COUNTERCLOCK

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INTRODUCTION

Why do we write? We, that is us, faneds - we who make these "science fiction-fanzines". Why are we into this ungrateful business? Here is my own halfwitted theory; We have learned that wisdom comes from books. We admire books, the art of storytelling and the facts and insight we gain from reading them. By adding to the substance of written material, we feel that we have become part of this wisdom. "Acolytes of knowledge." How sad if we can't achieve desired recognition. It isn't merely the desire to express my opinion that motivates me, but deep inside I feel that by writing I immortalize myself. And hopefully I can, in time, contribute to the substance of human knowledge and insight and thereby again immortalize myself.

Holding the latest issue of Mimosa in my hands I can clearly hear some flapping unheard of since my excursion to the Red Square. Must be the Wings of Time. In my realm they are rarely heard of. And I have always been interested in history and fan-history. Particularly fascinating was Cato Lindberg's report on "When Fandom Came to Norway". I can vividly imagine what is was like to print a fanzine with a huge stencil stamp. I remember what it was like to be entangled in stencils with ink up my sleeves, in my face and all over my jeans. I've been struggling with mimeo- and dittograph and it was fun. During some years carboncopied fanzines were considered the height of fannishness. I wrote a lot of them... But my personal fannish history doesn't nearly go as far back as with Cato.

Today it's all in a computer. And I'm currently between computers (so it'll take a couple of weeks before I can add pictures to CC - if no later, then I will have it until next issue.)

Woes of Writing

The main topic of this COUNTERCLOCK issue is writing. The purpose for publishing this fanzine is not to boost my ego, but hopefully to make obvious progress in writing. I got this idea from Brian Stableford: *"Fanzines which carry fiction are usually open for submissions, and provide an opportunity for beginning writers to expose their material to comment and criticism without actually having to pay for the privilege."*

The key word here was **pay**. Fine! However, this was written ten years ago - and the number of fanzines on paper is diminishing. Perhaps they are about to disappear. Now the number of the considerably cheaper electronic fanzines increases. But I know that it is exhausting to read off the computer monitor, unless it is something you've written yourself. Some text is still better to have on paper. You can read it in the underground, on the bus, on your way to work... Whenever or wherever it suits you best. So I guess that I will have to pay for the privilege after all. But I pay as much as I can afford and leave it at that.

It is quite a challenge to write CoClock, because many of you are seasoned faneds and some of you are pro. There are hardly any neos among the CC readers. This challenge is a guarantee that I will keep on producing this fanzine at the best of my ability. Oh yes, I am serious about this. Very serious!

I hope that I eventually will feel confident enough about my ability to write, to submit a fan-historical tale to Mimosa.

Review: **The Way to Write Science Fiction** by Brian Stableford,

published by Elm Tree Books (1989) ISBN 0-241-12663-0

I had a perfectly good reason for investing in this book. In my youth I had a dream. I wanted to become a writer. Perhaps if I have had a book like this to guide me, I'd be there already. Perhaps not. I've read books on semantics and on stylistics of writing - but it didn't make me a writer. Only hard work and determination will eventually get me there. Perhaps, if you have a similar dream, you do best in getting yourself a safe job first, before you go on the great adventure of writing. That depends on what country you live in, what the publishing market is like in that country. Can a writer live by writing and does it pay off? This may seem like a terrible mundane question - but in the end you will find that you'll need money to live a comfortable life.

Many of my friends have made writing their profession. They are journalists, editors, translators or authors. But very few of them can afford the comfortable life that I'm living. And I'm a railway man.

This may be a case particular to a small country like Sweden. You can also choose to write in another language than your own (Hugo Gernsback did it - among others). But it'll render you a lot of extra work. You'll have to use a dictionary frequently, you'll have to know the exact meaning of every word you use, check for spelling whenever you feel insecure (until you no longer need it) and get yourself a good Thesaurus. When you have found a synonym that sounds good - you'd better look in the dictionary section again to find its exact meaning. I've come to the conclusion that I would rather proceed slowly than sloppy. In the end it will have its rewards. I will make less and less use of a dictionary. But I can't imagine to ever work or write without it.

Let's have a look at the advice given by someone who has succeeded in his writing. In his autobiographical preface, Brian tells us: *"Forcing myself to write showed me how easy it is to drift into a state of mind where you produce utter drivel. I found that there comes a point in the writing of every novel when you wonder whether it was worth starting. I also found that writing wound up my brain to the point where it was very difficult to get to sleep. Writing may not look like hard labour, but when you go at it hard you can get as high as a kite on your own adrenalin - which sometimes feels nice, but sometimes doesn't. Miraculously, that first completed novel - after a certain amount of revision to replace the worst of the drivel - actually sold."*

Be assured that this experience is universal, no matter what the topic or the genre of your writing is. It is also comforting to know that a master of the genre has produced drivel. When you look at your own work, don't be so hard on yourself. You're not alone!

I'm a *night crawler*. I work best at night when everything is quiet all around. Since all of my ideas kept me from sleeping,

I thought: "Why fight it?" Perhaps you can't go about it the same way - but that's the way it works for me. Find the time of day that suits you best and go ahead and write. Write a story. Write another one.

Let this book guide you, when you run out of ideas... It approaches the issues of: 1. SF in the Literary Marketplace, 2. The Distinctiveness of SF, 3. The Art of Extrapolation, 4. Describing a Different World, 5. Worldbuilding, 6. Imaginary Hardware, 7. The Language of SF, 8. Characterization in SF, 9. Plotting a SF Story, 10. Playfulness and Seriousness in SF, 11. The Economics of SF Writing and finally 12. Marketing your SF. I will not address all the particulars of SF writing in CoClock. My thoughts here are rather to be seen as my personal comments on this book and on writing in general.

At WasaCon'97 in Stockholm, the Swedish writer Carl Johan de Geer told us that we ought to read our work to an audience. The audience can be anyone in your family, your friends or whatever poor sod you pick as a victim. You're not reading it to entertain them - you will actually be reading it to yourself. When you read your work to an audience, you will look at it from a different point of view. You will hear what it *sounds* like and you will find passages in your story that needs improvement. Try it! I did - and it worked fine for me.

Getting published may be the ultimate goal of your attempts at writing. Everyone has been rejected now and then. I was rejected the first time by Sam J Lundwall, 20 years ago. He was very considerate in his comments on my efforts, so there was no need for me to feel hurt or offended. I only realized that I would have to work a lot harder on whatever I wrote and make it a pleasure reading. If not for the editor, then at least for myself. Now I don't mind being rejected. Infact - I count on it. And unless I've been rejected more often than Stephen R.Donaldson, whose *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant* were rejected forty times before being published - I wont let a rejection slip put me down. I strongly believe that I have to submit my book 42 times before it is being published. Remember: *"The swine who just sent your pearl of a story back with nothing but a coffee-stain and a printed rejection slip* ***can be wrong.***" If I beat Stephen Donaldson to a publication, I'll see it as a complete success.

Back to the words of Brian Stableford: *"With those would-be writers who do not want to be told what to do, by me or anybody else, I have a certain amount of sympathy. If you are one of them, it will probably do you a lot of good to work out your own way of doing things, and you are right to believe that you cannot produce appetising stories simply by following recipes. But there is no harm in trying to think more deeply about what it is that you want to do, and what sort of problems you might have to solve in order to do it well. At very least, a book of this sort should help you to do that."*

What? Was he talking to me here? No, but to someone like me and there are a lot of people who think the same way, I suppose. I quoted this to show you that the book is written by a very understanding person. You will find many a useful advice in it. It is entertainingly written. You'll find it even more so entertaining if you seriously think about writing SF. Well... that would be a perfectly good reason to go ahead and buy this book.

And when you have read it from cover to cover, go and write a science fiction story. Infact, write several. As a beginner you may from time to time want to consult THE WAY TO WRITE SCIENCE FICTION again, so: *"Do not lend the book to your best friend; tell him to buy his own!"* When you've come to the last page, you'll understand why. And the most important piece of advice is: "Make progress."

*

QUIS LEGET HAEC? *Who's gonna read it?*

(Persius, 34-62 AD)

Appreciation is vital. Recently I wrote a couple of pages in pure dismay and published it as a Swedish fanzine with the title *Dr.Lament's Ventilator*. I have been disrupted an awful lot during 98 and had to express some of my frustration about all the things that had gone wrong. It was written solely for the purpose of releasing my own inner tensions. And it was quite well received. Perhaps, because I didn't care who was going to read it and how they would take it. Considerations like that could have an averse effect. This fanzine set me in motion. I realized that the ol' fannish spirit had not entirely vanished. As a result of this insight I began to work on CounterClock. I still have a number of loose ends to tie up in my life. This is my *best shot*. But...

From some of the things I write, people draw the conclusion that I'm a poor depressed person... I can assure you, this is not the case. I'm mostly a very happy person.

DAPPER # 43, January 1999

Dutch Amateur People's Press Energetically Reproducing is an APA based in Netherlands. It was founded by todays Dublin resident American fan Lynne Anne Morse and with all honour kept alive by her successor Jan van't Ent. Since this APA appears bimonthly, I assume it was founded in late 1991 or early in the year 1992. At that time, Nico Veenkamp convinced Lynne to make it in English language, rather than Dutch. Upon her recent return to Dapper, she wrote: *"Typical of Dutch science fiction fans, really - outward looking, and pleased to exercise their facility with English at every turn. I relinquished my plan to create a forum where I could practice my Dutch, and good thing, too: for I wouldn't still be finding the German, Polish, American and Canadian members, still here, not to mention former members from Belgium, the United Kingdom and Australia."*

In essence, what Lynne, Jan and all the Dapperites have accomplished here - is to create a second Eurapa. The first one croaked in 1985. It also had American and Canadian members, but after the last mailing only Lynne Anne Morse, Eunice Pearson (another Dapperite) and Pascal Thomas sent in contributions for a next mailing. It was THIN. So Eurapa perished. Mainly because it wasn't fun. But Dapper is called a *"Party on Paper"* and it is in many ways superior to its *predecessor*. It is well balanced between male and female members (at a ratio of approx. 50-50%). It has currently *only* four authentic Dutch members and all the others may be considered as 'deputy Dutch'. Minac is non-cumulative, but only **one page per two mailings**. If you are keen to join this party on paper, sign up for the waitlist. The supreme OE is compassionate and will not let you wait longer than necessary for a communiqué.

Approach: Jan van't Ent (E-mail: vanent@few.eur.nl), Vaalserberg 37, 2905 PM Capelle aan den IJssel, Netherlands

The answer to the question that I posed in 1974 will be in my grasp soon. What question was that? Well, 'twas the great question of life, the universe and everything, of course. What else? What other question would you expect a 14 year old boy to ask, when he is looking up at the stars? Will I ever have an answer? How long am I supposed to wait? I had to set a limit to my quest. So I decided to have an answer until the end of the year 2001. That's when I'll be turning 42...

Tea for Two or 42.

Do you believe in magical numbers? Are you taking auxiliary precaution on Friday the 13th? Do you have a lucky number? I didn't believe in any of that. I'm still not quite convinced...
But a number doesn't necessary have to be magical to be important. When we measure time, the number 12 is of more interest than 10. When we hack our way through the binaries of cyberspace in *Assembler* code, the hexadecimal, or let's say - the number 16 is of grave importance. The mathematician and writer Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-98, better known as Lewis Carroll for his book *Alice in Wonderland*) had a special interest in the number 42. I'm not certain why, but perhaps this was picked up by Douglas Adams. Another mathematician, Richard Borcherd (previously mentioned in CoClock#2), finds that the number 26 is significant. There is no magic about that. Where shall we draw the line?

In 1980 I ran into German fan Karl-Heinz Schmitz at BÄRCON in Berlin. In those days German fandom had two fans with the same name. There was K-H Schmitz from Mönchengladbach (the one who created atmosphere at German conventions, late 70's and early 80's, by introducing us to Tangerine Dream, Klaus Schulze and other excellent electronical music) and there was K-H Schmitz from Bonn (the one who published the fanzine SOLARIS, very serious and very ambitious). Both of them were in Berlin 1980, but I'm talking about the Solaris-Bonn-Schmitz... We noticed by some strange circumstance that we both were born the same day, same month and as far as I remember, same year.
14th of November. And by a strange coincidence we happened to notice that it was the 14th in that month of the year 1980. This had no significance what-so-ever at the time.
We simply noticed it.
The second time I met K-H Schmitz was in Bonn 1982. He invited me to his home and we looked at two sf-films from his video-collection, Phase IV and Solaris. And that's when I got inspired to begin a video-collection of my own.
After the film we talked about the living ocean on the planet Solaris, the concept of God and about possible ways of communication for pandimensional entities. He said this: "Anything could be a sign. We have to know how to interpret them and who they are directed to. And perhaps there is no such thing as coincidence. For example, we are both born on the 14th. Everytime we meet it is the 14th." That day in Bonn was the 14th of August. Merely a coincidence? Surely it was, but we happened to note the fact. *And he said this*: "14, 14 and 14! (He waved three fingers in the air) Perhaps it means something. But we can't tell today what it means and who it is directed to. It may become clear many years from now." It all sounded very profound to me and I was deeply impressed. But a couple of weeks later I forgot about it.

The first book I read in English language was *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. The second book was *The Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy*. I laughed a lot while reading it, but the biggest joke of them all was the answer Deep Thought provided us to the great question of Life, the Universe and Everything. Forty-two! The thing is, that I had posed the questions very much in the same silly way that Douglas Adams let his philosophers pose it in the Hitch-Hikers Guide. That was just it! I had been so stupid and the answer was so stupid that it just had to be the right answer. Forty-two!
I settled with this answer and was about to forget the quest I prepared for myself in 1974 (which by a strange coincidence happens to be 47 times 42). I ridiculed the deep thoughts that I have had and I ridiculed God himself. And I could reduce everything to that single simple answer. It felt completely hilarious and completely satisfactory.
I began to look for numbers that added up to 42. When I added the digits of my Social Security number 591114-9390 it gave the desired result. 5+9+1+1+1+4+9+3+9+0=42 It was a joke! To me it was funny. I had lots of laughs about it. I was being silly!
And then one day I remembered the words of K-H Schmitz: "14, 14 and 14! Perhaps it means something." I choked and repeated the words over and over in my head. "Perhaps it means something?" But what? Suddenly I could no longer keep the number 42 away from me. It followed me everywhere and surfaced in the most unlikely circumstances.

I would not have this. It was ridiculous. Forty-two! It was not supposed to mean anything. It was supposed to be a joke. It was a joke! 'Go away!'
But it was already too late. I had fallen into the numerology trap. Now let's use the number 42 for a calculation of probability. In any given series of events, where you can find the possibility to attach a number to it. Do it. Be it tickets, receipts, telephone-numbers, dates... whatever. The chance that you can divide this number through 42 is 42 to one. The chances that you in two consecutive events can divide both numbers with 42 is 1764 to 1.
In six consecutive events it is 5,489,031,744 to 1.
This is an exact probability calculation of an unlikely event that I experienced on my first visit to Moscow. How would you like to face these kind of odds? It isn't impossible - it's just infinitely improbable. So why did this happen to me every now and then? These mindboggingly unlikely events came repeatedly for as long as I denied that the number 42 had any significance - except of it being a silly joke.

Eckhard D Marwitz told me that I had a fixation on this number. Perhaps if I would look out for another common number as well. "Try 27!", he said outside Gripsholm Castle where we had a nice walk in the Swedish summer in the mid-'80's. So I did. The number 27 didn't appear at all.
After a few years I had a very uneasy feeling about the number 42. It didn't get any better when I noticed that the Holy Bible in its dark foreboding Revelations 13:5 said that the Beast would be in charge of this rotten planet for 42 months. Oh, come on, give me a break! I'm trying to be a nice guy here. I don't wish to be associated with the Devil, the Anti-Christ, the Beast or anything like that. Confidence was eventually restorted by Matthew 1:17 (There is a balance in everything, you know!). Whatever forty-two was about, I had a choice and could pick the good side as well.
Ancient Egypt had 42 provinces and to the Court of Osiris came one spirit from each province to pass judgment on a

person who died. Since there was one spirit or demon from every province, there would always be one who knew all there was to know about the deceased.
In the Osiris theater-play, they pose 42 questions, which had to be answered with a simple yes or no. The last question was considered to be the most important one: "Is there *anyone* who is happy about the fact that you existed?"
If this question would be answered with no, the deceased would have been in serious trouble (worse than death).
A wolf has 42 teeth.

Well... I gathered all this had to mean *something*... so I designed a *Master Plan* to gain some profit from it and become filthy rich, so that I could go on publishing fanzines for the rest of my life without having to worry about its economy and without having anything else to divide my attention. I decided to gamble.
I lost 42 Swedish krona.

*

Here is the next part of the CounterClock Chainstory:

Incredible Inventors Convention

My laboratory is stuffed with all kind of incredible inventions and weird properties. The Time Machine has not been used since I was told to 'quit mess with time'. The Telepod System has replaced my Xerox machine and I rarely need to use the kitchen anymore. I've got one of *Ericsson's* new Instafreezers, a brand new Sizer, a discretely beeping motion-tracker, sonic screwdrivers and an Ape-costume that I bought for a global prank we intended to pull on John Glenn. Unfortunately, the sf-fans who tried to bury half the Statue of Liberty got arrested before they even reached her ankles.
We, the members of Super-Mensa, decided to have our next gathering within these humble walls. What - you don't know the Super-Mensa? It is for people who think their IQ is above 200. I am one of the founding members of this society. So far we have 14 members and we get together once every year to exchange ideas and inventions that we don't think mankind is ready for yet. A man we call 'the Doctor' was Guest of Honour this year.
Our GoH last year, Jack Griffin, the Invisible Man, didn't show up - or did he? But he recently faxed a message that he finally has found a cure for his predicament. Even though he now is visible, people still don't seem to notice him. He also sent me a sample of his new invisiblity potion. Now invisibility is under control. He promised to come to this gathering and I was looking forward to see him. There is a first time for everything.

I was about to prepare for my demonstration of the Sizer. It is a machine that adds or deduces proportionally from the structural matrix of any object placed inside. The benefit of a sizer is that you can enlarge or shrink clothing that doesn't fit, shoes, pets, marzipan (gets enlarged frequently) and even human beings that for some reason would like to view the World from another perspective.
It is based on the same technology as the Telepod System and has simply an additional software routine. The Sizer pod also had to be bigger than the telepod, since I enjoy having the capacity of shrinking locomotives. They make excellent collectors items, because of their rich details. I have therefore extended my laboratory at high expenses. There is also a portable and compact version of the Sizer pod that can be folded down to fit within the trunk of a car (I decided to keep that one a secret).

Somebody knocked on the garage door of my lab. 'Who goes there?' My first guest answered with a riddle;
'How did Billy Gates become elected Miss Mars?'
'I don't know.'
'Lack of competition!'
'Mike Dengler, you twerp - come on in!' I recognized him not only by his voice, but also by his silly jokes!
'What do you have for us this year?'
'Not much really. A simple biophysics-modulator called *Tiresias-device*. You point it, zap! And look at you now!' He pointed the device at me and a tingling sensation ran through my body.
'What does it do?' It felt good, but I could not tell what it had done to me. 'Haven't you noticed yet? It changes your sex!'
I checked my mustache - no, it was still there! But to my surprise I could sense a pair of tits under my shirt and waistcoat. 'Oh, dear! What have you done to my dearest friend?' I didn't dare to investigate the result below the belt just yet, but I had the distinct feeling that something very important to me was missing. It was terrifying.
'Change me back *at once*!' The last two words were spoken with massive angry letters. To my relief the two bulges disappeared as quickly as they had come and the one bulge I sincerely care about returned. What a horrible experience!
'Don't do that again! I prefer being a man, thank you! And I don't think I make a good woman with a mustache!'
'Yes' he murmured, 'I have to work on that!'
'Are you sure your IQ exceeds 200?'
'Barely, but - yes! Of course I'm sure! Would I be a member if I didn't think so?'
Other members began to drop in, teleporting in from London. Randall Frost, Marion Claws and Jennifer Dephin. Jen was the real rocket-scientist among us. She had been working on gravity-boots for the past months. The main problem with the boots is that they only work vertically.
'Why do we need horizontal gravity?' Dengler asked her.
'Is that another one of your riddles? If your spacecraft collides with an object, like an asteroid or something, you'll be experiencing horizontal gravity forces for sure. If you accelerate, you'll be experiencing horizontal gravity forces.'
'But we don't have a spaceship! What good are gravity boots if we can't go anywhere with them?' He had a point there.

Benny Berg, one of our local talents had invented a new kind of musical instrument. After listening to the first few notes, we all agreed readily that mankind wasn't prepared for an instrument like that just yet. No one was.

A strange whirling, robotical exhaling sound filled the air and an old blue police box materialized in my laboratory. The Doctor was back! Our Guest of Honour had arrived. He didn't quite look the way I remembered. He said it was due to a transformation into his ninth incarnation.
He presented us with something called a CARDIS-box. It looked like an ordinary box of cigars, but it was much larger on the inside than on the outside. 'Cigars And Relative Dimensions In Space' Once all the cigars in the box had gone up in smoke, there would be plenty of room in the box to stick

your entire arm into it. He demonstrated this on an empty box and it was frightening to see how his arm disappeared into a tiny flat box no bigger than a Penguin Pocket Book.

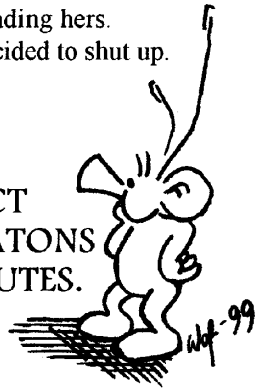
The Cellregenerator was one of the most popular inventions presented to us this year. Hans Klein claimed he got the idea from reading Perry Rhodan-novels. Now we were given the possibility of a considerable increase in expected lifespan. He said Methuselah died as a baby compared to the number of years we would be able to live.
Everyone was also very impressed by my Sizer and most of all by the simplicity of the idea itself. Griffin earned some applause for his disappearing act. But I'm not exactly sure when he left our gathering. I think he is too shy!

One of the coffee-breaks we had was about to become embarrassing when Benny Berg insisted to read an article from the newspaper aloud for us. He thought it was an entry fit for the *History of Human Stupidity* (a book containing more text than the Holy Bible). The article was about the Swedish State Railway missing several engines and wagons from their depot at Hagalund. 'How can an entire train just disappear?' he laughed.
The others laughed with him and joked about it until Jennifer noticed my collection of train models.
'You haven't...' she was about to ask the critical question when I skillfully evaded further investigation in this matter by farting involuntarily. I'm not sure if I blushed or if I sighed with relief or did it both simultaneously, but she broke off her sentence and excused herself with a courteous nod, held her breath, and headed for the far side of my laboratory.

The thing that annoyd me most of all was Dengler beginning his lecture with the words 'Dear fellow smart-asses!' Then he looked at me and I knew him well enough to guess what he had in mind. 'Don't say it!' I warned him.
'And far...seeing honorable chairman.' he paused while Marion giggled and Hans covered his face with both hands, so that I couldn't see what was going on in it.
'I present to you this screen...' he held up a flat screen, which appeared to be a modern television screen or plasma-monitor.
'So, what's special about it?' Marion asked with a slightly skeptical tone of voice.
'This!' he turned the screen on and for a moment a weird symbol flashed over it, and then we could see the face of some-one who looked convincingly alien.
'Hej på er, jordingar! Jag hoppas vi kan lära känna varandra lite bättre framöver. Vi kommer till JUniCon!' *it* said. They were green, of course, had long antennas on their heads, big ears and a big cone-shaped nose, attached to its face at the narrow end. They had two round bird-like black eyes. It was difficult to tell what size they were, having nothing to compare with. My gut-feeling told me that they were quite small.
'My God! They speak Swedish!' Jennifer was amazed.
'It's a hoax!' Hans said, '...an elaborate hoax!'
'I'm afraid not.' Dengler retorted, 'These appear to be the same aliens that have been sighted several times in the vicinity of Stockholm. 'They are called Mars-Ipans, although they have little to do with the planet Mars.'
'I still think it's a hoax!' Hans insisted. 'They're animated! And how come they speak Swedish anyway?'
'Släng ut den där tönten! Han får väl komma på JUniCon, så får han se!' the alien said. 'He said, they'll be coming to JUniCon, so you can see for yourself.' I translated it for our foreign guests.

The Doctor was fun and held a brilliant speech on Temporal mechanics and the danger of using time travel without proper guidance. I began to understand why time travel was a restricted area in universal science. He also contributed with several entertaining anecdotes shedding light on futile attempts to change history.
By the end of the day Randall Frost was the last to present his invention. It looked like a thermometer and it had a digital display. He said we had to put it in our ear and let it rest there for a couple of minutes.
'What is it?'
'It's an IQmeter!" he said.
Mike Dengler immediately removed the IQmeter from his ear and refused anyone else to have a look at it. So did I.
The highest registered IQ in our midst was the Doctor's.
'Mine says 211!' said Hans Klein.
'Two hundred and three!' said Jen, reading hers.
I sneaked a quick look at mine and decided to shut up.

Next part:
MECHANICAL MEN
WITH ELECTRIC INTELLECT
AND AMOROUS AUTOMATONS
WITH AMPLIFIED ATTRIBUTES.



*

Stress

is with us all. No escape. What is your trick to minimize its effect? I have dedicated a whole lot of time to try and solve this problem. I have no solution, but I did manage to shut out a lot of stress. I see advertisements as stress-invoking, saying "buy this" and "buy that". A lot of things that I don't need, a lot of things that I don't want. One sensible thing to do. Don't listen, don't look!

I see mediaguided debates as a factor to produce stress. And this week, we're gonna talk about the terrible civil war. and Next week we're gonna talk about starvation. And then we're gonna talk about the plunging stockmarket and then we're gonna talk about how awful politicians handle the situation in Russia. And then we're gonna talk about the Empire of Microsoft. "Join us! Know this! Get an opinion! Vote!" Don't listen, don't look! SCREW THEM ALL! I know there are many awful things going on in the world, everywhere and all of the time. I'm tired talking about it. And I have already done my part more than well about each and every one of these matters. With genuine conviction I said; "That's terrible!" Don't listen, don't look!
I would like to play chess, but there is no time and I would like to play darts, but there is no time and I would like to play MahJong, but there is no time... Perhaps it is because we have so many activities to choose from. Because a lot of things are actually quite fun doing. And we can't do it all. I would like to hack on my computer, and I'm doing that and I would like to make a fanzine, and I'm doing that and I would like to see the next episodes of my favourite sf-series, and I'm doing that. However, since your hobby creates stress; Don't listen, don't look!" I would like to go fishing...

LoC Around the Clock

The first LoC came from Kathy Taylor, UK. It arrived more promptly than I thought possible. It was rather long, though - so I have divided it into two halfs - first LoCs with general comments and after all that we get back to her in the longevity debate.

KATHY TAYLOR
1, Waverley Way, Carshalton Beeches,
Surrey, SM5 3LQ, United Kingdom

As requested your LoC is by e-mail. The day I got the fanzine too, I hope your impressed, normally it takes weeks if not months to get round to writing LoC's.
I like the logo/title. When I read you'd thought of calling it Counterclockwise I thought of the John Cleese film Clockwise. As you quote Monty Python later on I assume you've seen it, perhaps a subconscious influence?

I'm staggered by your command of English, the occasional unusual phrase suggests it's not your first language but the fluency is marvellous.

In terms of the best SF film of the 1990's I haven't seen most of these so I'm not really able to make an informed comparison. Of those I did see and enjoy I'd list The Handmaid's Tale, Jurassic Park, Independence Day and Star Trek:First Çontact. The Handmaid's tale is the best film, both for the skilful direction and atmosphere and of course for the story.

In terms of TV science fiction your taste and mine diverge rather. There may be some justification for your claim that ST-TNG was "the most popular" but "the best TV-made SF of all time"! I think not. Some individual episodes were well written and directed and enabled Patrick Stewart in particular to demonstrate his mastering of his craft, but a series which permits no ongoing character or plot development can not be "the best". Babylon 5 now, that's another matter. VR5 was a superior show to ST-TNG, not only because it had the aforementioned pot and character development but because it made the viewer think. To get the best out of the show you had to be actively thinking about what was going on and why. It seems odd you enjoyed Wild Palms but not VR5. Space Precinct in contrast was appalling, an unbelievable collection of sex stereotyping and clichés for dialogue topped off with weak story lines and dreadful rubber masks. I suppose it could have improved but I had enough trouble making myself sit through the first two episodes. Voyager should have been interesting but wasn't. When I read about Earth 2 I thought it was going to be disneyfied, two cute kids and all that, but I really enjoyed it. Much as I like Tim Curry I thought the series improved after he left. You missed out UV from your list, has it reached you yet? Another short series, this one about very modern day Vampires.

If you tie a sandwich butter side up to a cat and drop both obviously the knot will come undone so both can land the 'correct' way up. Either that or like an Esher print they will both land the 'correct' way up but you'll never be able to quite work out how. Best wishes for issue 2.

WvW: Impressed - is an understatement. My first reaction was disbelief. You were weeks ahead of everyone else.
I've seen the Cleese film Clockwise and I think it was very funny. But it had nothing to do with my choice. Not even subconsciously. I was very consciously exploring all the possibilities Wingdings had to offer me. The clock appeared useful. It has a profound symbolic impact, don't you think?
As long as the occasional unusual phrase surfaces in my writing (to suggest that it isn't my first language), I will still feel inadequate.
It doesn't happen often enough that people disagree with me about anything. When it comes to cinema and TV, we're talking about matters where it is possible to say almost anything (and get away with it).
So you liked VR5 and hate Space Precinct and I feel the other way around. Isn't it fascinating? I believe it has something to do with the kid in us all. I'm sorry if I appear presumptuous, but I readily admit that there is a big kid beneath the man you'd see if we came face to face. It is perhaps strange that I already was grown up when I made the acquaintance of Dr.Who and I'm still looking forward to unseen adventures. I can't even blame it on my childhood.
UV? Has it something to do with Buffy? No, I have not had the pleasure yet - but I would like to...
ST-TNG has no character or plot developement? Que?
Look again!
I liked your solution to the cat/sandwich problem. As a matter of fact: You win the contest!
You are hereby promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

LLOYD PENNEY
1706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON CANADA M9C 2B2

It's been a long time since I've received a fanzine from Sweden! Or, from Europe, for that matter. I did miss **Shards of Babel** for a while. So, here's some comments on your first issue.

You say many issues are going to Australia, the US and Europe. Any other Canadians on your mailing list? If you need more, I may be able to help with that...let me know, and I will send you individuals who may be interested in your zine, and clubs you can trade with.

I've been involved with fanzine fandom just more than 15 years, and I still feel a little on the outside. It's always looked like there was this great central group to fanzine fandom in the US, and the rest of us could look in, but not be a part. That has changed to some degree, but not much. I am concentrating on extending my contacts further afield so that central group isn't the only group having fun with fanzines.
[snip - getting back to this part later]

Interesting essay on time travel...it's not enough to travel in time, but in time and space, in order to stay on the same point on the Earth. Doctor Who was lucky...he had the BBC props department to get him around.

Best SF film of the 1990s...I am not qualified to comment, not having seen most of these. My list would include Jurassic Park, Johnny Mnemonic, Contact and Men in Black. Canada has now had its own SF channel, Space:The Imagination Station for a year and a quarter now, and it has provided us with some great SF on screen. (Try their website at **www.spacecast.com**. S:TIS is produced by the same company who originated the MuchMusic format of music video station...I believe such a service originates in Stockholm.) I always liked the new versions of The Outer Limits and The Twilight Zone. Many episodes of the former, and the final season of the latter, were shot in and around Toronto.

I think that's a good start. I look forward to issue 2, and to future issues where we can get some good international conversations going via the letter column. Until then, take care, and see you then.

WvW: Roelof Goudriaan will be pleased to read that his Shards of Babel not have been forgotten. I will make sure that he does. Uh... many issues to Australia, America and Europe... well, to tell the truth - I was horrified by the postage rates. It made me rethink my strategy for distribution. Perhaps you will notice that this issue has been mailed from within the US. I hope that it will come slightly cheaper and that I can reach more fans with the same amount of cash invested (about 100 USD postage/issue). I get back to you about additional Canadian readers as soon as I figured out how I can avoid imminent bankruptcy. Perhaps, if CC is successful enough, I should consider an e-mail alternative after all - and let people print their own copies. Posting CC2 from London was a good idea. Let's see if I can do something similar from Dortmund in May.

Yes, I sincerely hope that we get a global conversation going in this fanzine.

American Fanzine Fandom:

So US has a fanzine-elite? I expected as much. But if a zine is made for fun or for a purpose - why glance sideways? Surely the multiple Hugo awarded Mimosa is among these 'high ranking' zines. But wouldn't you say that Nicki and Richard Lynch set an admirable standard? And doesn't it make sense that we all try to excel at what we do and strive for progress? There are always some who will do better than others. The important thing, I believe, is to not put people down who are less capable than others. I have been less capable. But I'm also happy about every fanzine that I get in trade and, quite frankly, I think that most of them are better or more interesting than this one. But I cannot fold just because I have a feeling of insufficience. All I can say is: "I'll do the best I can! If you don't like it - so be it."
You call *them* a central group... Are *they* perhaps what we in Sweden call "Förening för inbördes beundran."? Now how the hell do I translate that? Perhaps: "Society of mutual admiration." (Yes, that's pretty close...) Perhaps one of our US readers would care to comment on these questions: "Do you have an elitist fanzine-fandom? Is it very difficult to be noticed or to feel welcomed in it?"
In my humble opinion neos need a lot of tolerance and understanding. The most tolerant and understanding people I ever met were filkers. Usually they don't claim to aim at greatness, but they seem to have more fun than most of us in the rest of fandom.

Dr.Who - ah, but his TARDIS does travel in both time and space. And as soon as I have figured out how to do it, I will integrate it into the CC Chainstory. So far... if we fuse a time machine with a resized CARDIS-box in the Telepod System, we'd get a device which is almost as ingenious as his time-travel contraption. One ingredient is missing however.

Speaking of British filkers... Here's one in the

Longevity and Immortality debate:

MIKI DENNIS
15 St.Catherines Cross
Bletchingley, Surrey RH1 4PX, United Kingdom
I really did enjoy your zine!!!

As to minor subjects like immortality; I feel that on the whole if your immortal is an 'ordinary human' then I am almost certain that you are correct. The capacity for learning and therefore the endless prospect of it is not particuly great in your average human and so many people complain of boredom within a normal lifetime. I suspect that conferring imortality on an average person would be as much as a curse as you suggest. In novels etc the recipitants of the 'gift' nearly always display super or at least enhanced abilities that sustain them through the eons. One of these is sometimes a transport system or some kind of outside 'base' allowing them to live outside society. This is one way to avoid the tedious everyday bits of imortality that would surly drive most of us who have to deal with it to suicide and to appear for the 'interesting' bits only !!!! However, were your recipitant a great [and I mean a truly great one] scholar, poet etc then perhaps things would be different. To someone like Byron, or Newton perhaps the chance to continue their work, inspired by ever changing environments would be a blessing for all of us. Memory is, as you say, another problem. As I have some trouble remembering yesterday I would only grow more and more frustrated as I failed to remember all the things and places etc the longer I lived. The idea that I would have all the time in the world to do things in and later would be unable to recall them would be terrible. However, the opposite is also true. Were you to remember everything that would also be intolerable.

One of my characters is an immortal vampire and I have discovered that he has total recall and what's more it is total as though it happened 'just now' I am certain that humans could not survive this. Pain and joy being as fresh as ever whenever brought to mind from a life spanning centuries. Horrible. [I can be very cruel to my characters but it isn't my fault, honest. It happens while I'm not concentrating, poor things] Still, as someone sort of said, I think I'd prefer longevity to the alternative.

SF films; Look out for ULTRAVIOLET, a British vampire TV series, [only about 6.] The best attempt yet from us to produce a serious and stylish new SF series. [Well I liked it very much] Mind you you can judge my taste by the fact that I like Seaquest 2032 and DS9 but hate Babylon and love anything with a hero in black leather!!! [oh, and Mulder, is there a plot in the X files?] Hope to see you soon !!

WvW: You may have noticed, I did not show up at XIlophone in Basingstoke. But since travelling to London is exceedingly cheap these days, I may combine a WiGGLe with the Tun later this year. Sometimes there is less than a week in between and I can get a week off now and then. How about the Eurocon? - There is rumours there will be a masquerade!

Immortality Spin-off Topic: Perry Rhodan

VPM KG
KLAUS N FRICK
Perry Rhodan-Redaktion, Karlsruher Straße 31
76 437 Rastatt, Germany

"I hope you forgive me for answering in German language to your fanzine in English, but since your German is better than my English, it may appear sensible after all. Thank you, for CounterClock 1-2, which I found very interesting.
I think it's nice that some of "the old" fans still are around, or have returned to fandom. After all, your fanzine (RAEL FOXBORO) was one of the first I asked for when I began reading fanzines back in the late 70's. How time goes by!
We're getting pretty old (grin). I found your comments on PERRY RHODAN quite amusing, now that it has become more than "just" a hobby to me.

I'm looking forward to future issues, and I'm sorry that I can't send any fanzines to trade with you, but I hope that I can bring you some enjoyment with the adjoined SOL magazine, the Perry Rhodan newsletter and the final issue of SAGITTARIUS."

WvW: LoCs to CoClock can be written in any language. I translate them, or I'll have them translated (if it's an obscure language like Punjabi or Mandinka). TO ALL OF YOU: Feel free to write LoCs in your own language!
RAEL FOXBORO was a PERRY RHODAN-Parody and one of the fanzines I had a lot of fun doing. Unfortunately, the RF writer team were never able to match the frantic writing of the PR team. And besides, I was too busy reading PR myself.
In retrospect, I'm impressed by the zeal and insight you display in your letter from 27th February 1981!
You told me that your ambition was to become a writer and now you are... or at least the editor (chief editor, I believe) of the Perry Rhodan-series. Well done!
You also had a theory about my apparent inadequacy in answering letters - and I can tell you now, 18 years later, that you were absolutely right! During the years 1979-1982 I wrote 700-900 letters/year. I was completely overloaded. And there was only one possible way out - total APATHY!
...which eventually occurred.
Finally... you hope that the SOL magazine, the PR newsletters and SAGITTARIUS would bring me some enjoyment. To tell you the Gods honest truth: It brought me total BLISS!
Why?

First of all: SOL magazine # 11 has a wonderful analysis of one mans vision. A man that has shaped the greatest sf-space opera series of all time. And I'm not talking about JMS, Roddenberry or Terry Nation here. 20 years ago - if anyone had asked me if there is any man that I admire - I would have answered without hesitation: WILLIAM VOLTZ. (or Willi Voltz). Dr.Robert Hector's article on Voltz does the author justice. I'm happy to see that he is not forgotten and Hector also reminded me why I was a PR-fan and what the vision was that also influenced me for the rest of my life!
Willi Voltz died in cancer in 1984. With PR issue 1200 I cancelled my subscription. I felt unable to continue reading Perry Rhodan. With Voltz PR died for me as well.
It never occurred to me that others might have been just as inspired by Voltz and that there would be heirs to the legacy of his vision.

Perry Rhodan will by the end of this year reach its 2000th issue. Ten days before the year 2000. This event calls for a CounterClock-issue entirely devoted to Perry Rhodan, the truly greatest space opera-series of all time. I'm sorry, all Star Trek and Babylon 5-fans, but your favourite TV-show pales by comparison. Why this is so - you'll read about it in CounterClock 4 or 5 (depends on how work proceeds on translations) - for certain is that it will be available at the EUROCON in Dortmund.
Secondly: There is an old prejudice against PR, calling it a fascistoid (resembling fascism) series. Martin Marheinecke deals with this in his article: "Perry Rhodan - Hitler of the Space Age?". His examination of fascist ideas and how far they can be applied to the PR-series is thoroughly and well researched. Thank you.
The CoClock editor will compare notes...
I'm happy to see that Perry Rhodan is alive and well and I sincerely wish this immortal hero extreme longevity.

AHRVID ENGHOLM
Renstiernas gata 29
116 31 Stockholm, Sweden

I'm curious about how the British/American readers take CounterClock. It seems to me a bit too conventional, like a chatzine of which there are thirteen in a dozen. It would be good to have something with more of a profile. Chatzines have to be exceptionally good in order to be noticed.
I was quite impressed by your review of sf-film of the 90's. I think that *I* am pretty well versed in it, but you mention films I never even heard of.
I don't believe in immortality. Neither physical nor spiritually. Not yet anyway. There are several problems. The brain does not have the capability to store the memory of an eternal life, even though the brain is a remarkable machinery with enormous capacity..

In case of longevity one would simply have to forget some of the long-standing memories. That could be quite distressing.
Man is not made to live forever. Our cells shut down after a certain amount of splitting and our nerve- and braincells don't split at all. Attempting to alter this process may cause serious complications. (Let's assume that we artificially boost cells ability to split. Cancer cells would be boosted as well. The immortal might frequently develope tumours and his eternal life could make him a continual customer at a cancer-clinic.)

The best possibility for an eternal existence, as far I can see, is if we some day can *download* our personality profile into huge super-duper-computers with awesome capability.
The computer would then contain a representation of the brain of its client and we could download all the memory we had. But then we may face yet another problem: "Zap! And a fatal error has ocurred in your version of Windows 2019. Please, reboot the system."

Another possibility is nanorobots that we inject into the body to scamper around repairing damaged cells. They could however only prolong life, but they can't make it eternal. Cells just die after some time. The nanites would in that case also have to build new cells in order to replace the dying cells. Is it possible?

WvW: I am also curious what the British and the American readers think about this fanzine. But it is not quite one of the 13 chatzines in a dozen. The profile of this fanzine is that it has readers in German, Swedish, Norwegian, Dutch and English speaking fandom. And since I don't publish it because I want to be noticed, it doesn't worry me much as long as some LoCs keep dropping in and as long as I get some kind of feedback. To get a second opinion on the subject of immortality, I have invited a 302 year old *immortal* to answer some of the questions raised in LoCs to CoClock. He wishes to remain anonymous, so I just call him *the Immortal.*

The Immortal comments: You're right, Ahrvid! Some of my antediluvian memories appear to have faded away. But I can still remember the summer of 1714 quite well. And I even have a faint memory of an event in the year 1700, when uncle Caspar and uncle Fabian came galloping into our yard. I was barely three years of age. On the other hand, much of the years 1760 to 1810 and 1855 to 1890 have gone by without leaving much of an imprint in my mind. Perhaps it's because my life was fairly uneventful during these years. I'm not aware that anything of my life has completely been eraised from memory. It's just that - if I stay in the same place for many years and my days seem to be the same year after year, then the memory of those years disappears in a haze. But as soon as someone talks about the discovery of something or some event which I shared - the memory comes back to me. The memory of extraordinary events that had significant impact on my personality remain intact forever, it seems. But then again - I am only 302 years old and I don't believe in immortality either.

Longevity is on the other hand an entirely different matter.

I would say that Lloyd Penney just about hits me where it really hurts.

Gruesome aspect of extreme longevity

LLOYD PENNEY on immortality:

Immortality isn't all it's cracked up to be. Fandom seems more than just interested in immortality because when they enjoy a good tale, they often ask, "And then what?" We want to see what happens next, but being immortal would tell us. However, practicality rears its ugly head. We'd need to re-educate ourselves on a regular basis to keep up with the quantum changes in technology that are coming with increasing frequency. We'd need to be independently wealthy, or have a job that would last long enough to save for a very long retirement. The current working lifetime of 40 to 45 years simply wouldn't be enough. Both re-education and retirement may cost money that we may not have.

Society and the way we live it seems based on a finite work history and lifespan. Living is one thing, but living in some basic level of comfort is another. All this, of course, pre-supposes that we were born immortal. Obtaining this immortality, should it ever become available to us, may be prohibitively expensive so that your extended lifetime is spent just paying it off! Mentally, how do you keep yourself entertained in this lengthy life? Would you be disappointed if even in an extended life you couldn't excel at what you liked to do, or perhaps, what you liked to do was phased out technologically, or dropped from sight from universal disinterest? Would boredom drive you mad after a time?

On the other hand, if you knew your life would end in a short time, could you live those remaining days to the extent that when you were on death's door, you could say you led a fulfilling life? Have you made your mark? an impact? a difference? Myself, I haven't made my career the way I wanted it. I've never been able to work in my chosen profession, journalism. However, in fandom, I think I have made some impact. A couple of awards have told me so. So, I continue on, knowing that at least I've made a mark somewhere. Is that enough to cap a life on? Well, I'll be 40 in June, so there's more to come. What happens next?, say fans like me. There's still time to become proficient or even famous at something.

KATHY TAYLOR again:

I think there are two major factors you need to consider. The first is health, I'd be much keener on longevity in the body of the 25 year old than that of a (contemporary) 70 year old. You might not be a champion weight lifter but you could peruse a lot more sports in a young body than an older one, and get more out of that aspect of a long life. The second is fertility, have you noticed almost all the fictional characters are sterile? If the phenomenon is widespread in terms of population control it makes sense of course, no need for replacements. It's so much a part of our psyche though I'm sure there would be considerable physiological consequences. If it's not freely available there may also be the emotional issues of how you and they would feel when you did not age or die your partner and children did. The could be other problems too, the resentment of the population as a whole if it were known, the question of discrimination, or even of pensions ! I think I'd love it if I, and the population as a whole, lived for two or three hundred years without frailty and in healthy bodies. There would be so much more time to study, to develop new skills and hobbies, and to get round to reading all those books.

The Immortal answers: "One of the worst aspects of extreme longevity is your dental health. Teeth will always be teeth, which is a major problem when there isn't a good dentist anywhere to be found. My fifth set of teeth were worn out by the end of WWII. And for once they were all gone more or less simultaneously. In 1969 the first teeth of my sixth set began to sprout and since the late 70's I'm for once fully equipped again. It has been almost 250 years, since I had a full set. There has been an awful lot of pain with it and the only *benefit* it gave me, was the ability or rather the habit to withstand or to ignore the pain. The progress dentists have made in this area is most pleasing. But the best advice I can give you, if you attempt to live forever, is to take very well care of your teeth. Although my teeth grow back after 30-50 years, I'm not sure that any other body parts will behave the same way.

Fortunately I have not been dismembered yet through all of these years (302 to be precise). I don't intend to put it to the test. I would be insane if I chopped off a finger just to see if it would grow back again.

A Guard gave me a nasty fleshwound with his flintlock, when I escaped from unjustful imprisonment in Stockholm, March 1731. The scar disappeared gradually over 150 years. It was the first and only time I was shot. A ronin (unemployd samurai) almost chopped off my arm in 1844 and I got squeezed between a locomotive and a platform in December 1985, but I suspect that my skeleton has become subject to eburnation. I have never had a broken bone in my body. "It may also be sheer luck, Holmes."

Sex is fun and love is eternal. A big problem with love is that my wives eventually appear old enough to be my mother and sooner or later, people believe - she's my grandmother. This has forced me to gradually prepare my partners for the unavoidable separation. My first wife died after nine years of our marriage.

We got married 1735 in Hamburg and somehow Dorothee, the daughter of Colonel von Brockdorff, will always be the one I remember best. No matter how many years have passed. She died in giving birth to my second son. I was left with three children. I've been married several times since then, but there were only two others I could stand to be with until their natural death. I've had more children than I dare to mention here, but except for one - they're all dead and gone. None of them has become immortal, like me. I don't know why. Some people say that I have a cold heart. That's not true. But I rather stick with one and the same woman for as little as 5-10 years, than turn both her life and mine into a complete misery.

SWEDISH FANDOM 1997-1999

...has been bursting into fanac. Okay, the number of fanzines produced in these past two years has not been very impressive. But there has been a good number of conventions. Three in 1997; WasaCon (Stockholm), SaltsjöCon XIV (Stockholm) and finally Konfekt'97 (Uppsala), and three in 1998; Confuse (Linköping), SaltsjöCon XV and A Better

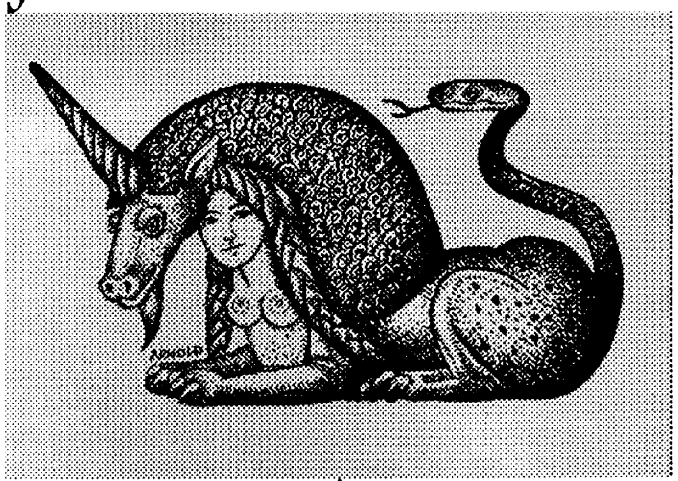
Konfekt'98. With Confuse, the project "SweCon" came off ground, an annual national Swedish convention.

For this year we have only two conventions to look forward to, but they'll be well organized. Konfekt in Uppsala will be SweCon 1999. In Stockholm the teams of WasaCon and SaltsjöCon will work together on JUniCon/BaltCon.

There seems to be about 100 Swedish fans that go to cons on a regular basis. One of the best sources for news in Swedish fandom is still Ahrvid Engholm's "SF-Journalen", but most of the communication between Swedish fans take place on the Swedish Fandom Mail List (and in an APA called SFF). The debate on this list has been lively and informative. One could say that fans on this list knows exactly what goes on in Swedish fandom at all time. And everyone of any consequence to Swedish fandom has joined in by now. A lot of fans who have been gafia for a number of years, have returned to fandom. Me among them. Though I already came back in 1996 after four years of complete gafia.

We have put the feuds we had in the 80's behind us. It is a wiser "Sverifandom" and one approaches differences more cautiously today. **The Alvar:** to honour the memory of a pioneer of Swedish fandom, Alvar Appeltofft, there is a "*Fan HUGO*" awarded every year to a deserving Swedish fan. This award is called *The Alvar*. The 1996 Alvar winner Tommy Persson was announced at WasaCon'97. The 1997 winner Hans Persson was awarded at his own excellent convention Confuse in Linköping 1998. The 1998 winner is not yet decided. A few electronic fanzines have emerged, *GRUS* by Magnus Eriksson being the most prominent. One can safely say that there is a sense of spring in our fandom.

JUniCon 18-20/6-1999



The Convention is also the BaltCon of '99. Among the guests we find sf-writer **Bertil Mårtensson** and the appreciated Swedish artist of sf, fantasy and horror **Hans Arnold** (a sample of his artwork above). Our FGoH will be: **Martin Easterbrook**

In Nacka Conference Center outside Stockholm we launch a convention done by 2 experienced teams that should be able to guarantee a smoothly running con. Members of SFSF (Stockholm) and SIGMA TC (Saltsjöbaden). Details about the program in English is accessible at our website:

http://www.sigmatc.a.se/junicon

Attending membership is approx. 18 ½ GBP (250 SEK) until May 30th 1999 or 22 GBP (300 SEK) at the door.

The Committee: Jan Alroth, Åsa Anderbalk, George Bobjörk, Tomas Cronholm, Carolina Gomez-Lagerlöf, Janne Johansson, Eva Norman, Monica Ringheim, Lars-Olov Strandberg, W.von Witting, C-M Zetterling.

A Swedish Werewolf in London

FAQ these days: How was London? "It was terrific!" Everyone spoke English, there were no mothers-in-law of mine and compared to Stockholm there was almost spring in the air. In spite of the fact that I arrived on February 3rd. A full moon (to rouse my latent ferociousness) did not come up during my stay, so all the Londoners could rest safely at night.

On my first visit, two years ago in January 1997, we went from Gatwick straight to Leicester Square and got ourselves a ticket for the new *Star Trek:First Contact*-film. This time I was on my own and came in via Stansted. But in order to keep up the tradition I went straight to the Trocadero and had a look at *Star Trek:Insurrection*. There were 14 other poor souls with me to witness the screening. It had not been a success with the general audience, it had been a total disappointment for many Star Trek-fans, I knew that! But, still - I quite liked it! When it comes to Sweden I will go and see it again. But though you could say that it was pretty obvious we made "First Contact" with British fans in 1997, it was far less obvious in what way I had an "Insurrection" this year. Let this game with words and with the name remain a domestic secret. You've had hints enough already.

GATHERING AT THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

February 4th - In order to get to the new "Tun", cross the Westminster bridge leaving Big Ben behind you and go straight ahead until you hit Addington Square and in essence... until you see the Tun. It's straight ahead - very easy to find, you can't miss it! And the fans are also fairly easy to spot in a crowd. Fans have a certain charisma... they don't *look* like ordinary people, they don't *act* like ordinary people, they're rarely even from this planet.

The first people I found to fit this description turned out to be Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey, the editors of BANANA WINGS. Others dropped in early, as I did... Chris Cooper - giant of a man and Dave Langford, giant of a fan (or should it be the other way around?).

This was the first meeting at the new place. The fans had moved from the Jubilee together with the manager who got promoted to the philantropic Florence Nightingale and there we now have an excellent beer-heaving ground upstairs. Everyone from my Ops-shift in Manchester was there: Janet & Mike Figg... John Richards, (from so far away as Portsmouth) and I spotted a good number of people that I remember from the 49th Eastercon, Joe Gibbons from Reading, Tim and Marcia Illingworth, Steve Davies and David J. Lally, the media-man.

New acquaintances were Rob Hansen, Paul Hood and Roger Robinson. I also had a chance to meet Alison Scott, but since there was a limited number of hours I didn't nearly get time enough to talk to everyone as much as I would have liked to do. There were at least one hundred fans to celebrate the first evening at "the new Tun". And when I saw the place, I could well understand that it must be perfect for these kind of events. CounterClocks correspondent from Ancient Greece, Sidney W Hage, was there too. However - the most important task for me this evening, was to brief our FGoH for JUniCon: Martin Easterbrook. Who else was there? Well... let's see... the usual people I think: Pat McMurray, Dave Clements, Amanda Baker, Fiona Anderson and the Seven Dwarfs. Oh, yes - Rafe Culpin came... late as he usually is (according to RR), the latest fan to be elevated into the "Filk Hall of Fame".

What can I say about British fans? Well, perhaps it's me - but somehow I find it more difficult to begin a conversation with a British fan (unless we have been introduced by someone else), with the exception of Mark Plummer - who I think was very easy to talk to. But once you get to know them, they're usually very nice (no exceptions that I can think of). I wish I could come to the Tun more often. Perhaps it will be possible. With RyanAir - the fare came to no more than 65 GBP. One thing is for sure.

I will be back! When there is a full moon.

INFINITESIMALCON 2

On "Mercer's Day", April 31st - in mundane calenders identical with May 1st - ICon 2 will be held in Stockholm suburb Såltsjöbaden this year. It is a rather unusual convention, beginning at 19:00 h and ending 19:05. The question is raised: "What makes a con a con?"

The record is in no danger of being broken. About 20 years ago it began with MicroCon, based on an idea by David Nessle and Erik Andersson. The convention was to be held in less than 10 minutes. Some Swedes have this inexplicable urge to do things fit for the *Guiness Book of Records*.

Ahrvid Engholm invited to INFINITESIMALCON on April 31st in the year 1980. The convention was to be held in his home. 12 people attended. But the shortest convention in fan-history has got to be InfraCon, hosted by Mika Tenhovaara in Hallstahammar/Sweden. All was done within one second.

There was a banquet (a glass of water) and a speech (just one word) and a oneshot was made (one letter was typed onto a stencil - there are 3 one-letter words in the Swedish language). "What does make a con?" That's a good question.

ICon 2 will have about 16-18 program-items. There will be a souvenir-booklet, the convention will have a Guest of Honour (not decided who it will be) and there will be a banquet with real miniature food, GoH speech and awards...

Panels and lectures will be well prepared and rehearsed. They will have to be extremely concise. Attending membership will be approx. 2 GBP at the door.

After the convention there will be a Dead Fish Party that will go on for the rest of the evening. If you would happen to be in Stockholm on April 31st/May 1st - 1999, ask for more info from the CounterClock editor. If you're from outside Scandinavia, we will make you foreign FGoH!

Perhaps this will be the shortest reoccurring convention for a while. At least until someone decides to run InfraCon 2.

Domestic Excavation

While practising basic home archeology, treasures of immeasurable value to myself were uncovered. Some day I had to dig through that pile of paper... The lesser fan-history brought back to daylight may not have been the beginning of a great new era, but I like to believe that at some point in time I was at the core of *something* memorable. Something that may or may not have left an imprint on German fandom today.

This will hopefully develope into a series of fan-historical articles and with any luck, we'll have comments from some of the people involved, since I'm convinced that many of them will read it with particular interest (since they may wish to know what *secrets* about them I exhibit here. A lot of it may seem apocryphal *or at least widely inaccurate*, but it is basically written for entertainment. And it will be my point of view. I don't have any other point of view to write from.

It will cover some events in an incredibly complex German fandom during the years 1977 to 1987, beginning with the convention in Kleve and wrapping it up with Hackenheim 10 years later. It covers most of my involvement into German fandom and we may also have a look into what happened in Swedish fandom during these years... at least we will have a look at some of the things which were relevant to the story.

For this purpose I'd also like to scan a number of pictures to accompany these events. I have found a report that I wrote on my first convention - in Kleve 1977. And I also have some pictures from this convention. The report itself was utter boringly written, but it brought the details back to me and I think I will be able to produce a con-report where you don't fall asleep while reading it. At least I hope so.

THE SEVEN SMOF sounds like a suitable title for the fan-historical tale to come, even if we were not really the Masters of German fandom. We were however secretive... We plunged a fandom that was Serious and Constructive into unassorted fannishness, disrupting the proper order of things. We established our own order.

German fandom began more or less in 1955 when Walter Ernsting, Forry Ackerman, Julian Parr, Raymond Z Gallun and Walter Spiegl founded the SFCD (Science Fiction Club Deutschland). Walter Ernsting also published the first German fanzine *Andromeda*, which was SFCD's first and official fanzine (the first fanzine in German language came from Austria and was made by Erwin Scudla). The SFCD and Andromeda are both still alive and well today. So is Walter Ernsting and Forry Ackerman, thank ghod!

The SFCD *mostly* provided cohesion and secured continuity to German fandom. Internal quarrels in the 1960's sank the club to an all-time low in 1970 (the year of HEICON - the German Worldcon), when chairman Heinz-Jürgen Ehrig started AN (Andromeda Nachrichten), an additional newszine for the SFCD. From there on the club was experiencing an era of prosperity and was at good health in 1976, when I was a complete neofan *(exiled to Sweden by indecisive parents, who never could make up their mind if Germany or Sweden was the place to be).*

Walter Ernsting did another thing to boost German fandom and guarantee its complexity. Together with Karl-Herbert Scheer he started the Perry Rhodan-series in 1961. Now what has Rhodan got to do with German fandom? Quite a lot! The Perry Rhodan-series has had a LKS (Leser-Kontakt-Seite = LoC column) through which fans have come in contact with each other. That's how I got in touch with Wolfgang Bolz and soon enough with the rest of German fandom. Perry Rhodan Clubs sprang from every corner of Germany, from every city, every village in which a Rhodan-fan had been *set on fire*. And the PR-authors have always been benign towards their fans and towards fandom. As far as I'm aware of.

In 1970 Kees van Torn, a young PR-Fan wrote to the LKS and said that it would be nice to reprint some blueprints in his fanzine to the PR-spaceships that were published in PR every month. "But that is of course prohibited, isn't it?"

"No, it's not! Just remember to tell your readers what the source and who the original artist is.", was the answer.

(Published on the LKS of PR nr:504) "Eat that, Viacom!"

I can imagine, that young Kees was happy. Twenty years later he chairs a Worldcon in the Netherlands (which coincidentally also had a Perry Rhodan program-stream, due to the publication of PR # 1500).

On December 5th in the year 1976 - I founded another Perry Rhodan-Club, the PRC TERRA KORPS. No teenager with any self-respect would have joined the SFCD at that time. The SFCD was for old people. For people above 20 anyway. Not that German fandom really needed another PRC. There were plenty of them all over. That's also why it is quite difficult to encompass German fandom by only telling the story of the SFCD, which has been well told already. Some PRC's, like the "PR Brief-Club Bully's Schreibtisch" (PR Letter-Club Bell's Desk, referring to Reginald Bell, a friend of PR "Reginald Bull" in German. His nickname was "Bully" in German PR... I guess they didn't translate it to "Belly", did they?) and the PRC TERRA KORPS. ....to be continued.

COUNTERCLOCK # 3

You get CounterClock because:

- ☐ I really appreciated the fanzine(s) you sent me
- ☐ I hope that you will contribute
- ☐ You have been mentioned, page ___
- ☐ .....told me you'd appreciate a copy
- ☐ This is the best way to annoy you.
- ☐ You deserve it!
- ☐ .....

If you're a UK resident and feel inclined to aid me in the distribution of this fanzine, know that you'd be most welcome to do so. It's clearly an advantage if you attend the Thursday "Tun"-meeting on a regular basis or if you go to the Eastercon or preferably both (could be difficult to find someone like that). - Any advice to reduce the cost for postage is also appreciated. And have no fear - I will cover for all expenses.

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FOOTNOTE

March 8th - Wrapping it up for the third issue. I guess that it won't be necessary to write anything about Stanley Kubrick, who died yesterday at the age of 71 in his home in Hertfordshire, UK. It will probably be all over the news and commemorated here and there, with reruns of his films, etc...

I loved 2001 and I hated Dr.Strangelove, I was fascinated by A Clockwork Orange and all in all - his work has definitely had an impact on me. I'm sorry he won't be able to add more brilliant films to the genre.

Future CounterClock issues will have one issue about the success of Perry Rhodan, its vision and its function... an issue with a report on "Trinity 1999 - the EuroCon" and so far I don't seem to run out of topics... However - should you notice that I get sloppy as a faned, tell me! If you think that I should improve further, tell me! If you think this fanzine sucks, then please tell me. And tell me why - so that I have a chance to make amends.

Since you're clearly at risk to recieve further issues of this fanzine, why not make the best of it? Help me to make the best of it. I don't know for how long we can afford to have the luxury of a fanzine actually printed on paper!!!

Do not expect the next issue too soon. I have some trouble being "between computers" and "between printers". End of April or early in May is my guess.

B.C.ing U!

Wolf