The (Fifthish) Fortnightly Fix

"Hazel [Ashworth]'s on e-mail, but Don [West] treats it like the Devil's Telegraph." [yours truly, to Harry Bell]
"Don doesn't trust anything he can't make out of baked bean tins and gaffer tape." [Harry]

Circumstances Forseen (and One Not)

When I first drafted the schedule for *The FFix*, I was well aware this fifth edition was likely to fall victim to the conjuction of three separate events: a pair of personal anniversaries guaranteed to drain my creative energies; the xmas holidays (whilst not an occasion I've ever really gone overboard upon, it still brings with it a sufficiency of distractions related to family and close friends); and the closing days of the latest eastbound TAFF race, even if that hasn't produced quite the tsunami of votes I'd hoped to handle.

Anyhow, the pre-yuletide weekend saw me heading down to Faringdon in Oxfordshire to visit my elder god-daughter Rachael for the first time since she and her parents moved up from Portsea Island this summer. I'd been there twice before in the early 1980s, back when it was owned by her paternal grandparents (curiously, Pete Wright and I both now live in our former family homes), although it's a lot easily to reach by car than public transport.

Typically, no sooner had the best part of two hours been sliced off my journey time to stay with the Wrights than the usual fifteen-minute jaunt over to see Kevin Clarke suddenly grew by at least four hours, following his own relocation down south. You just can't win. Clearly, the only answer is to imprison all my close friends in a dungeon below my back garden.

Many a Word Spoken in Jest…

In a 2002 episode of the short-lived telefantasy show *Special Unit 2*, one character suggests the brain-numbing songs performed by kiddie-tv icon "Arnie" (a blue Mr Blobby lookalike clearly referencing Barney the purple dinosaur) should be commandeered when interrogating the various monsters the eponymous squad encounters. I wonder if any of the goons at Guantanamo Bay watched this series before adding Barney's "I Love You" and the *Sesame Street* theme to their torture soundtrack.

Talking of TAFF...

May I be among the first to congratulate Anne Murphy and her co-candidate Brian Gray on winning the 2010 TAFF race, and to offer commiserations to Frank Wu. Between the three of them, they raised more than US$2000 for TAFF from soliciting and auctioning "Tuckerisations" (name-placement in new fiction) from the likes of Cory Doctorow and Charlie Stross. Well done to all concerned.

Down the Loccol

Karen Pender-Gunn: "I made a promise to myself when I lost Ian that I would leave the house everyday no matter what, even if it was only to check the mail. I knew Ian would be mad at me if I just grieved at home and for most of the time I have kept that promise to myself. Today is supposed to be 39C - I'm not setting foot outside until the sun goes down!"

Lloyd Penney: "I see so few movies because with two jobs now, there's so little time to actually go to the multimegaplex down the street and go it. I also admit I'd not interested in most of what's being shown, and I don't know if I'm getting my $13.50's worth. Yvonne can get cut-rate tickets through her local Canadian Automotive Association store (she's a member), but still, some of the descriptions of today's movies are nearly insulting. I can paint television shows with the same brush.

"Now, what do I see? Well, we purchased DVDs of *Up* and *Star Trek* recently, and Yvonne's a born-again Harry Potter fan, so *HP and the Half-Blood Prince* is at home. Perhaps that says more about us than about the state of the movie industry, which has already set a record for overall box office this year."

I also heard from: Jeffrey Boman ("A few pages, and you can produce it often. Mine is many more pages, and I'm hoping to mail it out after more than three months. There's a good lesson there..."); Dave Hardy ("Wow Steve -- all those movies. You must have square (well, rectangular 16:9) eyes!"); Bridget Wilkinson ("As I look at that list of films, I wish we had a working local cinema here in Walthamstow. All we have is a controversial ruin (the EMD)."); Jessica Saunders ("Much enjoyed *#4*, though rather ashamed as I haven't been to the cinema once this year."); Chaz Benchley; Dave Langford; Richard Freeman; David Wake ("Sadly I'm a Vista user, but at least it gave me material for my SF novel."); Jonathan Cowie; Robert Lichtman ("The fanzine *[Lucy Huntzinger]* did at Ted *[White]*'s house was *The Newfangoled Epicritic*, postmarked in October 1983. However, that wasn't her first fanzine -- which was a single-pager entitled *Poot* and published on March 29, 1983."); Lucy Huntzinger; Marilyn Holt; James Shields; Jason Burnett; Taral Wayne ("I downloaded the four issues this morning. A chatzine, I take it?"); John Dallman; Steve Glover ("I really must do more about getting back to things fannish."); Andy Porter; Ian Stockdale ("It's great to hear from you. Work has been a wee bit frantic, along with the holiday activity, but I've printed out all four issues to take with us on the plane to Minneapolis tomorrow."); Lorraine Forbes ("I finally got a chance to read something other than a textbook. I thought *The FFix* is great!"); Hazel Ashworth ("I'm impresssed you have the energy to do this! Cheering news after your somewhat alarming post on Facebook the other day."); Nigel Richardson ("Tempted to find some pastel tinted paper of an unAmerican size and print it out. Got some gnarly typewriter fonts somewhere. I miss fanzines as objects."); Felicity Walker; Brad Foster; Ruth O'Reilly; Andy Hooper (whose letter of comment will appear next ish); John Toon; George Houston ("Enjoyed the account of your Manchester experience")*****. And thanks to everyone who sent seasonal salutations.

*****[George kindly sent me a link to his own report on October's Festival of Fantastic Films: "a stonker of an interview on the Friday, with Emily Booth going for the grope and Steve Green's leg closest to hand - in his words, 'That was my Parkinson moment!'". It certainly was.]

You've just been reading *The Fortnightly Fix #5*, dated 23 December 2009. Yet another assault upon literature perpetrated by Steve Green, available via stevegreen@livejournal.com. Artwork by David "Tozo" O'Connell, Arthur "Atom" Thomson and Brad "W" Foster. My thanks as always to Bill "Bill" Burns for hosting this and previous issues of *The FFix* at eFanzines.com.

And now, our final message of 2009…