend on to drive the four to five thousand miles this trip would entail.

With any luck (aside from bad, worse, or catastrophic), we just might be able to pull this off. It would be a phenomenal thing, since we haven't really been west of Chicago since 2007.

The idea floats to mind that filming this journey may be useful as a basis for a "road trip" documentary of some sort.

To mention and dispel some possible questions about the long drive, I can say several things about why we would drive.

- Megan can not fly. Her doctor says her lungs couldn't handle it.
- She (and I, too) don't want to be constrained to when we can go, or how long we can stay. Driving gives us the control, rather than an airline.

- We would be able to choose when and where we eat, sleep, or use the facilities.
- Most importantly, we would have our little girl, Babe Ruth Bouchard (see the Colophon below) with us, instead of putting her in an aircraft hold (not gonna happen) or leaving her home without us (she'd die of a broken heart).

As to whether this is going to happen, only time will tell...



### COLOPHON:

This is *The All-New LIGHTNING ROUND* Volume 4 Number 1, sometime in Summer, 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 sad he was too young to be one of Murrow's Boys. 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, threats, invitations to be Guest of Honor at conventions, salacious propositions, one-liter bottles of club soda, and artwork (I can handle most formats) should be addressed to:

**AL BOUCHARD**

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Email can be sent to :

**ajlbouchard@gmail.com.**

Yes, I can be bought. If you have to ask, you probably can't afford it.

No fans were killed or maimed in the production of this fanzine. (*Better you shouldn't ask...*)

# LOC'N'LOAD

Hey there, Al.

Many thanks for your support during this year's TAFF election. I certainly appreciate your "Why the hell not?" statements; they probably cemented the win for me with their conviction.

*Sarcasm being just another free service you offer, I take it? And, congratulations again. You worked for it; enjoy it.*

Yeah, your opening comments about the rise of the neo-Nazis in America and their alliance with the GOP and alt-right faction is enough to make sensible Americans like thee and me quiver in our boots. I would go as far as you by saying the American public is becoming a replica of the civilians of the Weimar Republic or the Japanese under Hideki Tojo.

*I hate having to say it, but I can't sit here and not do **something**. Even something as little as pubbing my ish with my feelings about 45 spelled out as frankly as I dare, or perhaps a smidgen more.*

Mob mentality is what propelled Trump into the White House, which the GOP mined and primed for many years, preparing for the moment when the Republican party could control all three branches of our government. What gives me hope is the knowledge, and the push-back now occurring, that more and more civilians, judicial and elected officials from both sides of the political aisle are demanding that this travesty of an administration be reined in and punished. I am still holding out for a dual impeachment against Trump and Pence. I would much rather have Speaker Ryan become President than VP Pence; I think Ryan's congressional experience will help, and the democrats should have more of an influence on him than Pence.

*Ah, but what if Ryan is also forced out for one reason or another, like collusion with TrumPence? The reins of power would then be in the hands of one Orrin Hatch, Senator from Utah, who is the President Pro Tem of that body, and fourth in line in the succession, above Rex Exxon and the other Cabinet Cronies.*

*Something to think about?*

Anyway. What else of note do you have in this latest issue? Oh, yes: weather blatherings. At least you have more of a variety in climate than here in SouthEasternCentral Texas, where it is either hot or hotter for twelve months out of the year. It's always

summer here. No snow, no ice, but the occasional hurricane does bring an outlying arm through the area, which definitely livens things up a bit.

*We're lively enough; when some other place says things like "You can't have four seasons in one day!", Michigan smiles and says "Hold my beer."*

In any event, I thank you again for the zine and your support. It is now back to re-searching our destinations in Europe. All the best,

## John Purcell

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June 15, 2017

Dear Al:

Sorry I have taken so long with Vol. 3, No. 9 of the Lightning Round. I have found myself taking longer and longer holidays from locking zines, mostly because of other interests, and the never-ending job hunt. Some comments are sure to follow...

I think there's an awful lot of Americans who are trying to wake up from the Trump/Republican nightmare. They accuse others of what they are doing themselves, they are trying to sneak into legislation the Obamacare destruction that will dump over 23 million Americans from health care, the world laughs at your president, and deservedly so.

*I don't care to admit it myself, but he **does** deserve the disrespect he gets.*

Some say he is demented or mentally ill, others say he is simply the worst kind of human being...I don't care which it is, he has to be gotten rid of. The problem is, those who might come after him, Pence and Ryan, and just as bad, if not worse.

*This is true, but see my response to John Purcell about the third-in-line, Orrin Hatch.*

The mid-term elections may be your only hope.

*I will be working as hard as I am able to ensure the defeat of as many Republicans as can be done in the mid-terms, but I*

*don't hold out that much hope...*

The fan funds are a great idea... Yvonne and I were CUFF winners some years ago. We wondered aloud about TAFF a few years ago...really, we really can't travel overseas right now, and even though the money is there for our use, well, we really can't afford anything. I hope John Purcell will do us all proud with their trip to Finland and elsewhere on the TAFF dime. (Haven't heard anything about CUFF for some time. I think the fund may be quite dead.)

*I don't know about CUFF, either... I would ask Graeme Cameron about it, since he was the last administrator to my knowledge.*

*I have nothing bad to say about fan funds... I just think it would turn out to be a major shock to everyone's system if I were even to be nominated for one, since I am not well known outside the Upper Mid-western United States.*

My loc...I hear of Robert Mueller's investigation of DT45, and I hope that will continue long after DT fires Mueller for getting too close to the truth.

*Well, there would be so much fertilizer hitting the ventilator should that happen that Watergate would look like an embassy tea, and Teapot Dome and Iran-Contra would be laughed off as too minor to deserve any consideration at all.*

There are so many TV subscription services we could take advantage of, but we watch little television; we're too busy with projects here and there. Netflix, CraveTV...no time, and no money, either.

*We have Amazon Prime only because Megan got a deal on the HDMI stick, and she watches lots of documentaries and British movies. (More intelligent writing.)* Could you imagine what Dr. A would say about DT45?

*I don't thing the Good Doctor was in the habit of apoplexy, but OrangeHair BabyHands would probably have driven him to it...*

I do like Justin Trudeau, but I have seen criticism of his government for being less transparent, and I hope he will do something about that. I suspect he will get a smaller majority the next election. I hope he will see these criticisms, and do something about it.

*I'd ask if you want to trade, but even throwing in the entire Congress, Canada would still have an advantage in that regard.*

I have done what I can, Al, it's a warm

Continued from "Loc 'N' Load", previous page

day, with threats of thunderstorms, so I will get to you before they move in here. Take care, and see you with the next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.



## SO WHY AREN'T YOU FAMOUS?

There's always been a few people who, knowing me for a while, and finding out the stunning height and breadth of my trivia pile (a few kilometers higher than Everest, and about as broad as Switzerland), say things like "Say, you could get on *Jeopardy* or something, and make a bundle!"

Sorry to tell you, it ain't that easy, chum... There's an online qualification exam for *Jeopardy*, and it only happens a couple times a year. If you make it through the online exam, and score high enough, then you are called to a regional center for an audition. (The closest to me is Chicago.) Then, should you make it through that hurdle, you get to travel to Los Angeles to be on the taped show.

There was a woman, not long ago, who was dying of cancer, who won a bunch of money on the show, but didn't live long enough to see herself on TV. Sad thing...

Let's face facts... my knowledge may be high, but I'm sixty years old... my reflexes aren't what they were, and my mental acuity isn't quite fast enough to hit the buzzer ahead of other contestants.

It would be a pleasant dream... but not much more than that, I'd wager.

Let's make it a true Daily Double, Alex...

# {NOT QUITE} THE LAST WORD...

## IS IT ME, OR IS IT FANDOM?

(MAYBE IT'S BOTH...)

Back in the day, when we were younger, in better health, and had some funds left over after paying out bills, we usually went to Worldcon. It was our yearly vacation, seeing friends we only saw at that venue.

The way things have gone of late, our resources are much less than they were, even accounting for inflation; our health is nowhere near what it was, and the costs of going to a North American Worldcon are just about out of reach. (I don't even try to estimate for a foreign Worldcon, like Helsinki this year.)

Even a NASFiC can be out of the question... This year, the NASFiC is in San Juan, Puerto Rico, which is off the table, because we can't drive to it.

Megan hasn't flown since MilPhil in 2001, on advice of her doctor, and the train service is being butchered by the Administration even as we speak. Our only alternative, then, is to drive, and with the border situation being as it is, and we not having passports or enhanced driver's licenses, Canada or Mexico isn't an option, either.

The last NASFiC we went to was **Detcon**, which we could commute to, and still sleep in our own beds. The local Detroit conventions have changed their focus, to bring in the young fen, leaving lots of us old pharts out in the lobby, wondering what happened. I have no idea who some of the guests at media conventions are, since we don't have cable or streaming to catch some of the "hot" shows. Besides, the loglines of these shows don't catch my interest at all.

Out of touch? Probably. Out of the loop? Definitely. Out of fandom? Not if I have anything to say about it, and as long as I have this venue in which to say it. Of course, this particular venue is being deprecated more and more each new generation, and it's becoming academic whether any in the "newer" generations reads at all...

Fandom isn't what it used to be, and neither is fannish history. Is this a good thing?

I don't think so, personally, but what do I know? I'm a relatively young fannish dinosaur...

### R. I. P. Richard Lee Tucholka

**Gamer, game master, game designer, game publisher, driving force of Tri-Tac Games, Dorsai Irregular, perennial huckster of stuph in rooms across the Midwest, humorous video host at many cons ("Uncle Richard's Trash Video").**

**You will be missed.**