

Out of the mists it came, shrouded in mystery, heavy with portent, the ancient terror known only to its acolytes as...

THE FORTNIGHTLY FIX #24

News From Planet Me

An ocean away, many of my friends are gearing up for Thanksgiving next week, including the awkward pause whilst everyone tries to come up with something original to actually be thankful for. Me, I'm grateful that the apparent success of my Friday evening chatshow at Novacon 41 seems to have rehabilitated my less-than-professional performance at its predecessor; I even managed to raise a laugh via a passing reference to my Swiss cheese memory of that night. Both Dave Hicks and John Meaney proved just as entertaining as I'd hoped they would be as my guests, with the latter (pictured right) looking increasingly wary as we progressed through a slideshow I'd put together from photographs kindly supplied by his lovely, albeit clearly indiscrete, wife Yvonne).

Timing helped (this year, I went on stage at 7:30pm, immediately after the opening ceremony, as opposed to the post-book launch graveyard slot which I whinged about in *The FFix #18*), but so did a healthy dose of self-discipline and the presence of my friend Theresa Derwin to give me a swift kick up the posterior if I strayed off the true path before my obligations were met.



The following evening, I presented a brief selection of genre shorts largely harvested from this year's Delta Film Award entries. Again, it was an early slot in the programme, ensuring Theresa and I were able to follow George Ternent on an expedition to one of Nottingham's leading Indian eateries. Not that the scheduling had been entirely effective: I allowed myself to be enticed into a lunchtime soiree hosted by Gerry Webb and the fragrant Mali Petera, during which she plied me with champagne before he insisted I drink most of a bottle of imported Stolichnaya then take the remaining alcohol back to my room. I must have been on good form, though: I was invited back to the 6pm session, but my existing programme commitment (and my liver's survival instinct) intervened. I'd say hats off to both hosts, except Mali is one of those rare folks who can actually carry off the cream of the milliner's art.

Unfortunately, I was hijacked en route to Theresa's debut as a moderator on Sunday and forced to quickly add up the Nova Award results*, but I escaped in time to note that her panel "Attack of the Sixty Three Inch Woman" raised plenty of interesting questions regarding the role of female sf writers (indeed, is my use of the term 'role' pejorative?) and the positive feedback will hopefully prompt a follow-up panel next year (particularly since Novacon 42's guest of honour is Jaine Fenn).

*[For the record, Doug Bell & Christina Lake won the 'best fanzine' Nova for *Head*, Claire Brialey was named 'best fanzine writer' and Dave Hicks 'best fanzine artist'.]

As is usual with conventions, there were unexpected delights. For years now, I've been encouraging Meriol Ameringen in her artistic endeavours, and the sight of her running across the bar with her latest sketchbook has now become one of the staples of "my" Novacon. This year, however, she's been concentrating on her songwriting, and granted me a very select performance on the Saturday (my god-daughter Heloise Tudor and her best friend Magdalene Standage attended pretty much as my guests). It's still all at a very early stage, but Meriol has a nice voice, some writing talent and plenty of enthusiasm, and I can't wait to see what she comes up with on the next occasion we get together.

Lightning In a Bottle

My latest idea: NaNoWino. We all commit to drinking at least one bottle of wine every day next November, then see if we can still write afterwards.

Go East, Young Fan

As many of you are aware, I'm one of Jacq Monahan's nominators for this year's TAFF race to the 2012 Eastercon. Nic Farey and I have already worked with her on the first issue of *All Jacq'd Up*, a fanzine featuring material from Jacq's back catalogue, plus articles by other of her supporters. Meanwhile, she's collaborated with fellow Veggrants JoHn Wesley Hardin, Arnie and Joyce Katz on *Fourplay #1*, been interviewed for Jim Mowatt's *Pips #8* and is collaborating with fellow candidates Warren Buff and Kim Kofmel on a joint TAFFzine. (You can find the first three of those at *eFanzines.com* right now.)

Anyhow, it's exactly three weeks till the voting deadline. Given the past inability of *The Fortnightly Fix* to honour its own title, I guess I best take this opportunity to suggest anyone who hasn't voted yet go along to *taff.co.uk* and download the ballot form. It's an excellent line-up this year, and TAFF is an institution well worth your support.



You've been reading *The Fortnightly Fix #24*, released 18 November 2011. Edited by Steve Green. Cover photograph by Yvonne Meaney. Usual thanks to Bill Burns. E-mail: stevegreen@livejournal.com. This is a Gutter Press fanzine, and proud of it.