



THE (18TH)

FORTNIGHTLY FIX

“You take a book onto American television, they’ll put it in a bucket of water.”

-- Mort Sahl

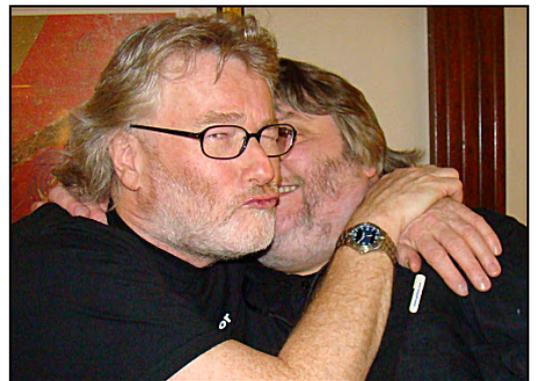
“You have no such thing as a wastebasket in your house, Steve.”

-- Phil Greenaway

News From Planet Me

A couple of days after I sent the previous issue of *The FFix* off to Bill Burns to be converted into sparkly electrons, the latest edition of the unapologetically old-style *Banana Wings* slid through my letterbox with the following observation from co-editor Mark Plummer: “Steve Green’s Friday night chat-show [at Novacon 40] was... shall we say, less than entirely coherent, although it was salvaged in part through Iain Banks’s skills as a performer.” Fastforward twenty-six pages and David Redd mentions he heard a similarly upbeat report about Iain’s appearance from his friend Geoff Winterman.

Unfortunately, thanks to a combination of the item’s absurdly late scheduling, the overly liquid launch party which preceded it and a last-second alteration in the line-up (during my opening remarks: you can’t get much more last-second than that), my memory of the event is conspicuously absent. Indeed, the only clues to what ensued are an audio cassette which I’ve yet to play back and the photograph above right, which appears to show Mr Banks either very happy with the way our conversation went or strangling me in retribution. I leave it to you, dear reader, to decide which. Still, if the item was truly that offbeam, at least it’s likely I’ll get a ‘get out of jail free’ card this year and watch some other poor sod embarrass himself.



The Aisles Are Full Of Noises

Despite the lousy December weather and a few related mechanical problems with my car, I still managed to rack up quite a decent tally with my moviegoing last year: a full one hundred and thirty, not counting the one film I saw twice (*Iron Man 2*, since you ask; the second

occasion was a treat for my brother Mikey, who's displaying a like enthusiasm for the Marvel Movieverse, albeit without having read the original comics).

All titles were released in 2009 or 2010, unless other wise indicated; my personal 'top 20' are underlined: [•Rec]²; 4.3.2.1; 44 Inch Chest; The A-Team; A Nightmare on Elm Street; A Single Man; Alice in Wonderland 3D; All About Steve; The American; Another Year; Avatar 3D; Back To the Future (1985); The Bad Lieutenant - Port of Call: New Orleans; Black Death; The Blind Side; The Book of Eli; The Bounty Hunter; The Boys Are Back; Brooklyn's Finest; Brothers; Buried; Burke and Hare; Cemetery Junction; Centurion; Chico & Rita; Chloe; Clash of the Titans; The Collector; The Crazyes; Crazy Heart; Cyrus; Date Night; Daybreakers; Dear John; Death at a Funeral; Devil; Did You Hear About the Morgans?; The Disappearance of Alice Creed; Due Date; Easy A; Edge of Darkness; El secreto de sus ojos [aka The Secret in Their Eyes]; The Expendables; F; Flickan som lekte med elden [aka The Girl Who Played With Fire]; Four Lions; From Paris With Love; Gainsbourg (Vie héroïque); Gake no ue no Ponyo [aka Ponyo] (2008); Get Him To the Greek; Going the Distance; The Ghost Writer [aka The Ghost]; Green Zone; Greenberg; Grown Ups; Gulliver's Travels; The Hole 3D; Hot Tub Time Machine; I Love You Phillip Morris; Inception; Invictus; Iron Man 2; It's a Wonderful Afterlife; It's Complicated; The Joneses; Kick-Ass; The Kids Are All Right; The Killer Inside Me; Killers; Knight and Day; L'arnacoeur [aka Heartbreaker]; The Last Exorcism; The Last Station; Leap Year; Legion; Let Me In; Life As We Know It; The Losers; Love and Other Drugs; The Lovely Bones; Made In Dagenham; Män son halar kvinnor [aka The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo]; Mic Mac à tire-larigot [aka Micmacs]; Monsters; Mr Nice; Mugabe and the White African; Ninja Assassin; Ondine; The Other Guys; Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief; Pirahna 3D*; Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire; Predators; Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time; The Rebound; Red; Remember Me; Repo Men; The Road; The Runaways; Robin Hood; Salt; Scott Pilgrim vs the World; The Scouting Book For Boys; Shelter; She's Out of My League; Shutter Island; Skyline; The Social Network; Solomon Kane; Somewhere; Somos lo que hay [aka We Are What We Are]; Splice; The Switch; Takers; Tamara Drewe; The Tourist; The Town; Toy Story 2 3D (original 2D version released in 1999); Toy Story 3 3D; Un prophète [aka A Prophet]; Up In the Air; Valentine's Day; Wall Street - Money Never Sleeps; Whatever Works; Whip It; Wild Target; Winter's Bone; The Wolfman; Youth In Revolt. (*Although not of quite the same calibre as others in my 'top 20', this old-fashioned gorefest scored high for its sheer exuberance, comic touches and 1980s exploitation vibe.)

Down the Loccol

My passing puzzlement last issue over the absense of any letter of comment from one regular correspondent sparked an immediate e-mail from Toronto, attaching the feedback on the previous two editions which somehow went adrift...



• Lloyd Penney: "You've corrupted Dave Langford's brain? Well done, sir! Keep up the good work. I'm sure you have more targets in mind for the future.

"Facebook has been great for getting me in touch with cousins, high school friends, community college friends from the west coast, and friends from all stages of my fannish career. I have tried to take the attitude that even if it is the latest tech, I won't partake of it unless I really need it, or it is of real benefit to me. Facebook fits the latter part of that policy. It's nearly as good as having my regular phonebook with me, and has reunited me with so many."

A couple of weeks back, I was contacted via Facebook by someone who worked for one of my newspaper's sister titles and who attended the same training courses in the autumns of

1979 and 1980 (we used to drive back and forth in her car every weekend). Seems, just like me, she eventually quit newspapers, only in her case she launched a singing career under an entirely new name. By a bizarre coincidence, her current agent happens to a fellow regular at the Festival of Fantastic Films and she spotted a comment I made on a Facebook photograph featuring us both. As a result, we're back in touch after a mere three decades: wow.

"It would be so easy to get to a British national convention, but with so much land mass, a Canadian national convention, the CanVention, is usually difficult to get to, if not impossible, for so many. I've volunteered my services to the Aurora committee for next year's CanVention, which will be SFContario 2 in Toronto.

"Any convention organizer has a difficult time choosing a hotel for their convention, even in large cities like Toronto. There are only so many hotels to choose from with the required ease of getting to, plus nearby food and services. Some hotels have the space you need, but there's nothing close by, and as a convention organizer from a ways back, I wouldn't choose such a hotel, but it looks like the Eastercon 2011 organisers did, and they may pay the price for their choice, by the sounds of it.

"Thanks again for your zines, and they really don't have to come out every fortnight, as long as they come out."

That's good to know, seeing as this issue is running four days behind schedule.

- Andy Neilson: "Great to see *The FFix* is still with us. Very impressed, incidentally, with the use of decapentasyllabic verse below - most writers wouldn't dream of composing rhyme in that format (known as the Greek 'Political' style). Hats well and truly off, my friend!"

For those who aren't on the mailing list for *FFix* notifications, Andy's referring to this ditty:

*We've had our fill of festive food, packed away the party tricks,
And now to finally kill the mood, here's a new Fortnightly Fix...*

- Marilyn Holt: "I can't say that you brightened my day. Seems that none of us is enjoying a cakewalk in life. At my age, which is a few years older than you, we are working very hard. I received an e-mail newsletter from a financial planning firm that talked about "active retirement." That has to be a code word for continuing to work, if you can find a job, just for food and shelter. On this side of the pond, the Republican party, the GOP (originally Grand Old Party, but now Grasping old Poopyheads), wants to do away with Social Security, and give the money, or not, over to the very financial companies that caused this monetary meltdown and congratulate themselves with huge bonuses.

"I don't know anything about your local politics, but I suspect that it is probably best that you stay away from it. Nasty stuff, and probably ruins the digestion. However, the income issue is near and dear to my heart. We are farming, which is on the cusp of failure or success. Financially, it is stressful, which to me is BAD.

"I know that you write, so have you thought about editing jobs for companies / people on the other side of the world from you? The time shift might work very well for you."

Given my sleep pattern (more of a quilt these days), that's not a bad idea at all. I'm really hoping my internal clock adjusts back to 'normal' hours now the days are getting longer.

"I am sorry to hear that you are cutting back on conventions. We did that, too, and it's crappy.

"Keep up *The Fortnightly Fix*. I do enjoy hearing from you."



- Ian Graham: "I've just been taking a peek at some of your fanzine work. Excellent, entertaining and splendidly well-written stuff. I like the piece about yourself, Barker and

Campbell and the gore-versus-atmosphere issue. Oddly enough, my housemate was watching *Rawhead Rex* last night. I asked if it was any good (never seen it myself) and she literally could not find words to describe how bad it was. I also enjoyed the feature [*in my 2008 collection, Are You Still Here?*] on horror movie prequels that were never made -- reminded me of the cinema prequels round on *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue* (David Mitchell came up with a good one; went something like "A Fairly Heavy Cheese Supper on Elm Street")..."

- Brian Stovold: "Sorry to hear about the council situation. Seems a bit off when the person who gets it lives 20 miles away! It's not as if the area is rural, like what it is down here, with villages spread wide and far. Talking of 'rural' and your mention of GroveCon in 1985 I recall



a comment you made during the supreme rural convention (which, to be quite honest, I had completely forgotten about: lot of water under the bridge since then) about the buses in Olton dropping from every 15 mins to every 20 minutes on a Sunday. to which we replied 'Live down here [*in Grove, Oxfordshire*], and the bus is every hour!'. Actually, it's improved since the '80s. I seem to remember an awful collection of films for the programme; can't remember which, though, which is probably just as well."

I vaguely recall us watching *Dr Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine* over at your house -- or at least, *everyone else* watching it: I believe I was engaging in a fully-clothed re-enactment of the wrestling scene from *Women In Love* with the mother of my elder god-daughter.

- Eric Mayer: "I'm trying to get back to responding to ezines and I have to admit, a short ezine is easier to respond to than a hundred-page one. So long as you're not put off by short responses, that is.

"If you don't get to a convention this year, that will be exactly like every year of my life, since I have never been to one. Probably I couldn't afford to go -- not to many certainly -- but since I have always hated travel, and come to dread it more and more as I get older, the cost is moot to me. I used to go to weekend orienteering meets, which tended to arrange for inexpensive accommodations at reasonable hotels or motels, the main action for the meet being outside in a park. For years, the meet at West Point made barracks available for something like \$3 a night, which sure fit my wallet, and some parks had free camping, which fit my wallet but not my bones.

"Sorry to hear about that political debacle. I would have thought you were owed a favour after running for a no-hope seat, rather than being kicked aside. Well, politics is... uh... all politics, I guess. A childhood friend whom I haven't seen in years ran several times for office in Portland and barely missed out each time. Here in the United States, I think one might still make a difference at the local level, but national politics is entirely rigged, bought by corporations and the wealthy. The difference between Democrats and Republicans is less than between bad and worse.

"Glad you're still pubbing along anyway. Very nice drawing [*by Lesley Ward*] on the first page, by the way. Love the colours and way it radiates light."

Regarding the local election, it wasn't that I didn't get to be my party's candidate which pissed me off, but the way I was shuffled out of the selection process. In retrospect, I should have thrown my hat into the ring immediately, but I felt that would have been disrespectful

to a colleague who'd only just passed away. (Small correction to last issue: I wrote she would have been eighty-four by the time of the 2012 elections, whereas she was already that age.)

- Jonathan Cowie: You wrote "started attending conventions in February 1977". You dog, you; pipped me by a few months. Mine was Novacon 7, GoH John Brunner and spotted paint.

"Hmmm. With great respect, while I agree that bondage and Tai Chi have little place in an Eastercon (though PSIFA's early days did have a Tai Chi sub-group), for once I have to disagree with the talented Dave Hardy about some Eastercons' broad appeal. Sf does not just exist in the written form but film, tv and other forms (this is a fact, not an opinion). The value of anything purporting to be a national convention is that it is the one place that brings together all the various, disparate sf clans. Personal experience (which I admit may be atypical) clearly reveals that all my friends who primarily like sf books also like films and some sf on tv. Conversely, some of my friends who like sf in its visual form also occasionally read sf books. If Brit fandom moans (and some do) about the greying of fandom, then it really needs to take lessons from those European countries that have a more uniform age distribution due to a continual intake of young blood. These all run national conventions with broad appeal to sf in many forms that helps to foster diversity of sf interest in many of its attendees. Finally, I do find it almost a tad oxymoronic that any sf fan (of a genre that explores new worlds, travels space and time, and breaks down mental barriers) should seem stuck in some sort of rut and want to get back to the kind of values many 'oldtimers' prefer and used to expect... Well, not this semi-old-timer.

"Joel Lane asked if a con couldn't use a travel lodge and then just the conference facilities only of a hotel. Nice thought, but... This is what large cons (and Worldcons) do, as so many want to attend that a number of hotels at different price ranges are used. However, as you pointed out, for smaller cons, hotels with conference facilities often heavily discount the conference facilities, allow one bar to have some cheap beer, fruit juice, provide a cheap alternate meal etc, because they know that they will make their money in part through hotel room bookings."

- Lloyd Penney (back to catch up with last issue): "I know exactly what you mean about finances making you stay local. That's what's happening with us. My never-ending job hunt kept us at local cons in 2010, and it looks like it will do the same in 2011. Having to purchase a new car didn't help matters; better transportation, but can't afford to go anywhere. We're still in far better shape than some of our friends, but still... I wish local conventions here had an 'unwaged' discount for membership.



"The Novas still have some relevance, IMHO, and opening them up to the general fannish population should work. The Auroras here are open to all Canadian fans, and participation is very good.

"Have you thought about scanning *Meta* and perhaps putting it on eFanzines.com? Bill's got the space, and I wouldn't mind a look. So many great fanzines of the past are in collections where they will likely never see the light of day again. Give them a scan, and we can all enjoy them, and give them new life."

- I also heard from: Noel Chidwick ("That's a great write-up of our meeting -- cheers."; you can read Noel's own account of the event at noelchidwick.com); Chris Holmes; Brad Foster; Chuck Connor (with a relief parcel of DVDs); Lesley Ward (with two CDs of gothic opera-rock); Rog Peyton via Mike Meara (with a 2CD country collection); Cathy Palmer-Lister ("Love the quote at the top!"); Dave Langford; David Wake ("BDSM and bondage -- there's too much of

that even in letters of complaint.”); Char Shea (“Good show, Steve!”); R-Laurraine Tutihasi; John Purcell (“Nice to have a *FFix* again.”); David Haden (“Thanks for *The FFix* #17, and the mention of my *Time Machine* sequel!”); Theresa Derwin; Emily Booth; David O’Connell; Bill Burns; Joel Lane; Richard King; Kevin Clarke.

Endnote: As I write this closing paragraph, my friend and fellow TAFF delegate Chris Garcia is working on a special edition of his fanzine *The Drink Tank* devoted to this year’s RaceTo Reno and (hopefully) featuring contributions from all four candidates. If you haven’t voted yet, do check *TDT* #273 out when it appears on eFanzines.com, make your choice and then head over to taff.org.uk and cast your ballot.

This has been *The Fortnightly Fix* #18, dated 18 February 2011. Edited by Steve Green. Artwork by Arthur ‘ATom’ Thomson (pg.1, pg 2), Brad Foster (pg.4) and Bill Rotsler (pg.5); Novacon photographer unknown. Yes, I know it’s mostly letters this time, but I’ll provide a few more comment hooks of my own next ish, ‘onest. My usual thanks to Bill Burns & eFanzines.com. Feedback is welcomed via stevegreen@livejournal.com. This is a Gutter Press fanzine.