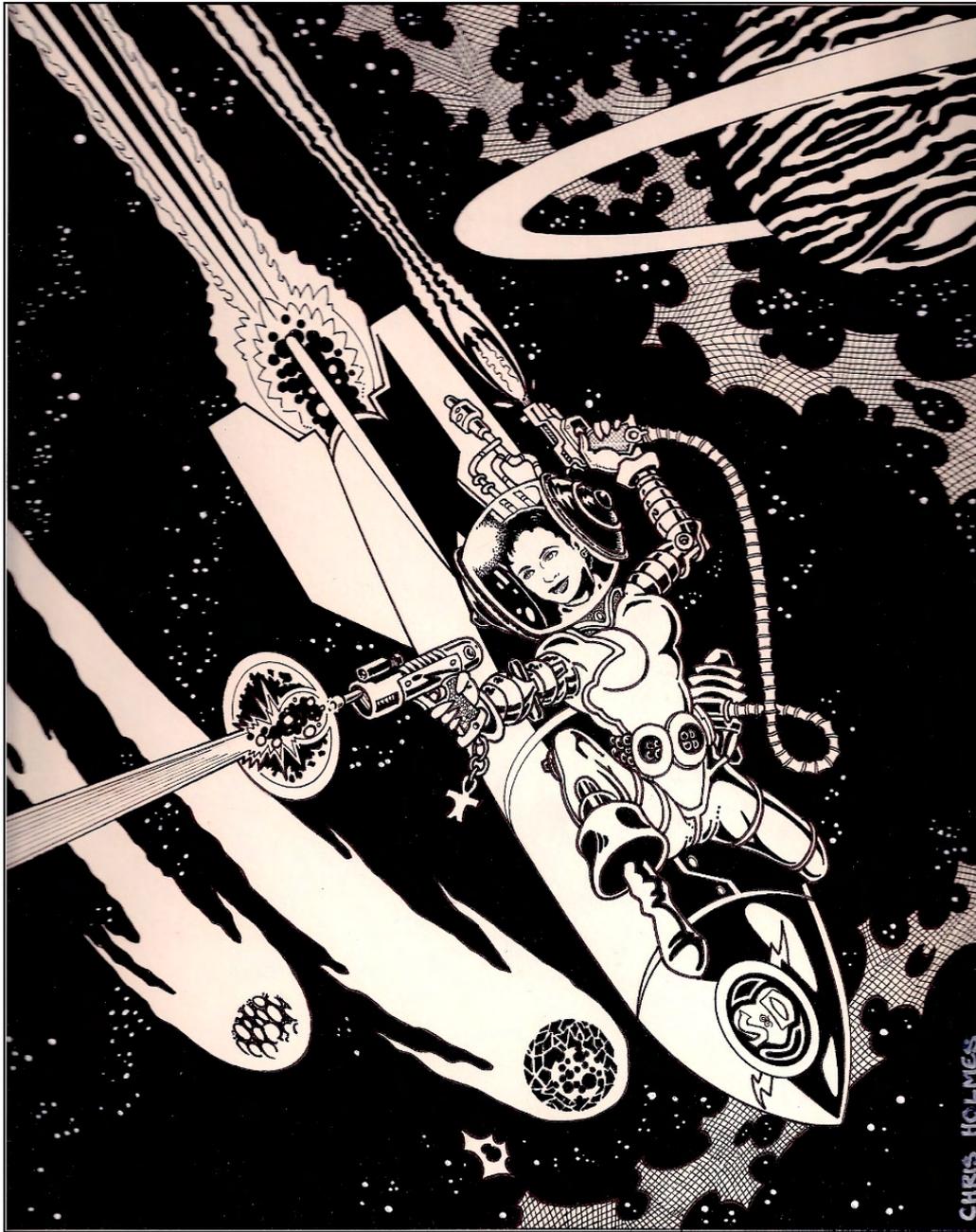


THE (TENTH) FORTNIGHTLY FIX



GIANT-SIZE SPECIAL

An Unfunny Thing Happened To Me...

The more observant of you will have noted there hasn't been a new edition of *The FFix* for a full three weeks, and #9.5 was itself a fill-in single-sheeter. Ah, such dreams I had.

Actually, there's a very simple explanation: I returned from Microcon 2010 with the usual souvenirs (great memories, a clay statuette) and one that was slightly less welcome: thanks to the campus security refusing to open the doors until the very moment Sunday's programme was due to launch, I stood in a minor gale for a full twenty-five minutes. Little wonder that by Tuesday, I was cultivating a really unpleasant chest and throat infection.

Thankfully, I just about got the bug out of my system before heading down to Winchester for Corflu Cobalt, of which I would say much had I not left my notebook behind at the hotel (it was subsequently rescued by Sandra Bond, who has since passed it to Alison Scott, who will complete this cross-country relay in less than a week's time: ain't fandom grand?). In any case, I have sold the exclusive rights to my Corflu memoir to a Mr N Farey of Nevada (and when I say "sold", it's more that he's bribing me with a bunch of photos from the All-Girl Nude Wrestling League, the cad).

In other news: I'm standing in the local council elections on 6 May (the photograph alongside features yours truly and Solihull MP Lorely Burt, and is currently appearing atop letters to voters in my target ward), and continue to spend two or three afternoons each week spin-doctoring in the local LibDem office; my movie tally had passed forty by 25 March, meaning my average ticket cost for the year is now below £1.00; despite the protestations of my friend Catherine Crockett, I dropped by a local barber's shop on Thursday and was duly shorn of fourteen months' growth (I'd avoided the scissors since immediately before I flew out on my TAFF trip in July).



On those occasional days when I'm not preparing for, or recovering from a convention, I've been spending time with my younger brother, corrupting his young mind with the best (and, in a few cases, least best) genre cinema has to offer. I was particularly pleased when Mikey requested the Swedish vampire thriller *Låt den rätta komma in*: he couldn't recall watching a subtitled movie before, and was surprised at how easy it was. Meanwhile, he's introducing me to such bands as Red, Hollywood Undead, Skillet, Breaking Benjamin and 3 Doors Down.

Down the Loccol



We open with three letters of comment on *The FFix* #8, the first of which was accidentally omitted from #9 (my sincere apologies to its author):

- Joseph Nicholas: "You remind me that I once stood for the Labour Party as a candidate in local elections.

"Indeed -- it was in 1986, in a ward (Westminster) that it had no hope of winning and in which it did no campaigning, but in which it nevertheless fielded a full slate of candidates (as it did for every ward). I was then a member, having joined in 1984 or 1985, but I allowed my membership to lapse in 1988 as a consequence of the 'policy review' which followed the 1987 election defeat, which among other things resulted in the abandonment of the commitment to nuclear disarmament (as well as much else). In retrospect, this was probably the start of the gradual move back towards 'the centre' -- or the alleged centre, which Thatcher's Conservatives, as Norman Tebbit said they would, had 'dragged massively to the

right' -- which eventually culminated in the invention of Blair's New Labour: a party which compensates bankers for their greed and stupidity and forces low-paid public sector workers to pay for it. Which is another reason why the party is going down to catastrophic defeat this coming May, as its 'natural' supporters desert it for the BNP or UKIP (or stay at home and don't vote at all) and the idiot middle classes who want to get little Jocasta into the right school and complain about having to pay more to have their bins emptied and fret about those frightful oiks in hoods who hang around the street corners on summer evenings revert to type and vote for the Conservatives because well, you know, tax is frighteningly high and immigration really is out of control, blah blah blah. (The cretins.) It would be better if they stayed at home and didn't vote, too.

"I haven't been a member of any political party at any time since, although I have counter-signed nomination papers for Green Party candidates in local elections (and may do so again, if asked). But joining parties, I think, constrains one's freedom of speech and action -- one can still disagree with what a party says on a particular issue, but those thoughts have to be kept to oneself, otherwise one begins to receive more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger missives from the party secretary. Bleagh."

I must say I've not had that problem, but then I *am* the local party secretary. I believe there's a place for both individual and in-party action; right now, in my home town, the latter course makes more sense, although none of my letters to the local press are vetted.

- David Hardy: "I'm not sure what to think [ref Barack Obama's lunar scaledown], yet. Obviously, I was disappointed to see the end of Bush's plans to go to the Moon and Mars (about the only good thing he did), but I've been saying for years that space tourism and commercial space-flight are the best way to really get humanity into space, not just a few NASA (or Russian, or Chinese...) astronauts. From the point of view of industry, there are the asteroids to exploit for minerals, there's 'free' solar power and energy, a near-vacuum, extreme cold just by shielding -- and, above all, zero-g. What are they waiting for?"

- Lloyd Penney: "I was disappointed, too, that the Obama government cut the planned return to the moon and trip to Mars, but given the state of the US debt, edging closer to \$12,000,000,000,000, everyone has to be a fiscal conservative, whether we like it or not, and I doubt I will ever see such an adventure as a return to the moon in my lifetime. Will this mean a boom in science fiction tropes and memes in the future? (Fiscal conservatism is fine, but when I see the money that goes to war and the military coffers, there has to be some place to cut back there, too.)

"I can imagine some sneering at the idea of getting an electric typewriter, but we've got one, too, an old IBM Selectric with the typeball on it. We have found that not everything requires the computer, and sometimes, you just want to type something on a small piece of paper or an index tab. Missing the old kachunk-kachunk of the Gestetner? Did you get a look at Colin Hinz' duper in action at Anticipation?"

Yes, indeed, as well as those in various states of assembly in his basement.

"It is so difficult to have any faith in federal and provincial politics here [in Toronto]. I have worked for candidates in the distant past, and worked a couple of polls for Elections Canada more recently, but our low opinion of politicians is really a low opinion of humans,



and how far we can descend in the name of personal gain. We've had too many elections here, but I would like another one that could oust the Tories here, and give our Liberals a majority in Parliament. That scenario isn't likely right now, but it's got to happen sooner or later; the Tories will say or do something amazingly stupid as they always seem to do, and the race will be on."

And so we move to the feedback on *The FFix #9*, the bulk of it in response to my editorial on fannish elitism as displayed during the recent TAFF and DUFF races:

- Nic Farey: "Yer opening bit about sidling in via *Doctor Who* fandom obviously struck a chord, since I snuck in via the *Star Trek* ghetto meself, albeit somewhat abetted by a *Whovian*, who got me going to the old London Ton meetings. Since I'm old enough to have watched the Doc since 'An Unearthly Child' (and I did), I find it pretty fuckin' amazing that I can't ever recall me & you having a *Doctor Who*-related chat ever. Am I right or was I drunk again?"

A hardline teetotaller such as yourself, Nic? Impossible. (Joking aside, I'm amazed, too.)

- Chris Garcia: "Total agreement! I missed much of the complaining about the TAFF nominees (though I'll admit that I half-expected it), but I still maintain that they were all great candidates and that Anne and Brian'll make a great pair of delegates come Corflu / Eastercon. I think the fact that Anne, Brian and Frank raised huge amounts of money for the fund should say exactly how dedicated they are to the fund and that fact alone is worth an incredible amount. Ultimately, as I've said before, TAFF is Whoever Stands For It, and while I certainly beat the bushes out on this side, these were the folks who came forward and certainly made the most of their chance. I hope that future races have more people who are as dedicated as they were this last race. That would help do the one thing that I sorta think I managed: to get the name out there (and, secondarily, raise a lot of money!)

"It's odd, but in the BArea, one of the greatest things that brought people to fandom was a horror-science fiction television programme called *Creature Feature*. Host Bob Wilkins mentioned that there were conventions coming up and that kids should consider going. Dave Clark, a future WorldCon chair, was one of at least five kids I know (well, they're not kids 35 years later) who all came to fandom after hearing about it on *Creature Features*. Comics fandom has brought many of us in too. And *Star Trek*. And...

"That said, I'm one of Jeff's nominators and would love to see him win. He's a great guy and I'd love to see him as a DUFF delegate. Canadians have not done well in Fan Fundery, though that could easily change. It's a good bunch this year, especially with folks like John Purcell and John Hertz in the mix. I hope they all do as much for DUFF as our TAFF candidates did in our race."

- John Purcell: "Another *Fortnightly Fix* with some most thoughtful commentary. Before I forget, you might like to know that I printed out thish not only to file but for referencing purposes while composing this loc.

"Interesting how you picked up on that crazy fannish elitism thing based on the DUFF race now being run. First off, I am surprised at the number of entries: five people - well, six, if you count the duo candidacy as individuals - are in the hunt, and they all sound like great candidates: besides Jeff Boman (whom you support) and myself, there are also Terry Fong and Jannie Shea, John Hertz and Melanie Herz. The nutty thing about this group is that I have barely heard of Terry, Jannie and Melanie, but their platforms reveal a lot of convention experience among them all. For that matter, Jeff and that other John have a lot of convention and fanzine experience. The latter two I know through correspondence, but have never met them personally. Still, from all our correspondences I can honestly say that Jeff

Boman and John Hertz seem like splendid fellows and nice guys. I am positive that Terry, Jannie and Melanie are also really nice people.

“Unfortunately, the niceness factor isn't the question you raise: it is this fannish elitism that the so-called 'Core Fandom' has adopted. Personally, I really don't see the big deal here. In fact, knowing that John Hertz is in the hunt puts me at a disadvantage; he draws from a large fan-base in the Western realm of fandom (LASFS, Westercons, and all) besides being a fine fanwriter whose work has appeared in numerous fanzines. He may not loc that much, but Mr Hertz is a very well-known fan who not only faithfully sends me copies of his APA-L zine *Vanamonde*, but has been an active fan far longer than I have. As for Jeff Boman, I have read his fanzine *The Original Universe* and enjoyed it -- even locced the latest issue posted to efanzines. It is a really fine looking fanzine. And from what my friends Chris Garcia and Lloyd Penney (and others, too) tell me, Jeff is a helluva nice guy.

“As far as I am concerned, Jeff is as much of a qualified fan to run for DUFF as I am, perhaps more so. If recent and consistent convention attendance were a factor, Jeff would probably have me beat hands down; the last worldcon I attended was Iguacon in 1978, and I usually only get to a couple Texas conventions every year. This year will probably be different due to this DUFF thingie, but even so, I bet Jeff gets to more cons a year than I do. I know John Hertz does. And the other candidates run the damned bloody things! Yeah... about that...

“The bottom line is that I consider Jeff Boman as much of a fan as I am. So what if my main fanac happens to be through fanzines and his isn't? Yes, my fannish pedigree is very old school and I love to write fanzines, articles, locs, and so forth. It's fun, and that's why I do it. But why should that be different from Jeff's background just because he got into fandom through comics and pubs a comic-based zine? A zine is still a zine in my book, even if

it is marginally related to that dreaded ghetto of *Science Fiction*. So even though you're elevating eyebrows by supporting Jeff's DUFF bid, that's cool. Your decision was based on a reason that made sense to you, and that's really all that should matter.

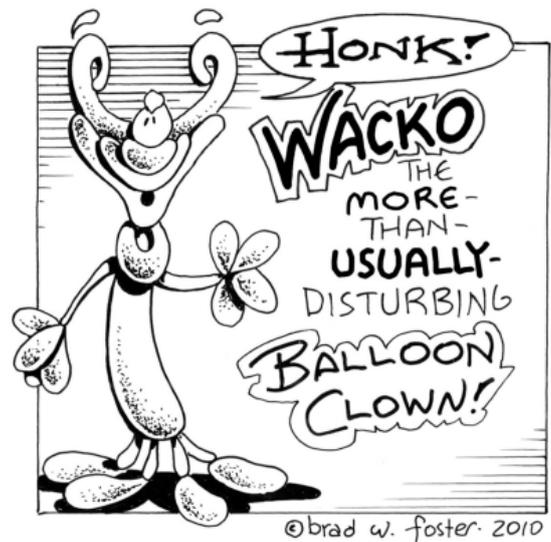
“See if you ever get another issue of *Askance* in the mail, you rat bastard...

“Anyhow, and getting back to another comment on *The FFix* #9, Paul Vincent whets my appetite for an old-fashioned Gestetnerized fanzine when he wrote ‘I'm agog at your determinedly retro endeavour to produce fanzines in ye olde fashioned duplicated way. You're a traditionalist at heart, sir!’. This implies you're running off X-number of copies of your zine every 13 days?! Really? I am most impressed, even if it may be a limited run. That is something that I have slipped off from doing in recent issues: a limited number of copies of *Askance* are supposedly send to contributors, but I keep forgetting this rule. I need to follow through on this and ship them off, especially to Taral Wayne Real Soon Now. He's holding an article hostage for my third annish until he sees the whites of my zine in his mailbox.”

The FFix is distributed electronically, but I do have plans for another paper fanzine.

“So this was a good ish. See how fast I wrote this time since you piqued my interest? Punch somebody's button and it's bound to generate a loc or two. Thanks for the issue, and I hope to get the chance to see you someday soon.”

- Cathy Palmer-Lister: “The issue of ‘elitism’ has come up a few times. We all know it's there, we all know it's a problem, but this elephant in the room has no owner! No one claims responsibility, no one knows what to do about it, and so we argue over whose fault it is, or



pretend it's not there and chewing up our furniture. Those 'real fans' just don't get it, they don't know the world moved on and left them behind. And then they complain that attendance numbers are dropping, and fandom is turning grey, well, DUH!! There's more colour on tv, movie screens, computers, and gaming consoles! So, the characters have big eyes and purple hair, they aren't sf anymore? No matter how many spaceships and strange new worlds and technologies are explored?

"My fandom is *inclusive*, and yes, we will have an actor at Con*Cept, and so what if she / he is paid to appear? Some of us were raised on *Star Trek*. I will not be cutting off my nose to spite my face.

"And now, I find out from *The FFix* that some fans don't think Jeff Boman is 'one of us'? I'm livid, absolutely livid. Jeff has been active in fandom ever since whenever!!! He's at all the cons in this city regardless of the media being celebrated: anime, gaming, comics, books -- all of them! And he's a fan-ed to boot! Jeff *is* one of *us*, and deserving of being honoured by the community he's been supporting all these years."

- Jeff Boman: "Some clarifications and corrections to *The FFix* #9. First: I'm friends with some members of the Montreal SF&F club, but I'm not a member myself.

"Second, as to my pedigree in fandom: I first read Asimov's 'I, Robot' at a very young age (still have it, too). I've been reading books and magazines ever since. I've been trying to get published in them for over a decade (almost two). I was on the local convention committee for seven years. I've been a letterhack for sf zines for over five now.

"I hope this clears up whether I'm one of you. :)"

- Joseph Nicholas: "Reading your front page piece about the elitism of 'core' fandom reminded me very much of the complaints by some (I name no names, but the label 'Ted White Group Mind' thrusts itself to the forefront of my consciousness) in the early and middle 1980s about the alleged "balkanisation" of fandom that was said to be occurring -- i.e. complaints about these unlettered newcomers who'd never heard of Walt Willis and didn't respect the Elder Ghods and failed to acknowledge the fact that fanzine fans were here *first* (stamp foot, pout mightily). I thought at the time that this was drivel, and still do -- other fans do other things, but so what? How does not pubbing your ish make you any less of a fan?"

"It was obvious in the early 1980s that fanzine fandom, for so long the dominant form of fannish activity because it was for many the only form of fannish activity, was being pushed from its central position by other, newer fandoms: filking, costuming, media fandom, running conventions as an end in itself, and so forth. There were probably many reasons for this -- changes in society and technology which were opening up new opportunities and niches not

previously available; the increasing size of fandom overall (increasing both the likelihood of its fissioning and the viability of any new 'sub-fandoms'); the perceived moribund nature of the fanzine fandom of the time (the 1970s insurrection had run its course); the potentially greater attractiveness of these 'other fandoms' -- but what struck me with greater force was, firstly, the point-blank refusal of the 'Old Guard' to entertain any of these possible explanations and, secondly, the sheer resentment expressed by the same old guard towards these newcomers. (Newcomers who had the audacity to carve out their own paths with no regard to what the old guard had done, forsooth! -- doubtless doing a fair amount of wheel-reinvention along the way, but what new generation doesn't?).

"Fanzine fans had one point in their favour: they were there first. But this undeniable historical fact is not in itself an argument for continued primacy: that was (and is) one which has to be made directly. Instead, the fanzine fans of the time tended to retreat



into hand-waving about Fifth Fandom and the like: anything, it seemed, but engage directly with everyone else. Then they founded Corflu as a Second Foundation to keep the light of hope alive in a time of darkness (etc. etc.).

“That was perhaps the only good thing to emerge from all the arguing, even if the connection between them isn't as obvious as it may appear. (I've been to only three of them -- next month's, in Winchester, will be my fourth.) But from what you say on the front page, it sounds as though those arguments have not only not gone away but have come back stronger than ever. When I first heard the term ‘core fandom’ some years ago, it was clearly intended ironically, but its meaning has obviously mutated into something more literal (in same way that ‘political correctness’, once used as a satire by the left against itself, now has a wholly earnest and po-faced interpretation). One might almost think that fanzine fans are themselves poised to reinvent the wheel, this wheel being the same drivel about balkanisation and pretend shock that newcomers have never heard of Walt Willis that cluttered up the early and middle 1980s. Colour me bored rigid, dude....

“Ps. Ian Williams's comment on the MPs' expenses scandal -- aka ripping off the taxpayer for whatever they could get away with -- strikes me as just daft. To argue that our politicians are more acceptable because they're less corrupt is hardly a shining endorsement. A claim to be the best (most upstanding, most honest, most diligent, etc.) -- claims which British Parliamentarians are keen to advance whenever they can -- requires to be supported by evidence that this is absolutely the case. Otherwise one is merely arguing about degrees of criminality, with the attendant corruption of public life.”

- Lloyd Penney: “I remember many years ago, I made a few gentle inquiries about fan funds like TAFF and DUFF, and wondered aloud how I might do. I met up with that elitism, which dismissed me as being too inexperienced, and too unknown, and a couple even dismissed me as being Canadian, saying that this fund was for Americans and Brits, and Canadians could go mind their own business. (I also don't drink much...this was also seen as a factor against me.) This was some time ago, and those negative voices are now largely silent, but elitism is still there. Should I truly go for a fan fund, and both Yvonne and I are considering it, would those harsh voices be heard again? Seeing how many are on the DUFF ballot, perhaps those harsh voices are defending TAFF more than DUFF or any other fund. Part of fandom's appeal is the ability to participate; I've always gotten more out of doing rather than just watching. I also know that if I don't go for it now, I may never get the chance again. By the way, is there a list of names of 'us' as in 'not one of us'? Fandom continually changes, in activities, attitudes and people involved. The older fans will whine and bitch, but they will faithfully fail to do something about it. By going for a fan fund, do you set yourself up as a target?”

I was delighted to be the first TAFF delegate to represent the fund at a Canadian worldcon, and I certainly hope to see at least one Canadian candidate in the next eastward race, much as I'd like to see a non-UK fan among the next westward line-up.

“I am not a Luddite, but I also believe that old tech is not bad tech. Go for the older repro, and as the editor, your word stands. Doesn't stop you from listing issues as .pdfs on eFanzines. Our old CUFF trip report from 2000 was photocopied and stapled, and is already seen as old tech, or retro, as some might say. Parts of were produced on Word and others on QuarkXPress; I should get it scanned as a .pdf, and perhaps offer that to Bill burns for storage as well.

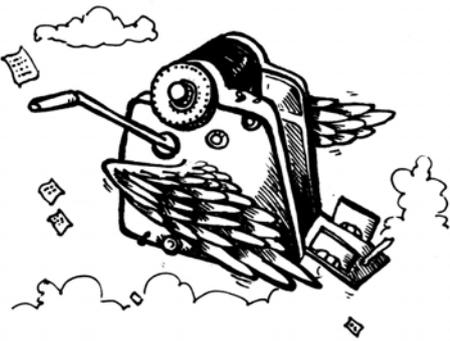
“I do sympathize with American fans who are saddened by their own government's pork-barrel and lies. Believe me, we criticize your government, not your country. It will take more than Barack Obama's best intentions to fix eight years of George W. Bush, and we wish Obama and his coming successors luck. Many of us who have a ringside seat to the effects of American politics see the far right plotting its revenge, and it looks like the Forces of Evil(TM)

reassembling their forces for the return of toxic politics. When that happens, as it invariably will, the whole world suffers from it.”

- David Flint: “Read *The FFix* #9 (alongside #8, which I'd missed) and enjoyed. I was never part of the sf fanzine scene, but I do miss those old photocopied, renegade horror fanzines of the latter '80's. Amazing how few of us who were cranking that stuff out are still around doing *anything*.

“But, time and technology marches on. I'm putting the finishing touches to a new website, which will be launched as soon as I can afford to buy webspace and a domain name, and which will somehow mash most of my interests (not sure how many other sites will mix movie and booze reviews) into an incoherent, and doubtless unpopular whole.”

- I also heard from: Mike Ward (“When I go retro for publishing, it means I'm using ‘.txt’. Went through the ditto and mimeo and xerox and offset phases, and I even did a couple of pages in letterpress. Nowadays I prefer electronic dots. Not to say it isn't right for you to try it -- and have fun with!”); Dave Hardy; Char Shea; Andy Neilson (“What happened to the caption competition in the last ish?” -- good question, mate); Laura Watkinson (offering me weekend hospitality in The Hague: wow!); Terry & Jannie Fong; Scott Edelman; Kevin Welch (“Ambitious but interesting”); Felicity Walker; Nic Farey (“Fun seeing you on [*Corflu's*] virtual feed, where did you get the Beatle wig? [larf].”); John Richards (with whom I spent a very enjoyable evening at a Birmingham curry emporium during his UK tour) ; Jim Barker.



- Fanzines received since Novacon include: *Banana Wings* # 40 (ed. Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer); *Journey Planet* #5 (ed. James Bacon, Claire Brialey, Chris Garcia); *Trapdoor* #26 (ed. Robert Lichtman); *Luna* #5 - #7 (ed. C D Carson); *Littlebrook* #7 (ed. Jerry Kaufman, Suzanne Tompkins); *iShoes* #3 (ed. Yvonne Rowse); *The Original Universe* #10 (ed. Jeff Boman); *Data Dump* #144 - 145 (ed. Steve Sneyd); *Vanamonde* #798 - #812 (ed. John Hertz); *This Here* #13 (ed. Nic Farey). Not to mention the huge stack I picked up at Corflu Cobalt last weekend and will list in the very next *FFix*.

This tenth issue of *THE FORTNIGHTLY FIX* is dated 27 March 2010. Published by Steve Green, who can be contacted via stevegreen@livejournal.com. Illustrations by Chris Holmes (pg.1), Arthur Thomson (pg.2), Rick King (pg.3), Brad Foster (pg.5), Pete Lyon (pg.6), Sue Mason (pg.8); photograph on page two by Claire O’Kane. My usual thanks to Bill Burns for distribution via the wondrous eFanzines.com. This fanzine supports **Jeff Boman for DUFF** (get your votes in by Wednesday!). A Gutter Press fanzine.