

LIGHTNING ROUND

Fast and Furious Fannish Fun and Frolic

ON THE WAY TO NOWHERE IN PARTICULAR...

This is the fourth issue of *Lightning Round*, and it's becoming both easier and harder to write.

Easier because the exercise of flicking the fingers over the keyboard in that mechanical motion that all touch-typists develop is improved by repetition. **Harder** because "content" is what this is about, and it's becoming somewhat harder to think of things to write that would be both interesting and at least somewhat relevant to the events of the day.

Do I write, for instance, about The War? The amount of coverage from this one is truly staggering; I have no doubt that, between CNN, MSNBC, and the Fox News Channel, you could watch war coverage 26 hours a day. But what do we actually know?

Do I write about the things going on in my (and Megan's) life right now? Mostly, it seems to me, our lives are days of sheer boredom punctuated by minutes of total panic. The occurrences at her place of work (from which she's off on sick leave at pres-

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ent) could fill a book, usable in the curriculum of any business education program, on what not to do.

My mental health remains on the same apparently stable ground where it's been, but with even less certainty that the bottom won't fall out from under me.

Some fun, eh?

WHY WE WRITE (SESSION 2)

Well, after quite a bit of reflection on writing screenplays (see last ish), I have begun to re-examine why I choose to write screenplays at all. (Taking the time to refocus your perspectives is Not Necessarily a Bad Thing. As long as you don't do it too often. Say, more than once a day. For no longer than thirty minutes at a time. Your mileage may vary. Professional driver on closed course. Risk of serious karmic injury occurring.)

The restrictions I mentioned in that previous article - that You Don't Write What

You Can't Put On the Screen, and that The Writer Doesn't Direct the Director, in addition to the strictures of formatting - would seem to be daunting challenges. The way I see it, that's precisely what they are - **challenges**. It's, "Sure, you can sink a free throw from the free throw line. But can you do it from the other free throw line, as a hook shot, and blindfolded?"

(As an aside, I don't often use sports metaphors, but it seemed appropriate in this time and place.)

If you can maintain something that's exciting, well-structured, and has a solid payoff, while maintaining the rules that The Powers That Be have agreed to, then you will quite possibly be a successful screenwriter.

This does not necessarily mean that you will have your screenplays produced.

There are a lot of reasons that screenplays are bought, sent through development, and, finally, dropped. Any one, or combination of two or more, of the reasons may apply.

- The studio changes executives, so they will kill all the previous regime's

product.

- After they rip the original script into confetti, they can't make the new "concept" work.
- They can't get (or keep) a commitment from a "name player".
- Somebody in the studio (doesn't matter who) gets cold feet.
- The studio perceives that the public's taste has changed (even if it hasn't).

This is not necessarily a Bad Thing. If they actually pay you money, you'll get to keep it, even if the script never sees the light of day.

If all you want is the money, you can make an entire career without having one produced writing credit.

If that's all you want...

UPDATE ON PENGUICON

By the time this hits general circulation, I'll be at PenguCon. I emailed in, and I volunteered to work Ops. Yes, I'm *quite* familiar with the old soldier's dictum, "Never volunteer for anything." Thing is, it was either volunteer, and get in free, or not go at all. I suppose time will tell which was the wiser decision. (It usually does.)

I'll let you know how it went afterward.

CATS... WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Today, Thursday (as I write this), I took one of our two kittens in to get her

spayed. Mimi got through the operation fairly well, and is sleeping in a cage we built for her to isolate her (as best we may) from the other three cats, at least for a couple of days.

{later} The cage part didn't work too well. She got out, ran, and hid, and we didn't see her until the next morning.

Such is the way of things.

Mimi has always been the stealth kitty of the bunch.

Gigi is scheduled for next Thursday. Whether or not she's broken, she's getting fixed.

THREE-PIECE LAW-SUITS (WITH A SECOND PAIR OF PANTS)

I am hearing quite a lot of talk about lawsuits in the air lately, especially when they involve Megan, Megan's workplace, my relationship to Megan, and what I've done to/for/about Megan in the past

three years. Things are happening... and I can't talk about most of it.

This much I can say... Anyone who deserves to be sued will be. And the whole story will be written down, and will come out sometime after the conclusion of whatever happens.

SARS AND THE TORONTO WORLDCON

The outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in China, Southeast Asia, Western Europe, and North America (particularly Toronto) is casting a pall over some people's plans to go to Toronto for the Worldcon.

Ours, for example.

Megan's respiratory system is not stable to begin with; her immune system is weak, and she would have difficulty fighting off any sort of viral (or bacterial) infection, let alone SARS.

THE INDICIA

(or, Who's Responsible?)

This is *Lightning Round* #4, 12 May, 2003. This more frequent fanzine is from AlexanderPress, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bouchard Unlimited. Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to keep reading this as long as I can keep cranking it out. If you or any of your fanzine force are caught or killed, my secretary will disavow any knowledge of anyone's actions.

This is a science fiction fanzine. This means that science fiction and/or science fiction fandom may be discussed at any time.

You've been warned.

Editor: *Alexander {@} Bouchard*. Publisher: *Megan J. Stirlen Bouchard*. Official mascots: *Ada Jane, Gabrielle, Gigi, and Mimi*. Office of publication: **P. O. Box 573, Hazel Park, MI 48030-0573**. Email: *ajlbouchard@yahoo.com*. Available for "the usual" (arranged trades, LoC, article, artwork, cold drinks, filthy lucre, back massages, free or cheap stuff, a place to live, or an unlimited supply of *good* coffee). This includes editorial whim -- and I can be **quite** whimsical.

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Should there be no real solution to the problem by the time Worldcon gets closer, we may not go. In fact, I would suspect that Worldcon could conceivably be cancelled if the health risk is perceived as being too great. (I wouldn't like it, but I'd suspect it.)

Check your local news, keep a skeptical outlook, write if you get work, and hang by your thumbs.



Art by William Rotsler

LOCKARMA

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May 5, 2003

Howdy,

In an attempt to improve my LocKarma, I figured I'd go for the nice classic snail-mail LoC. Nothing particularly clever or witty follows - sadly - but suffice to say that I've been enjoying *Lightning Round*. {Pleased to hear it!}
Re: issue #2 mentions of cats

I'm a cat person who, after finally getting over fifteen years of cats in a small apartment, is about to give in again. I don't have the foul beastie yet, but it's an inevitability. In June my girlfriend moves in, you see. She's a cat person who actually misses having those smelly little furballs underfoot (her current living situation not being conducive to kitty-wrangling). So good man that I am, I said, "No. We're not getting a cat. I lived in this little apartment with up to four cats at one time and it took me years to get rid of them. No. No. No."

So naturally we'll be selecting our cat the first weekend she gets settled in. [I should point out that this little apartment situation is temporary as I'll be moving, after 18 years in one place, to larger digs in September.] {I don't think any further comment from me is necessary.}

Re: issue #3.
I enjoy reading scripts - particularly to movies I've seen to see how things change from the script to the time when the director calls the shots. I have two partially-written spec scripts sitting on the project backburners waiting for me to find more time. It looks so easy to do, but like other forms of writing - it's deceptive, time consuming, detail oriented, and subject to episodes of hair-pulling rage. Which reminds me - I found an interesting link from a fellow who's sold a few spec scripts and has much to say about the art.

<http://www.beckerfilms.com/articles.html>

{Funny thing... I got the site up, and the name looked familiar - then I realized, he's one of the old Renaissance Pictures crowd from here in Detroit. Sam and Ted Raimi, Josh Becker, Bruce Campbell... Sure. Nice site - thanks!}

Voting for the 2007 Worldcon will be interesting. As a long-time Japanophile I've already purchased my presupporting. Yes, it's going to be horrendously expensive. I don't even want to think about the hotel rates - but should it get the vote, I've

already decided to open a special savings account just to save up for it. Call me nutty. Call me baka. Call me broke.

{Maybe you are all three. But I'm still leaning towards a Worldcon I can drive to.}

Cheers!

John Teehan

Henry Welch
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Al:

Thanks for Lightning Round.

My sister-in-law is an aspiring screen writer. I've never read any of her work, so who knows...

{Well, that's true... the only way to know is to read the script.}

In my typically brief fashion I wrote about Ditto in one of my editorials. I wouldn't call it a proper con report, but I did name names and tell tales. {I'll have to go dig out that issue and reread it.}

To rehash here. There were people there. They talked, they ate (we ate a lot at all kinds of restaurants of which Toronto abounds). We drove too much in the car, the US border had a long wait for trucks, Letha attended a needlework show, and Andy Porter is afraid of heights but went up the CN Tower anyway. If I've left anything off it was purely intentional.

{I guess you could call that the "USAToday" version of a con report.}

Until next issue...

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May 3, 2003

Dear Alex and Megan:

Greetings! I got issue 3 of Lightning Round a while ago, but it's been only now that I've been able to get to it... and that's mostly because of my change in employment. I was let go from this great job I had downtown because of lack of work, and the past month or so has been with a little-known organization called the National Broadcast Reading Service, or NBRS. They produce a spoken-word cable service for blind and low-sighted Canadians called VoicePrint. I've been a volunteer reader for VoicePrint for just over a year now, and they saved my butt by hiring me under the table to call subscribers and supporters to help with the renewal of their broadcasting licence. It's a great help, as my EI isn't scheduled to kick in for another month. So, I now have time to catch up on fanzines...
{Well, at least that's something...}

Fred Rogers and Ernie Coombs were two young men who made their living as entertainers in the Philadelphia area. When Rogers got the opportunity to do a children's puppet show, Coombs joined him as lead puppeteer. Rogers stayed in the States, while Coombs eventually got the opportunity to do his own show on the relatively new CBC. Coombs' show was originally called Butternut Square, but was quickly renamed Mr. DressUp. It's hard to believe that both of them are now gone; many Canadian kids grew up with both of them, depending on which channels we could get.
{Growing up here across the river from Windsor, I saw Mr. DressUp... and The Friendly Giant... and many of those CBC programs. In many cases, they were better than the competing product on the three US network affiliates. In fact, I spent enough time watching Canadian

programming, that once or twice, when I was hacked off about something, where a regular American would say "I'm gonna write my Congressman!" I came out with "I'm gonna write my M.P.!"}
 I see PenguiCon is on this weekend...you'll have to tell us if you attended or not.
{I did indeed... I worked Ops all weekend. That still left me some time to see what there was to be seen... like the 802.11 wireless network setup... and Terry Pratchett spending half an hour in the Ops Room, just being friendly - I wasn't there at the time, more's the pity.}
 I had been monitoring the various fannish listservs (it's better than getting into some of the silly arguments they contain) when I found out about the passing of Harry Warner. I don't think fanzines as we know them are done; much the same thing was said when Bob Shaw and Walt Willis

THE SPOT

What's going on (that I know about)

5-8 June 2003

Bead & Button Expo - large bead, button, and fashion art trade show - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Web page: <http://www.beadandbuttonshow.com>

28 Aug - 1 Sep 2003

Torcon III - the 61st World Science Fiction Convention, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Web page: <http://www.torcon3.on.ca>

GENERAL REFERENCE WEBSITES

The Stilyagi Con List

<http://stilyagi.org/cons>

An excellent reference list of science fiction conventions happening around the country.

The World Science Fiction Society

<http://wsfs.org>

The site for the unincorporated literary society that is the official sponsor of the annual Worldcon.

If you were a member of the last Worldcon, or are a member of the next, you're a member of WSFS.

The SF Lovers Site

<http://www.sflovers.org>

Home for a varied assortment of fan-based links. Maintained by Saul Jaffe.

The Science Fiction Resource Guide

<http://www.sflovers.org/SFRG>

An online guide to what's available on the web, maintained by Chaz Boston Baden

FANAC, Inc.

<http://www.fanac.org>

The brainchild of Joe Siclari, chairman of the '92 Worldcon, this is attempting to be a compendium of all fannish links you might need. If they don't link to it, they might know who does.

*If there's an event you want mentioned here, mail details to **P. O. Box 573, Hazel Park, MI 48030-0573**, or email ajlbouchard@yahoo.com.*

passed on. We have to acknowledge our losses, and carry on as best as we can. Fanzines have survived the losses of our best over the years, and others have risen up not to replace them, but to add their own mark.

{All too true... and all too sad, as well.}

My letter...for the first time in the fund's history, CUFF is being contested. Colin Hinz, last year's CUFF-er, is in charge of distributing ballots for the runoff. The candidates are Garth Spencer of Vancouver, Andrew Murdoch of Victoria, and Lyndie Bright of Winnipeg. The winner will get to attend CanVention, which will be part of Torcon 3. I have found out that Chicago fandom is at it again, and will be launching a Chicago in 2009 Worldcon bid at Torcon. I may just spend my money on pre-supporting that bid, and see what happens.

{Chicago in '09? The concept has possibilities...}

Time to go and hit the jobhunting websites. Good luck to both of us on the job search, and let's hope for full employment before the really good weather starts.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

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NIGHT OF THE LIVING VIDIOTS...

There aren't many shows on TV that I watch anymore.

I mean, WATCH. Go into a grand mal hissy if I miss it. Burn however many kilometers of videotape catching. Turn off the phone while it's on. That sort of thing.

I look at the news... until I start getting sick to my stomach. I watch Entertainment Tonight. (Some people would consider that the sign of an unrepentant sinner. And their point is?)

But the shows I WATCH are few and far between. They are, in no particular order,

- The West Wing
- John Doe

The West Wing, the saga of a fictional (boo!) Democratic President, is well-written, crackling with subtext, snappy banter, and lots of disguised lessons in American government. And now that the creator and primary writer, Aaron Sorkin, is leaving, who knows where it could go...

John Doe is the saga of a man, fished naked out of the Pacific Ocean off Seattle with no memory of who he is or how he got where he woke up, but with a head full of answers

to the most esoteric questions.

Ordinarily, you would see no obvious connection between the two. You'd be right - there is no obvious connection. The less-than-obvious connection is that these two series are both well written, and they both have compelling story arcs. We can only see if the dynamics of American network television will allow the quality to continue.

SECONDARY EMISSIONS

Subjecting one's self to the grueling, often soul-draining act of being on a convention committee is not always the smartest act one could perform. Most people, especially those who have worked on large regionals or at a Worldcon level, would agree wholeheartedly with this opinion.

So why am I considering being involved with a concom again? There could be a number of reasons:

- I'm insane
- My medications aren't working any more
- I have a death wish
- I'm starved for human contact (fen count)

Think it over, and supply your own reason (I know I

Sharp Sword.
Short Temper.
Any questions?

Late Breaking Items

PENGUICON UPDATE (Part Deux)

The con went off remarkably well, especially for a first effort. I think that there will more than likely be a second iteration, and this is, in my opinion, a Good Thing.

I would like to extend my personal congratulations to Tracy Worcester and the rest of the con-com for their hard work and dedication that helped bring this off.

The combination of a con and a Linux expo was such a natural fit, the question became "Why didn't somebody think of this sooner?"

It is to the credit of those who did that they pulled it off so well. Since this was a first con (they called it Penguicon 1.0), there were a few bugs as they shook down. But not so many, nor were there insurmountable ones.

I expect that Penguicon 2.0, next year, should be a larger, more friendly gathering. According to the website, the attendance was right around 500, and the con has broken even, give or take. This is good.

When I hear more, I'll write about it here.

-@

SOME NOTES BEFORE THE END

I've got a few more quick zine reviews for you.

Challenger #17, from Guy H. Lillian III, P. O. Box 53092, New Orleans LA 70153. Another issue of Guy's large, well-written genzine, this time without the fanzine reviews, which he's sending out separately. (See the previous ish for details.) Well worth finding. Guy's three-part essay on the changing views of the police is worth reading.

No Award #13, from Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore Street #105, North Hollywood CA 91606. Marty Cantor, "voted Fandom's Resident Curmudgeon by a poll conducted in *Twink*", produces another issue of his "smaller" (compared to his previous attempt, *Holier Than Thou*) fanzine. He concentrates mostly of California fandom, since that's where he lives, and has articles from Len Moffatt, Mike Glycer, and an appreciation of Harry Warner, Jr. Smartassery *sine qua non*.

AVAILABLE AT EFANZINES.COM (THANKS, BILL BURNS)

Art: Brad W. Foster

