COUNTERCLOCK
Issue 8 July 2000

An random fanzine produced by Wolf von Witting,
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CONFLAKES
THE NATIONAL SWEDISH CONVENTION
BRIAN M STABLEFORD
JOHN-HENRI HOLMBERG
MINSTREL & PATCHWORK
ANDERS PALM, NIKLAS KROG
1ST EDITION PDF - NASACON SPECIAL



FILM PROGRAM STAR WARS IV TITAN AE
5TH ELEMENT ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK
DARK CITY GATTACA STARGATE ALIEN 4
INDEPENDENCE DAY DRAGONHEART DUNE
STAR TREK FIRST CONTACT WILLOW
CONAN THE BARBARIAN MEN IN BLACK

INTRODUCTION

This issue of CounterClock was hastily being put together in June for the international guests of Nasacon 2000. At that point I had no hope of getting more than a few copies printed. Involuntarily I had been cut off from publishing for a while. But I promised to be back.

The problem started in December 1999. I only got half the edition of # 7 printed. For reasons of convenience, the areas UK & Ireland and Scandinavia got Issue 7, while Americans and continental Europe had to wait. At the time, it was my firm belief that they wouldn't have to wait more than two or three weeks. Then SAAM's machine broke down. I waited.

The machine eventually came back from service and I waited again. After a while I was told that they would not be able to provide any copying service until they had moved to a different location and invested in a new copying machine. So I waited again. Then, the sf-fan who held the originals mislaid them.

'Tis a pity, when things otherwise were running so smoothly. Ahrvid Engholm had just signed up to co-edit Counterclock in future. This would have meant a report from the Eurocon in Gdansk, proper coverage of Scandinavian fandom and Ahrvid would also have been writing most of the fanzine reviews in Counterclock.

The wider publication of # 8 was stopped by Anders Bellis, who objected to my translation of his presentation on John-Henri Holmberg. As a professional translator, he felt himself able to do a better job than I did. Now, for this (re-)release of issue #8 he said he would provide the translation. Unfortunately he never found the time to do so. After more than three months of waiting, I have decided to cut the presentation of JHH from this issue entirely. We still have the interview Mika Tenhovaara did with John-Henri. I was also looking forward to present one of Swedens finest fan-illustrators to you; Nicolas Križan. But that may still happen…

NASACON 2000, on July 7th – 9th



Camilla Zetterqvist, winner of the Miss Universe competition 2000.

PREFACE TO DISASTER

- Let's do it differently this time! I said. Usually the conventions were made by everyone together. It meant that everyone was sitting and listening to what everyone else had to do. Sometimes bickering about it.

This was not how I wanted to do it. Let me have it my way, for once. If it goes to pots, I pay out of my own pocket. One problem was, I didn't get quite as many aboard as I was hoping. One could say, that I wasn't quite trusted, in spite of a long line of conventions behind me. A reason for not trusting me, would have been that I often had lofty plans which turned into… well… nothing at all. I can't blame them.

But I am grateful for the ones I got aboard, because they all did more than their fair share. The idea was that everyone only needed to attend to their own part of the convention. Anders Reuterswärd only needed to care about the convention booklet, Ahrvid Engholm only had to handle the press contacts, Peter Söderlund was in charge of Stockholm Trekkers and their contributions to the show. Peter's right hand (1st officer) among the Trekkers was Johan Tjäder, who carried his load to the convention. Monica Ringheim had registration, etc

The 'boring' or 'heavy' stuff, we could leave to the hotel to care for (like the bar, the banquet and the cleaning up afterwards). By all the ghods of fandom, we paid them enough for it.

I made sure, we got a good deal by choosing a time of year when the hotel otherwise wouldn't have had any business going on at all. It meant that even the date itself for the convention, was agreed with the hotel. Early in July, when the Swedish industry are on holidays and no conferences are being booked. I also made it clear that we were trying something new, so we wouldn't know how things would turn out. The break-even would go somewhere at attending (paying) 225 members.

Oh, it was also a policy of mine, that if people worked for the convention, then of course, they wouldn't have to pay for the con on top of that.

ADDITIONAL KINKS

Can someone do their job too bloody well? Yes, some can. Ahrvid Engholm is such a person. A force of nature, no less. Chance willed it, that the exhibition halls of Wasa had scheduled for an exhibition of sf-film props which overlapped the sf-convention. This, in conjunction with Ahrvid's press releases for Nasacon created science fiction fever in Stockholm in July 2000. We had the press all over us, before and during the con.

50 mentions (including articles) in the national and local press, 6 mentions on radio (including 3 interviews) and 3 times on the national newscast. This convention even made it to be mentioned in Ansible and across the Atlantic in *Locus* (Issue 477, Vol 45, No:4, page 37).

THE FRIDAY FOCK-UPS

Having the press, the radio and TV all over us was kind of nice, for a little while. Like, for the first hour or so. But then too many calls made it difficult to make the final preparations for the convention. Someone also had to pick up the Guest of Honour Brian Stableford and his wife at the airport. Radio Sweden and Radio Schweden wanted to do interviews, in English and in German language. Sure, we could fit it in. We had visiting guests from the UK, Minstrel (Chris Malme) and Patchwork.

Chris Malme had arrived from England by car, and he offered to drive by the Radio and after that to Arlanda, the airport. Before that, TV came to our home for an interview. And the convention booklet needed to be picked up from the printer, pages needed to be sorted, folded and stapled. The inside of the cover needed a print in black and white (to be done in the SF-bookshop in Stockholm). In the middle of everything, Aftonbladet, one of the major newspapers called. I was already so

blasé, that I didn't really care anymore. Everyone in the committee was busy answering to the press, we had to enlist convention attendees to assist.
- Do you want a serious person or a sitting duck? I just asked them.
- What do you mean?
- I mean, do you want to write a serious article about the convention, or do you want to depict us as nerds and geeks, the way the press usually does?
- No, we want to write something on the serious side, but maybe not too serious.
If I remember it correctly, I asked them to contact Karl-Johan Norén for finding appropriate *victims*.
Chris and I raced off to pick up the booklet and to see the radio station. I think Chris' interview went extremely well. We should have a recording somewhere…
No rest, no breaks. On and off to the airport…
Which terminal? Heck, I forgot to print out the email, but international flights are most commonly terminal 4.



We arrived at terminal 4 in time. And there was indeed a flight arriving from Heathrow with British Airways at the time Brian had given me.
Now, Brian Stableford does not like heights. So, he is also not very fond of flying. He does it anyway, but I have seen him bravely conquering his fear in the tower of the Harenberg Center in Dortmund, so I guessed he would be all green in his face upon landing.
Actually, I was sure of it, so he would be among the last to come out. Chris and I waited. And we waited.
And we waited and waited.
After a while there were no more passengers coming from the London flight and I was having a terrible sensation creeping up my spine. To make sure I went to the information desk.
- Excuse me, is it possible… Are there flights with British Airways coming in from Heathrow at this hour to any other terminal than terminal 4?
- Yes, the nice lady answered. They also come to terminal number 2.
Oh, smeg! We were standing at the wrong terminal!
Quickly we raced over to terminal 2, but apparently Brian and Jane had already taken a taxi to the hotel.
Nothing else for Chris and me to do, but to head back for Stockholm. I wasn't all too happy about how things were coming on. Chris tried to cheer me up and to look at the bright side. It could always get worse. *I was* well familiar with the law of Murphy already, thank you!

STOCKHOLM DISPLACED

We were barely fifteen minutes away from Arlanda when Chris' mobile phone buzzed. It was his friend Neil, who just had arrived at terminal 2. Chris cheerfully promised to be there to pick him up in 15-20 minutes. I looked at Chris dubiously.
- You don't seriously believe you can make it into town and back to Arlanda in 15-20 minutes?
- Oh, well… maybe half an hour. Chris was still in the best of moods, but while he chit-chatted with Neil, we made another ghastly mistake.
I was looking at Chris who steered on the right hand side, as Brits tend to do in their cars. He seemed lost.
- I don't recognize this road, he said.
- Me neither. I replied equally confounded.
The next sign read SALEM 13km.
We had missed the off-ramp from the highway. Without noticing it, we had driven right past Stockholm. Surely the city had not been displaced into the Twilight Zone with its one and a half million of population, but we had managed to drive right past it anyway.
I was sinking deeper into the seat, next to Chris while he was trying to joke about it.
- Haha! I've captured the chair of Nasacon. Kidnapped him in my car, I did.
- What else can go wrong? I was just shaking my head and repeating the words. What else can go wrong?
Then Chris tapped his meter and calmly retorted;
- We're running out of gas! And he wasn't kidding…
Finally we made the turn and found a gas station. Even Chris was finally beginning to see the darker side of the forces against us. To say, that we actually managed to drive right past the capitol of Sweden without noticing it, was kind of embarrassing, so when I called home I tried to phrase myself carefully vague.
- Something happened, I said. But we're ok, don't worry, and we will show up at the convention this evening. Its just that we are going to be late and miss the opening ceremony. This was at the convention translated to…
- They had an accident!!! [Of course.]
Fortunately, Brian was very understanding. As he said on stage in the Saturday evening show.
- It's not *his* fault, they put Stockholm in the wrong place!
This wasn't all however, which went terribly wrong. It was only the Friday Fuck-Ups. And they were not nearly as bad as the Saturday Screw-Up. For me, anyway.

SATURDAY…

The next day was not much less stressful. On the bright side were the Stockholm Trekkers. Starfleet Captain Peter Söderlund and his first officer, Commander Johan Tjäder did an excellent job on their part. Parts of the exhibition from the Wasa-halls were moved to the hotel and with the Trekkers around in their costumes (and in moderate numbers), it all felt like a considerably larger event than usual. They provided the film-program (among other things) and all critics who initially were *against* their participation outright admitted they had been wrong all along about Stockholm Trekkers.
Swedish fandom always have been, and still is, a bit snobbish compared to younger fandoms. In Sweden the literature fans seem afraid of being overrun by any of their often more popular counterparts. That's why they don't play nicely together with Trekkers, Tolkien fans, costumers, filkers and other fringe fandoms.
Most things seemed to be running smoothly on Saturday. Some of us worked in folding and stapling booklets, some of us even had time to attend a program item.



The improved Brian Stableford writing began around 1990.

At 16:00 I had the interview with Brian Stableford and I dare say it went well. And it turned out that by chance I had picked the one short story to translate into Swedish (from his collection of stories; *Sexual Chemistry*) for the convention booklet, which he himself regarded as a major turning point in his writing. I would put that on the plus side of this event. Program items with Brian in it, tend to get more interesting, the more he is allowed to talk. I knew this and kept it in mind…

Also, during the day… a lady from the Art Center, *Kulturhuset*, which is situated smack in the middle of the busiest part of shopping-in-Stockholm came to the convention, Kristiina Kolehmainen (1956-2012), and was wondering "how come we don't have the convention at Kulturhuset?" Which resulted in the first SweCon to be held there, in the middle of Stockholm in 2001.

The major program item for Saturday evening was the "Nasacon Stage Show". It was originally planned to have *more*, even though it already had everything.

As a grand finale I had planned Minstrel & Patchwork to play. I knew they were brilliant, so I was convinced that when everyone retired Saturday evening, they would be floating home on clouds.



I'm not an expert, but I'd say it was a pretty cool act they had.

Peter Söderlund had arranged a group of young dancers for the opening. I am normally not a fan of dancing performances. I had been quietly sceptical about this act, but it was Peter's call and he wasn't exaggerating, when he praised them. Now when I think about it, Peter did everything right, while I did at least half of the things wrong at this convention.



Graceful moves…

The dancing act was followed by lengthy award ceremonies, which unfortunately became a tad longer than they ought to have been. There were several different awards and recognitions to be handed out, the most prestigious among them being the Alvar award.

The Alvar award is handed out for substantial and lasting contributions to Swedish sf-fandom. I don't think there is any more prestigious award to be had in Sweden, in matters of sf. Yet. In the year 2000 it was given for the year before, being 1999. And the winner was Lars-Olov Strandberg, who has been active in Swedish fandom since 1956. Through the years, he's been at practically *every* Swedish convention and at a lot of international ones. He then went on to become FgoH at the Worldcon in Glasgow 2005.

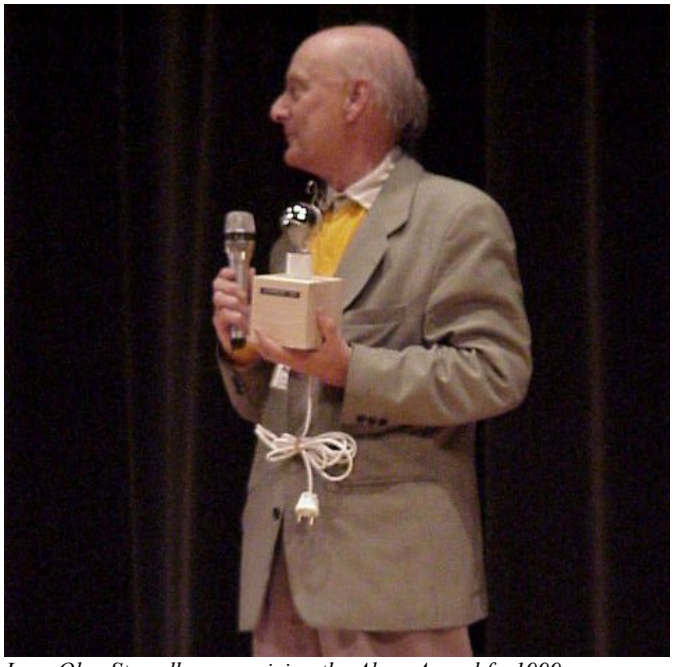
After the awards, it was Ahrvid Engholms turn to step up. Ahrvid had formally been the owner of the name Nasacon since 1991, when he patented it. Let's not get into why and what here. On stage, in front of everyone at the convention, he officially gave back the right to the

name to Sigma Terra Corps. This was a grand gesture of peace. And we ALL appreciated it.



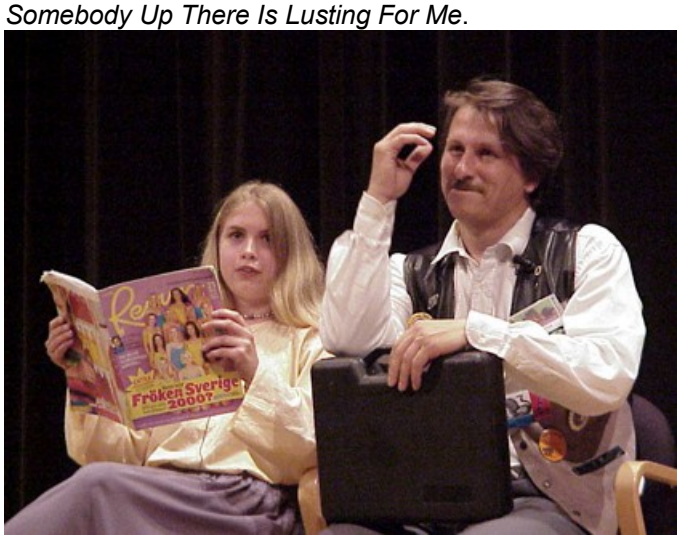
Ahrvid Engholm returns the Nasacon-rights to Sigma TC.

This gesture generated some of the most heartfelt and joyful round of applause I have heard in a long time.



Lars-Olov Strandberg receiving the Alvar Award for1999.

Anni Häggström and I performed an act (Alien chat-up), based on the first scene of Roberto Quaglia's play *Somebody Up There Is Lusting For Me*.



Next up was the Miss Universe competition with competitors from all over the universe. Unfortunately a lot of competitors had troubles getting any visa for the trip and others simply got stuck in quarantine.
But Jane Stableford did a wonderful voice-over for the minute eight-legged lady from Gorx.



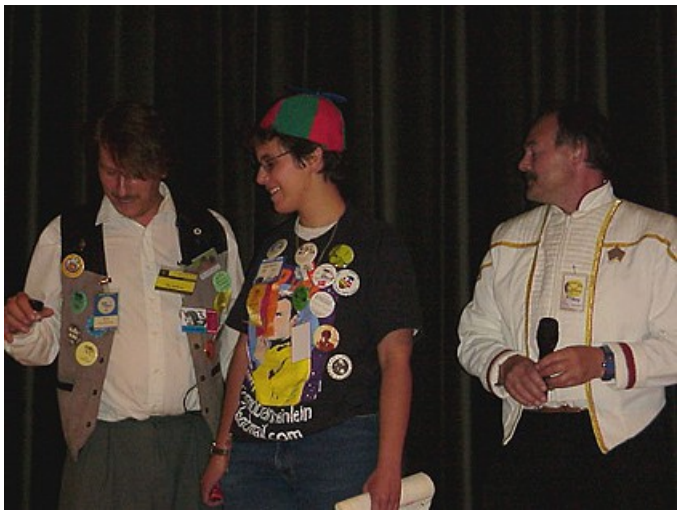
Jane Stableford had me stunned with her wit as we went off script. My question was (not in the script): "So, what's your world like?" Her reply didn't take long: "It's… like the World Wide Web!!!"



My song was a Potpourri of what filk may have sounded like in the 1930's had they thought of it then…



Chris Croughton performed a song for the convention.



Carolina Gomez-Lagerlöf was third placed in the competition, posing as a geekish sf-fan, "Tuttan Storm".



2nd place Nanna Alroth as a Vulcan, was actually rather attractive.



The winning costume was made by Camilla Zetterqvist herself. She was inspired by the movie and the TV-series Stargate.

As I said before. I had saved the best (in my opinion) until last. Generally a clever thing to do. But not in this case. The stage show was stretching out a bit too long and people needed a break.
That was ok, meanwhile Minstrel & Patchwork could run a soundcheck. But…
People refused to come back from the bar. The band had to play for only a handful of people. This was another one of those moments when I wished the Earth would have simply swallowed me, and never let me see the light of day again.
It's not that the Swedish fans don't like music, they do. I recall the sisters Anni and Sandra Häggström and their Kantele concert att SaltsjöCon XV in 1998. The music was tremendously appreciated. So, the things is to pick the right moment for it. And I screwed it up.
I felt bad about this for a very long time afterwards.
I still feel bad about it, when I think back.



Minstrel & Patchwork in the Stockholm concert. The main attraction of the show went unnoticed by Sverifandom.

The Sunday Smeg Up

Not one day of the convention without bad things happening. Except that no one noticed it, even though it happened right in front of everyones eyes.
Before the convention, I talked with George Bobjörk about giving our GoH's some kind of present, as a token of our appreciation. George said, that for tax reasons, we had to limit the value of what was given to 500 SEK. Fine with me, I thought.
But… I had this idea for the Brian Stableford Award, which was a wooden figure carved by the Swedish fan Urban Gunnarsson, who does this professionally. And the likeness is striking, if you hand him a couple of photographs of the person he is supposed to portrait.
It was an item that *only could be made* by two people in Sweden (with this particular level of skill) and which was considered to be a typically Swedish thing (know all who have read about Astrid Lindgren's boy character Emil of Lönneberga). Of course, 500 SEK is not enough for such piece of art. I had to add the difference from my own pocket. I didn't reflect much about this. I didn't think far enough, that it could be misinterpreted. I only looked at it from the angle of *giving*.
The presents to the GoH were handed over at the banquet on sunday, near the end of the convention. At this point I had already found out that the convention

wasn't going to break even and that I would have to pay a couple of thousand Swedish kronor out of my own pocket. Not a very thrilling prospect, I say.
Anyway… John-Henri Holmberg is a connoisseur of whisky, so there was a bottle of the finest whisky for him. His favourite brand, as I knew it.



The Brian Stableford Award was a splendid surprise for Brian.

Brian was overwhelmed, as I had hoped. But in this moment I looked over at John-Henri Holmberg and I saw immediately that something was on his mind.
Something which suddenly felt like a *sting* inside me. My mistake was that I never looked at this *giving* from the other side. Neither seemed anyone else to do. But clearly, if one did, one could interpret it as John-Henri being treated as a 2nd rate GoH in this case, which had not been my intention at all. Of course I should have had the same gift for both GoH. But as it was with the cathedral in Genova when they had built the first tower. They ran out of money. So did I. And, shit (!), the second tower was shorter.
Nobody, not even John-Henri Holmberg, has felt so bad about this as I did. For 7 years…
To say sorry doesn't fix it. The day before I messed it up with Minstrel & Patchwork. The next day I quasi-insult one GoH. I was so down, I just hid myself and cried where no one could see me. Except maybe for Anders Reuterswärd, who tried to coach me.

So… when you guys, Anders Bellis, Johan Anglemark and others honestly thanked me for having made a **wonderful convention**, I was gobsmacked and A) not believeing my ears and B) after digesting the fact that I heard it right…
It suddenly didn't feel so painful having to pay some more after all. Because it was for a good cause.
My worst critics had done an 180 degree turn.

Yes, things went wrong. Terribly wrong. But the general population didn't notice it and no one else but me has to carry any shame for it. Everyone else did a marvellous job. Peter Söderlund, Johan Tjäder, Karl-Johan Norén, Anders Reuterswärd, Monica Ringheim, Åsa Anderbalk, George Bobjörk, Ahrvid Engholm, Janne Johansson and everyone else in Sigma TC. Without them, it would all have been a great frak-up.

There. Now I have confessed my sins. Since then I can't recall having made any similar bad calls. One learns from his mistakes. Hopefully.

There was a nice epilog to the convention though.

AFTER NASACON 2000...

The biggest bill was the convention hotel itself. I told the Conference Manager exactly how much we had in and out. He then said, that if we scratch one of the minor rooms from the bill, we would break even. He didn't have to do that, but he did. So, in essence the con was also sponsored by the hotel. Afterwards.
The second largest bill was to the SF-Bookshop. They also declined taking any money. They said it had been a very nice event for them as well.
With these two contributions to the con we did break even after all. Sigma Terra Corps had spent the vast surplus we gained from Junicon (after Nacka decided not to bill us) and was back on zero cash. But at least we were not in the reds.



The Alvar Award for 2001, handed out at Confuse in Linköping.

Two years later, I finally won the precious Alvar award. As you can see in this picture, I had not shaved since Nasacon. I know, in retrospect, I should have declined the honour of being nominated after losing 2001. But as I see it, by messing it up so well, I had already proven to be *(at least mentally*) still a junior citizen.

For a while I comforted myself for being so stupid with strumming on the guitar by myself: *"Take your music to the people, take your songs out to the land. Take a message everywhere you go, make them try to understand.And don't be disappointed, if no one hears you sing. Take your music to them anyway, even though… they don't hear a thing. Na, na, na… da, da, da-dap-dap-dadaa…"*



Still wish I knew who wrote that song… (above)

After these depressing confessions of a former con runner, let's have a look at the booklet of the convention and its contents. There was the short story by Brian…

AND HE NOT BUSY BEING BORN and there was the presentation of Brian Stableford:

Brian X, the Great Unknown

This presentation of Brian Stableford is followed by a translation into Swedish of his novel AND HE NOT BUSY BEING BORN (in the Nasacon booklet) from a collection of short-stories SEXUAL CHEMISTRY (1991).

Like a connoisseur of vintage wine, one could compare Brian M Stableford to a connoisseur of books. Brian loves books. He can sniff the pages of an edition and tell you what year it has been printed, who the publisher is and how many copies exist.

No wonder he adds to the substance of written material with both facts and fiction. He usually takes the weekend off from writing and spends time with his wife, going to the movies or takes a stroll through the local bookshops to look for rare and interesting books to add to his collection.

He lives with his charming wife Jane in the Lennox-house at the outskirt of Reading a few miles west of London. The house is filled with books, the walls covered with shelves and since they're already crammed with books, some have to be neatly piled on the floor.

In spite of his great passion for books, Brian is neither wooden nor quadrangle [*since this is a Swedish idiom and I have given you the translation word for word, you can only begin to imagine what it really means. I think this kind of translating can be quite amusing*] It becomes even more obvious when he turns to one of his favourite soap; "Xena – the Warrior Princess". One doesn't have to be dead serious all the time.

The episode featuring the Trojan War was particularly amusing, trying to do it with only six actors.

He is a typical English gentleman, behaving as one would expect of a gentleman. Always very polite and considerate, never complaining about the shortcomings of the con-committee, about delay in the program and other failings.

He is always on time for his scheduled items (mostly before the audience) and is well prepared. His words are carefully chosen and hardly ever pompous. He is simply the perfect Guest of Honour and makes the committee wish they could be just as flawless.

The characters in his books are actually thinking people (which may be a disadvantage in a time when the hero prefers to shoot first and ask questions later), his special knowledge of biology and sociology surfaces in his work.

He knows how to write science fiction and fantasy, which is a knowledge he is happy to share with others. He has done so in several books, articles, at conventions and in a writer's workshop.

While writing, he listens to music. At times the music can serve as a source of inspiration, as Bob Dylan's song "It's Alright, Ma'!" has.

One of his most impressive works in recent years is the Genesys trilogy; "Serpent's Blood", "Salamander's Fire" and "Chimera's Cradle", published 1995-1997. It appears to be fantasy, starts off as fantasy, but proves to be genuine science fiction.

For those who just hate it, when a book is finished, I can recommend this trilogy. It will last through several rainy autumn nights. It opens the door to a world of wonder and it has some wonderful genuine characters.

There is a lot to be said about Brian Stableford, which is proved by his entry in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. Clearly this is a master of the genre. Dave Langford calls him "*the no:1 expert of science fiction*", which certainly is a well deserved epithet.

He will not come to the convention with all his awards pinned to the chest, since he doesn't like to be taken for general Patton, but he will most likely be dressed in black.

So, look for a Man in Black in the front row and don't be shy. Brian likes to meet people. He has been to Confuse in Linköping and is already well aware that Swedish fans are incredibly nice people. This is also why he is coming to Nasacon 2000.

Brian is not the Guest of Honour because he makes a big fuzz, since he doesn't! He is the Guest of Honour because of his vast knowledge, and because he usually has something interesting to tell.

Wolf von Witting



Brian and Jane in Ratzeburg 1997, when we first met.

CONTEMPLATION - *12 years later...*

It just occurred to me, that the mundane world in connection with round number years like 1000 or 2000 have been looking for the End of all things, while sf-fans of course always have been looking towards the future. It is in the nature of what we do. Perhaps an sf-convention in the year 2000 stirred something subconsciously as well in the journalists.

Our *messages* have generally been messages of hope, rather than messages of despair, death and ruin. And we are not trying to sell anything.

We are not trying to convince anyone who isn't already convinced. To some, fandom is a way of life and to some fandom is just a ghoddam hobby. There is no book of rules, there are no shepherds, only BNF's and SMOF's...

And even when it comes to religion, the gods of fandom are as liberal as any gods can be. But maybe, it was also the fact, that it was the year 2000, which contributed to the unparalleled press hysteria around the convention.

A Slice of Fan-History

Excerpt from an interview with John-Henri Holmberg (JHH) by Mika H Tenhovaara (MHT).

MHT: How did you get into sf-fandom?

JHH: As far as I remember, the radio theatre play *Space Pirates* by Georg Eliasson, was my first encounter with science fiction. It must have been broadcast in 1956. It also came as a novel that year and it had an enormous impact on me.

I spent many years chasing after that book, until I finally got it in my possession. While searching for it, I found a lot of other sf, and in the autumn of 1958 I discovered both *Galaxy* and *Häpna!* (which had been around since 1954).

In most issues of *Häpna!*, there used to be a *Club Column* with reports of sf-conventions, news about sf-clubs and brief reviews of sf-fanzines.

I thought it an opportunity to find more written sf and to encounter others, who didn't think of sf-fans as being *weird* or *silly* (as my mates at school made it perfectly clear to me that I was being).

But since I was a shy and short, I decided to grow up a little and leave first contact with those mythical fans until I had reached my teens. So I waited until 1962.

In the autumn of '62, I produced the first few issues of my carbon-copied debut-fanzine ZLEWWY. I made five or six copies and sent them to some of the faneds listed in Häpna!: Sam J Lundwall, Dénis Lindbohm, Bo Stenfors and Sture Hällström (Sedolin).

In reply, they wrote kind letters and sent me their own fanzines in trade. And Lars-Olov Strandberg called me and invited me to the gatherings of SFSF.

Of course I didn't dare to go.

In the spring of 1963 the first step towards fandom and fanac was taken by attending Sam J Lundwall's convention STOCKON 4, in the suburb Farsta.

Everyone was unexpectedly friendly and at one of the convention late nights, I was invited to Sam's place and he gave me a cardboard box full of fanzines. After being so kindly received by one of the most famous (his name had been published several times in Häpna!) I even dared to visit Lars-Olov Strandberg and the SFSF gatherings in his flat on Sunday afternoons.

MHT: How old were you?

JHH: I had only turned 13 when I first published ZLEWWY. Before my 14th birthday in the summer of 1963, I had already produced another five issues, visited Lundwall's con and several SFSF gatherings.

MHT: What attracted you to sf-fandom?

JHH: The answer to this question has partly already been given in what I told you before. I didn't share the interests of other kids my age (or any age for that matter), and began to think about matters which were absolutely alien to most people.

Keep in mind that we are talking about the late 50's and early 60's here. Television had barely been introduced.

The climate in Sweden was far beneath any dreams of space, time or eternity. At the time nothing could be more childish, or alien and unswedish than the notion of space travels, the future utopia, escapism or alternate realities.

MHT: The best thing about fandom?

JHH: That fans actually were listening, while others were laughing at you or patting you on the head as soon as you began to talk about these issues.

That it was possible, at the age of 13, to be taken seriously by people of 35. That it did matter, what you would say and do, not how old you were or how close you were sticking to the established society.

That the ideas where debated and not the issue of whose ideas.

MHT: Would you say that fandom is about science fiction or about something else?

JHH: Fandom has of course its origin in sf and would be inconceivable without it, but apart from this I'd say that it is about something else. I'd define it as a community in which idea and speculation can thrive (based on the necessity of alternate, creative or radical ideas), and provide a neighbourhood for individuals who otherwise only would encounter contempt, distrust or ridicule.

Even if speculation isn't your main concern, the most important aspect is the tolerance of fandom towards everything that is odd and unconventional.

MHT: Are sf-fans people who find it difficult to socialize with others, a society of outcast?

JHH: This has been widely true even until the late 70's. Perhaps there is still a small truth in it, considering that people who join an association rarely are the same who are popular in the disco or at the party.

In the past 20 years science fiction has turned into an important, popular cultural phenomenon. With it, being an sf-fan has become accepted.

While you were considered bizarre for reading Heinlein in the 50's, you can feel free to read William Gibson and enjoy Matrix in the 90's without being considered an outsider.

It is perhaps also unfortunate that Gibson and Matrix is considered no more exciting than Liza Marklund [*popular Swedish mainstream writer*] or Fucking Åmål [*bizarre juvenile movie*].

I suspect that all sort of associations attract individuals who prefer to socialize within the context of a common interest.

Fans may still be slightly different people, but only as far as they often display an uncommon personality trait. But sf-fans are no longer met with contempt or ridiculed and so fandom no longer serves as a freehaven for the odd sort of people. In the end, this may cause fandom as we know it to disappear.

MHT: What happened when you first encountered fanzines? Did it inspire you to make a fanzine of your own?

JHH: I had read about fanzines in *Häpna*, and yes, it inspired me to also make one before I even had seen other people's fanzines.

When I finally got hold of other fanzines, it urged me to improve upon my own, which led to more ambitious and voluminous fanzines.

In the pile of zines that Sam Lundwall gave to me and later in piles that I got from Sture Hällström, I discovered the fannish American sort of fanzines, aimed at fandom rather than at sf. I was thrilled with it and attempted to introduce it into Swedish fandom.

My personal preference are fannish fanzines, in particular Terry Carr's *INNUENDO*, Ted White's *VOID* and many others, consequently are some of the fanzines in my production that I'm most pleased with, the last issue of *DNQ* and some issues of *GAFIAC* in the late 80's.

MHT: Why did you publish fanzines?

JHH: It was a solid motive for writing and drawing, which was the best way for me to express myself (with the years I have narrowed it down to writing only. Today few fans are aware that I actually have been drawing as well, fortunately those fanzines are today difficult to come by). The sheer joy of creating from scratch to something to share with others. It was means of communicating with kindred. Within a short time it also gave status in fandom, a community which consisted of the sort of people I preferred to hang out with.

MHT: How much time did you spend publishing fanzines?

JHH: So far I have published 272 issues of 1-250 pages. The average should be somewhere around 15 pages. A wild guess is that every issue needed an average of 25 hours to create (including the act of printing, stapling, mailing), I must have spent 6.800 hours publishing fanzines or translated into weeks of 40 working hours... 170 weeks or approximately 4 years of normal working hours.

This is of course an absurd method of calculating it. My publishing of fanzines has been irregular through the years. In the first three years from 1963 to 1965 I published over 80 issues and spent virtually all time with fandom.

I also read and commented other fans production, wrote contributions and wrote letters to dozens of fans both in Sweden and abroad.

The following 80 fanzines took me 10 years to make. Early in 1975 the 160th issue was published. Fanzine 240 came in the summer of 1987.

Since then, in the past 13 years, I have only managed to come with another 32 issues. A rate which suggests that I should be so lucky to live until it is time for the 320th. If ever.

But who knows? It has occurred that an impressive amount of fanac was accomplished within a few years (like it was in 1987-88, with 19 issues of *GAFIAC* with an average of 70 pages).

MHT: How would you estimate your passion for science fiction? Low, average or high?

JHH: During the early years, I would say that it was extremely high. Until the age of 15 or 16 my reading was only concerned with sf, and as a matter of principle a book every day.

Since then other kind of literature has been almost completely dominating. But I'm still trying to read a book every day and in spite of this I may have read only a dozen sf-novels, including the ancient classics I turn to when-ever I catch a cold.

MHT: Why do so many sf-fanzines not deal with science fiction?

JHH: In the end, an sf-fanzine deals with matters that the editor is particularly interested in. Certainly will sf always be a part of it, but the charm of fanzines is that they can raise any topic the editor deem worthwhile.

Fans are true intellectuals in the sense that they concern themselves not only with literature, but with ideas and consider alternatives to present reality, not only in writing, but in any form.

MHT: What's the best thing about sf-fanzines?

JHH: The informal tone. The absolute freedom to create whatever you wish. Feedback from readers. The relationship between fanzine-publisher and fanzine-reader.

MHT: Have you stopped publishing fanzines? Will you publish some more or have you had enough of it?

JHH: I never had the intention to quit. In a few months it will be four years since last publishing a fanzine, but I wouldn't be surprised if I did publish another one, one of these days.

The main reason that I don't publish any fanzines is not that I have grown tired of it, but that my work demands all of my attention now. On top of that, I have to admit, that the feuds which threw Swedish fandom into turmoil from the year 1988 on, not just turned me off but many other fanzine-publishers as well [*see "boring page 10 statistics", CoClock issue 6*]. I may have carried on publishing fanzines way into the 90's.

MHT: Looking back at fanzinepublishing, how do you feel about it?

JHH: With some ambivalence, depending on the hour, occasion or present company and depending on what comes to mind. But the bright sides of it are stronger in retrospect, a certain pride (and the occasional embarrassment of what has been preserved for posterior) and I feel a whole lot of joy, slight nostalgia and there are many good memories.

Add the certainty, that it was the publishing of fanzines, which helped me to develop the skills, which have been earning my living since the days I started as a journalist.

MHT: Are fanzines something one deals with as a teenager and eventually grow out of? Or is it something you can keep on doing regardless of family or career situation?

JHH: I find it difficult to see why the publishing of fanzines should be any different from other hobbies? Does one grow out of stamp collecting, football (soccer), political debates or building models?

For many people, these are things they did in their youth, but stopped doing once they got a family to support. But I don't see anything awkward or childish in any hobby one decides to keep up, be it railroad models or origami.

The same goes for publishing fanzines.

It is true that the majority of all fanzine publishers spend a couple of years in fandom only to gradually fade out and disappear.

The reasons for this vary greatly, once you get to know the individual. Some pick up a different hobby, or they

discover that writing, editing and publishing wasn't as much fun as they had expected it to be. Others simply don't find the time for it (because of their family or their work) or they can't afford it. Some have partners who doesn't like fanzines, so they quit.

But internationally as well as in Sweden, there are some examples of faneds who have quit publishing,, but return years later, once their private situation allows it. There are also some who have kept up publishing for thirty or forty years without any major interruptions.

The secret, which isn't much of a secret really, is something I already have pointed out. While publishing fanzines one also has the opportunity to be creative and to state an opinion.

Fanzines serve more than one purpose. It's a speaker's platform, a communication link, a notebook, a diary, canvas and a message board, metaphorically speaking.

The people who feel the need to express them-selves and who once have discovered fan-editing as an hobby, have a hard time finding anything equally satisfying.

* * *

EDITOR's COMMENT:

It has been a privilege translating this interview. John-Henri has been an active sf-fan, not only in Sweden but internationally. Some who were around in the 60's and 70's do certainly still remember.

Many of my own thoughts about this matter have been confirmed before I even came around to put them into words. I hope that the clarity in JHH's argument will refresh former publisher's enthusiasm. Remember, the fun we had!

I quit publishing fanzines in 1988. But since my return in 1997 I have had so much fun with it all over, that I can't imagine to give it up again any time soon. Not completely, in any case. It has been most annoying to have been cut off drastically, but I will find the means to get back into it as soon as possible. One way or the other.

Since the introduction of Internet to the main population, e-mail and the mailing lists, the need of communicating is widely fulfilled in the realm of binaries. But fanzines on paper will always remain the better canvas.

Wolf von Witting

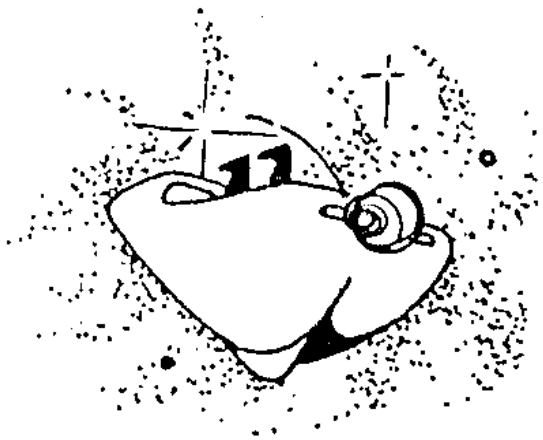


Illustration by: Arthur Thomson (ATom)

Confused in Linköping

How does one best report from a convention? The financial *angle* is one way to look at it, the question of what is gained and what is lost. There must have been near 80 people at *Confuse* 2000 (16-18/6, Ryds herrgård, Linköping). With these figures I was spared the sight of a conchair running around (with a cyanide capsule ready) and announcing drastical cutbacks.

Nor did I have to see the bartender count every peanut or debate the intricate question of just how much foam there should be on a pint of beer.

Another angle of approaching a convention-report is the issue of *transportation*. In spite of problems like, *"How many fans can fit into Mike Pargman's car?"* all these uncertainties were solved and I headed through hard, drizzling rain towards Checkpoint Fridhemsplan and the car of Pargman.

Fullfilling fannish fanzineduties I was mental-ly exhausted, but our trip to Linköping passed without calamity and I dare say we had a good time all of the way. On site I was refreshed by some Chinese herbal tablets and insisted on having the last slurp out of the coffee pot (from which most fluid already had evaporated).

Transport can be an obstacle, but it wasn't too bad here, with five Norwegian fans, two British (the GoH Stephen Baxter with his wife), one Dutch (Larry van der Putte) and even fans coming all the way from Umeå!

As a matter of transport I also have to mention the bicycles on which Johan Anglemark and I had memorable rides to and from Hans Persson's residence where we found crashspace.

On Sunday the bicycle steered me to the Museum of the Air Force, where I spent at least a full intellectual hour scoping the present old Swedish B17, B18, B9, J9, J10, J21 and J22.

Not an uneven treat for a fan of the aviation-magazine *PILOT!* (the best mindboggler was a collection of miniature German jets, planned to come into use, had WWII continued for a while longer. Some had a remarkable resemblance to the J29 – also on display.)

Next issue under the looking glass are *the guests*. Stephen Baxter was charming, but could perhaps have mingled more with the general fanpopulation. We (Wolf, Johan Anglemark, Janne Johansson, me and others) were sitting at the next table on Saturday evening, filking. He could well have been swinging his pint with others.

He was good in the program. I attended the interview with Baxter, when he among other things mentioned that he almost was picked to become one of the British astronauts in the late 80's.

Fan-illustrator and GoH Nicolas Križan was really nice talking to. Ask to see his driving license or ID-card if you encounter him. He's got an exceedingly unusal signature (craving a number of bureaucratic turns to get approved). It definitely induces a SoW.

Another guest, Richard McKinney, was interesting talking to, but screwed up his program-item by not having his slides in order, which took some time to sort ut.

The general introduction to sf could have been cut and he appeared to be a little bit nervous. He should have been sticking closer to the issue at hand (human ecology) and come more to the point. But we had a nice chat in the bar and he remembered me from Bacon'78 (I was barely a fan at the time – but I was present). He was on the committee for Bacon 1978 – the last in a series of large Scancons.

The program is another aspect of a convention. Not much to say about it, really. It was OK. The only catch was at the banquet due to miscommunication between the con-committee and the Eastgothic National Food- Processing Conglomerate.

I didn't eat. I went to see the soccergame England – Germany instead. When England scored, we dispatched a courier to inform Baxter about the progress of *his* team.

I tried to attend at least a third of the program-items (partly anyway).

The *auction* was a disappointment. Simple things went at high expense. I didn't acquire anything at the main auction, but did get a Gor-book in a side-auction.

The first passage I chanced to glance at said that women ought to be slaves in chains and further investigation revealed that this was a book that ought to be sent to the Main Library of Wellington, New Zeeland (as far away as possible – a thing we actually did to the worst of lousy writing at an early Nasacon).

My participation in the panel about *fannish duties* became slightly indistinct in its latter half. Too many opinions about what should be a fannish duty. And there were also some who took the words right out of my mouth.

The convention-report must not fail to mention the *general side activity*. This con had a special *game-card* side activity. Everyone received eight game-cards with questions and answers about sf. The idea was to challenge other convention-members. If you knew the answer to a randomly chosen card, you'd get that card. Your opponent would then pick one of your cards to answer.

I had eleven cards at best, but went down to six after challenging people like Johannes Berg and Tommy Persson [Norwegian fan Johannes Berg won the competition]. There could have been less questions about modern sf and film/TV-shows. I'm a literary quite retrospective.

Anyway... the SF-Bookshop in Stockholm was represented at the convention as well as Paradishuset [minor almost fannish publisher], who had a table with books on sale. I spent most of the time in the bar or at the front stairs chatting with people.

The souvenir book was quite good and I noted in particular John-Henri Holmberg's presentation of Nicolas Križan.

Trufandom vs Serconfandom. *CONFUSE* started as a serious constructive convention in the early 90's. But they have bounced back sufficiently to serve both as an introduction to fandom for newcomers (like Jonathan Olofs-gård) and as entertainment for old farts.

Some fanzines were distributed and some new ones were in the making. My SFJ#184 was received with, what should I call it, mild curiousity. "Good to see something is happening, but what will the future of the SF-Journal be?" I can only say that the future production and distribution policy of SFJ hopefully will make it appear on a more regular basis. Let's hope for the best.

Lars-Olov Strandberg's classical slideshow is part of the fannish tradition at Swedish cons. The audience is always ready to help out with comments. The main attraction of LOS' slides are the nostalgic memories connected to them and hilarious comments from the audience, filling in with names and events. Its charm may be unclear to neofans, but it is definitely one of the most important program-items.

The *artshow* consisted of works by Nicolas Križan and Mats Öhrman. The art of Mats is sensational raytracing. I asked Nicolas if he may be out of a job any time soon, and he said: "Perhaps..." But according to Mats and Nicolas, there are still a lot of things that can't be done on a computer. Taking a closer look at the raytraces, revealed them to be slightly rigid.

Back at the bar, late Saturday evening, one of the neos acted completely at loss as I rigged for a dephtcharge (a glass of whiskey sunk in a pint of beer, from the New York Futurians of the 40's). No matter what I said, would the usage of a *blended* not find approval (But I would never do that to a single malt, unless it was extremely good bheer).

On the whole, I had a good time at *CONFUSE* and I believe we can expect future conventions in Linköping to be just as satisfying.

Ahrvid Engholm

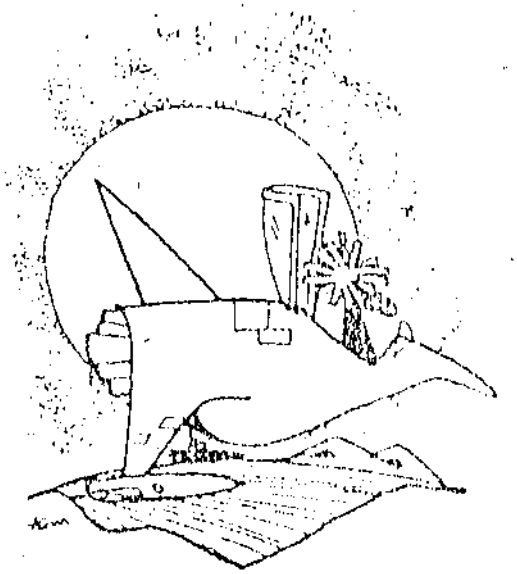


Illustration by: Arthur Thomson (ATom)

CounterLocCs

Fiona Anderson

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Herewith my loc re the Counterclock received today: Thanks for sending me them, two issues and a filk even! Very much appreciated! :)

And while I also thank you for mentioning the ESE, I feel I must take issue with your coverage - generous in volume though it was:

Firstly, could you please let people know our contact addresses (see end of this loc), which were unfortunately left off both your mentions before?

Secondly you label us as "probably one of the most important events in the history of European fandom". No, that's not what we're about - we're about having fun, talking about things we enjoy, meeting people we can make friends with, and so forth. Don't expect "the future of European fandom to depend on steps the Eurosmofs will take" or any similar nonsense from us! :) European fandom is perfectly capable of getting along by itself without any edicts from Eurosmofs or from anyone else! Ha! What an idea! Our actual intention is purely to run a small relaxacon with smoffing as the focus of the programme, but with enjoyment as the main aim.

Other things you mention, that I also take issue with: Yes, I'm keen on cross-European collaboration, but I don't see agreeing as an aim of our little con - after all, if everyone agreed, then we'd never have anyone try out anything different, and life would be deadly boring!

As to European worldcons, well I don't see European fans as "poor little Europeans" at all, but as equals, which can be rather startling to people who don't regard themselves as equals, but that's their problem!

You want to host a Worldcon in Europe, then go figure what Kees did, before you start telling me that poor Europeans can't manage it - don't think he bothered doing a Eurocon first, and no real point either, seeing as Eurocons don't prepare you for Worldcons, which is a whole different type of game. Whether anyone would want to run a worldcon would be a better issue to debate - and that is better addressed by looking at what's involved in bidding and running worldcons per se, than in going down irrelevant side-tracks.

My personal belief is that one should run whatever con because that's the con they want to run, not as some kind of exercise to show their worth to the world. Thus to me, one should run a BEC, a Eurocon, an ESE, a relaxacon, or whatever, because that particular con would be fun to run. And that's why I'm one of the people doing the ESE - it's going to be fun! :)

Having run a worldcon, I'm not convinced that it is enough fun to offset the hassle, but I expect plenty of people to disagree with me, as always, and look forward to interesting discussions at the ESE, as all different points of view are debated and discussed, and as people get together and exchange ideas on a whole range of topics, not just worldcons, in congenial surroundings, that I intend to take the opportunity to tourist around as well!

About the filk issue:

Now, I'm not a person who's into music, I'll listen to Queen and that's about it, but I did look through your filk issue, and found a song
dedicated to Thorsten and Scarface!

Thorsten and Scarface are my premier teddies, and people can see a picture of them on my website (web address below). Anyway "the bears go by" is somewhat misleading, as the thing about bears is they don't actually go by, they tend to stop instead. Particularly if there's any chance of beer in the offing, or any of the other teddy bear food groups. And indeed more and more of them tend to implode into one's living room, as the word spreads, so far from bears going by, there's then a plethora of bears :) And to prove my point, yet another one arrived today, whose name is Johnny Ted, who is already muzzle first into the last of the choc.... no sign of him going by anywhere!! :)

Bearst, Fiona

WvW: Unfortunately I have received a message that the ESE has been cancelled. 'Tis a pity and a shame, really.

In any case, it appears that I will have to attend a funeral some time in July / August, which also rules out the Eurocon for me. And I thought my parents were going to live for ever!

Some of my statements about the ESE had the only purpose to begin this debate. Cross-European collaboration appears to be the future of fandom. As British, Dutch, German and Scandinavians get closer to each other – this will probably come naturally.

Now this ESE has croaked, and Intersmof activity is leaving much to be desired, but it is possible and likely that European fandom may come together around the bid for 2005 like we never have done before. E-mail and Internet helps us to do this and I will do what I can to support Glasgow in 2005. ESE or not.

I think ESE should have another go. But not as an isolated event. Why don't link the ESE to a Eurocon, BEC, Eastercon or any national convention in Europe. They're bound to attract a good number of smofs. At a major con, the ESE can be held in a sideshow (but then again, perhaps the general fan-population is not supposed to be anywhere near?).

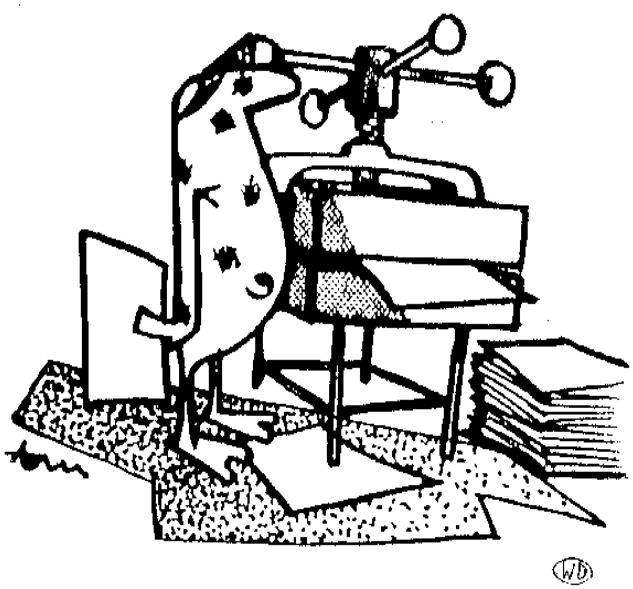
Why would anyone want to run a worldcon? I have a theory; because they have no idea of what they're letting themselves in to. And in spite of the fact that Vincent Docherty makes a perfectly sane impression, I'm convinced one has to be mad to do it twice.

Me too, I also expect people to disagree with you – and with me! Infact I hope they will, keep them LoCs coming, fellows!

Since I consider you a friend, then your friends are my friends. Thorsten and Scarface are the only bears I have been properly introduced to. Their place in fandom is just as legendary as Carl Brandon's, Comet-Johan Bensin jr. and Ture Storm's. One could not even begin to imagine what a desolate place fandom would be without these odd characters and without the Tower of Empty Beer-Cans.

Cheers!

At this point I would like to thank Margaret Austin, who years ago provided me with a copy of ATOM 2000 and The Millennium ATOM. With it a never ending supply of fillos.



Kathy Taylor

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Surrey, SM5 3LQ, United Kingdom

A short and rather late LOC on CoClock # 5.

I don't hate filk, I like it but even at Cons I don't get to much of it because of the hours it's on. I know it's odd of me but I need to sleep at night, perhaps it's getting old. When I do go I feel a stranger, and a not specially welcomed one. The other thing is that in ye old days I'm sure bardic circle used to include reciting as well as singing. Alas it seems to have dropped out of common usage. I enjoy reciting but my singing voice is too poor for anything but joining in the chorus or drinking songs. I was looking forward to COUNTERCLOCK 6 being a filk special but I don't seem to have had a copy. Are there distribution problems or has the post just eaten my copy?

The convention reports were a bit mixed. Like most articles of this type the bits about people I know are more interesting. It's nice to get a general flavour of what conventions were like but your piece on Trinity had a frustrating start with a lot of 'I try not to gossip' in it. If you don't want to write about something for reasons of principle that's fine, but please don't keep saying it in different ways. All it does is give the impression something interesting happened that you know about but we are not going to. The idea of autograph hunters seems odd to me, getting authors to sign books is done but autograph hunting is not really part of British fandom. Is it just the kids you mentioned or do adults do it also?

I really enjoyed Anders Palm's piece on early Swedish fandom. It painted very clear images of what it was like at that time, and it's interesting how similar it is in some ways to accounts of early American fandom.

Kathy Taylor

WvW: Should anyone, for any reason not have one of the previous issues, It'll be my ambition to provide them with that issue ASAP. Just let me know what you didn't get! I will keep them coming for as long as you're interested.

Autograph hunting... well, fortunately I'm only approached by kids who love marsipans. But I remember an auction in which a copy of the first issue of Perry Rhodan was up for bidding, and it rated higher because it was one of the few surviving copies that *hadn't* been signed by the author Karl-Herbert Scheer.

This may be laughed about, but PR-authors have always had a generous attitude towards fans, loved to write autographs and yes, there is more autograph hunting in German fandom than in Scandinavian or British. It's all part of the show.

Lloyd Penney
1706-24 Eva Rd. Etobicoke, ON
CANADA M9C 2B2
January 21, 2000

Just got issues 6 and 7 of CounterClock, plus a copy of 20h Century Wolf Songs, and many thanks. I thought I'd reply quickly, seeing you might be on your way to the British filkcon Digeri-Douze in Britain.

And if you do go to that filkcon, you may meet Urban Tapestry, at last report, the most popular filk group in North America right now. UT is Allison Durno, Jodi Krangle and Debbie Rid-path Ohi, all of the Toronto area. They are all nice folks, and you'll enjoy their company.

6...I'm sure there are some people angry with me because I painted all filkers with a wide brush. Well, perhaps I can define my remarks somewhat. Many of the local filkers in Toronto are great folks and close friends of ours, and they have varied interests. Katy and Juliane were great, and Talis Kimberley from Britain was very sweet. There are many great folks in filk fandom, and I'm sure many of them miss talents like Duane Elms, who left filk to pursue a career in SCA. However, many of the filkers I don't like are the ones that wind up inhabiting the con suite, and abusing it and us as the previously-mentioned menials. The people we wanted to see in the con suite would spend the entire weekend downstairs at the con, filking! One of my main interests at any convention is to chat with friends, so there wasn't too much of that for us at a filkcon, I guess.

Don't worry about your English; I can get through it and grasp your meaning just fine, and I think most of the rest of us can, too. Just think what would happen if any of us English-speakers tried to produce a fanzine in Swedish or German or Finnish...I'm sure that if any of our efforts were even close to legible and understandable, we'd probably type gibberish, or unintentionally offend someone!

Like Herbert Gleißner, I don't like the commercialization of science fiction. But then, fandom has only itself to blame. For decades, we wanted the general public to understand that we weren't weird (see below), but that we had specific interests. Then the press paid some attention to us, businessmen realized that this group had money to spend... Now, SF is considered mainstream, and fans today don't feel as special or different as fans did way back when. I do attend a few media conventions, especially the big annual Star Trek convention in Toronto...I see what's in the dealers' room, and the cheap toys, action figures, and myriad mass-produced "collectors' items" turn me off. Even at literary conventions, it is getting difficult to find books because they don't sell well, and they are expensive to buy for retail sale. They are often replaced with buttons, homemade crafts, videotapes, comics, animé, models and similar toys.

7...I know what you mean about journalists and science fiction. My own training is in journalism, and when it comes to the two meeting, I often wish they wouldn't. Instead of bringing truth to their readers, they often bring to the page hardened, pessimistic opinions. Such is what they say about science fiction. If anyone from the press is set to cover a convention, they usually look for something their limited experience recognizes, like someone dressed as a Klingon. If they interview a person about SF, that person is treated as if they are, ooooo, WEIRD!, or they are automatically classed as Trekkies. The public's snide or negative opinions about SF stem from what they read in the paper, or see on television. Even when they are presented with the positive and constructive things fandom and conventions do, they ignore them; rampaging Klingons or a nearly naked young woman in an over-stuffed chain mail bikini makes for much more interesting pictures on the printed page or the small screen.

The only way the two mix is if that member of the press if from fandom, or if the station's intent is to cover science fiction. In the United States, there is the Sci-Fi Channel; in Canada, there is Space:The Imagination Station. I have tried to get work with Space, but to no avail; management there has restricted news coverage to the current activities of the space programme and related industries. Science fiction is entertainment alone, they say. Ah, if only they could comprehend the idea of science fiction (and fandom) as news, the public would be better informed, and I'd have the job of my dreams.

Michael Swanwick asks some interesting questions in his essay...let's see if I have an interesting answer. Science fiction is good for some things...one of those things is making you think about things you've never thought before, things that most likely do not exist and probably will never exist, but do exist only in your imagination, if you have the imagination to form and comprehend it. In this way, SF stretches the mind, to consider the improbable and the impossible. It sets out an impossible setting as actual, and logically progresses from there. It exercises the mind, and appeals to that cross-section of the shrinking reading public who still wants to think hard and creatively. When you have imagination, creativity and the willingness to suspend your disbelief, you have wonder. SF can bring you that, for there is precious little wonder left in the world these days. In another fanzine, I read that there is no record of any active fans suffering from such diseases such as Alzheimer's. Exercising the brain with SF will keep you alert into your later years, it would seem.

I receive all the fanzines you mention as fanzine Hugo finalists. I enjoy them all, and Dave Langford has certainly earned his Hugos. (He has 14 of them, by the way.) Mike Glyer and the Lynches have certainly earned their Hugos, too. The main reason American zines win their Hugos is the quality of writing within, from the editor and his contributors. Another reason is that the majority of Hugo voters (and indeed, Worldcon attendees) are American. Foreign zines often can't afford to distribute themselves to a large American population in order to be considered for that Hugo vote. However, the British zines you list (including Cheryl Morgan's Emerald City, as she is living in England right now) are making inroads because they are gaining an appreciative audience, not only in Britain, but elsewhere. No one can say that all Hugos should remain in the United States.

100% response to CounterClock from Canadians? There's myself, Murray Moore, Andrew Murdoch and Dale Spiers. There aren't many of us here, but we are busy. And again, thank you for the Torcon III ad on the back.

I will wrap this up, and say thank you for some fine zines.

Lloyd Penney

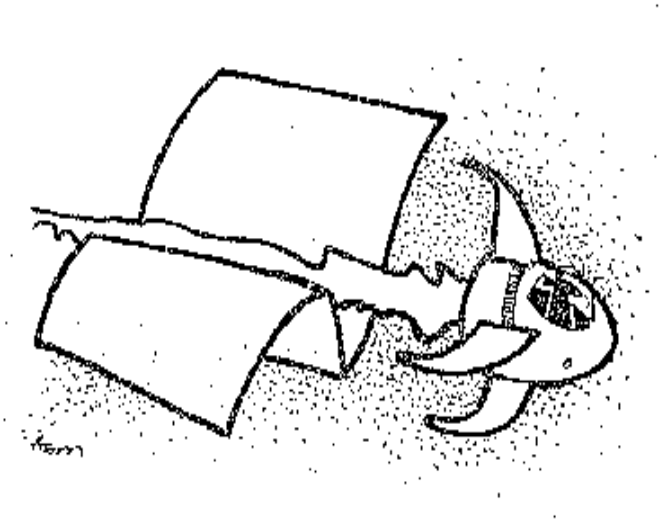
WvW: I don't think you have made any filkers angry *over here*. Besides, there was some truth in your comment.

I have stopped worrying about my English. There is still plenty of room for improvement, but you'll see me, when I get there!

More Canadian brilliancy has reached Sweden. *THE CUBE* – must be one of the best sf-films I've seen in recent years.

About Torcon III. Perhaps it is too early to say, but I would like to get back to Canada (been there, seen it, in 1976) and 2003 seems like an excellent opportunity. Will need to work at con, and will need crashspace. ; -)

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Fannish Fandom

as an advanced form of life...

I am proud to be a f*annish* fan. You don't know what that means? Well.. it means, someone who is more into sf-fandom, than into science fiction, the literature, itself. That would be the primary meaning of the word anyway. The secondary (greater) meaning has evolved from how fannish fans tend to behave. Apart from when we are being plain silly, I mean. Because we are being silly a lot and shamelessly.

More importantly. A fannish fan does not care a lot about money. His fanzines are not for sale. They are given away, no matter how good or (more often) how bad they are. No matter how much he invested in making them (time & money). A fannish fan is more interested in *boosting his own ego*, also called egoboo.

Or so it was. Because he boosts his ego until he doesn't need to boost it any further. But then, very often, he remains a fannish fan simply because he likes it. Even as a published writer he can remain a fannish fan simply for this reason, and for no other reason. A good example is *David Langford*. He has so many HUGO-Awards, he lost count. Yet he remains fannish.

Ahrvid Engholm in Swedish fandom and *Horst Hoffmann* in German fandom are other good examples. None of them would ever think of denying their fannish roots.

Unfortunately I never had the privilege to meet ATom or Arthur Thomson (1927-1990), as his real name was. ATom was a fan-illustrator whose work appeared in countless fanzines in the Anglo-Saxon and Irish fandom as well as in Germany (in the 60's) and in Sweden. His work was of the finest quality and he gave it away for free. Like *Bill Rotsler* (another fine fan-illustrator), like *Mario Kwiat* and many others in German fandom and *Nicolas Krizan*, *Lars Olsson* and many others in Swedish fandom (Nicolas is also a pro).

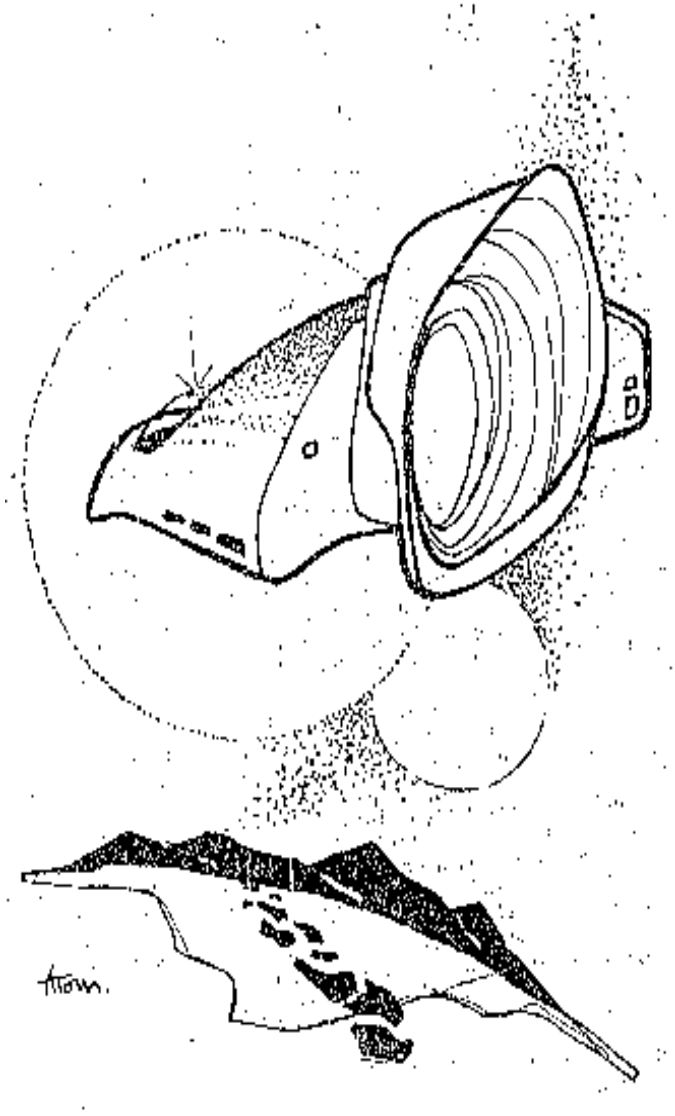
Money is a mundane thing. If you *want* to do something in return for CounterClock, then write a letter of comment. It is also a kind of work. It requires time and some mundane ideology equates time with money. So... Feel free to give me some of your *(time)* thoughts.

I believe a time will come when money counts less than today. We are living in troubled times because of money. Let the future incorporate a time when money doesn't count for as much of your decision making as it does today. It doesn't have to be so. We should live to better ourselves, not for earning our living, no matter if we do it prosperously or if we have to struggle for it. This chase for money is degrading the human spirit. Some are corrupted by it, some are depraved by it.

About being silly... Yes, this is perhaps a downside to fannishness. Since it cost nothing, and anyone can do it, sometimes we write things which we better should have left unwritten. But once again, to echo the words of screenwriter Simon Moore. *I believe you have to write a million words of garbage before you get it right.* And this is what I am doing. I am working on my million of words, so that one day, hopefully, I get it right.

However, I also believe that the golden age of book publishing is over. There was a time when one could do it for money. The time when we do it for our own sake is bound to return. Too much is being published these days and most of it is garbage. Professional garbage, no less, but still garbage.

This fanzine is not exactly Chivas Regal either, but none the less, it has now been 12 years in the making. And finally... [...loud and hysterical laughter...] ...finally it is ready. As it was meant to be. Minus one presentation of John-Henri Holmberg, that is.



Famous Last Words (2000):

It was fun! Oh, my... Twenty years ago, I was running my first convention – and oh, boy, what a disaster it was. ”Never again!” I said to myself.

Then I went on doing it all through the 80’s. Perhaps I will be involved in con-running in the future, but I will not sit in that chair again for the next 10-20 years.

SIGMA TC will continue, however. And within a series of future *SALTSJÖCON*s I may still, in a limited way, be a little smof. The first thing we will do, is running the first Swedish filk- and relaxacon ever. Next year.

We will be back at Fiskarhöjdens Kvartersgård outside Stockholm (at the very core of Stockholm’s South-Eastern Fandom, where many of *the greats* have resided, Mats Linder, Torkel Franzén and others...).

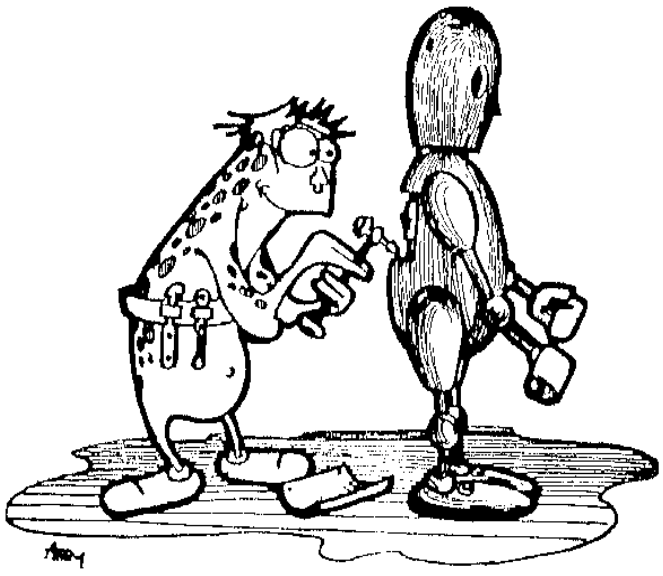
I will not claim to know everything about conrunning. I’m far from that good. Without the people who through the years have been a part of Nasacon, this convention would not have lived past 1980.

Most of all, *Ahrvid Engholm*, has been an engine for the convention. Then we have had repeated and continual support from a lot of people: *Carina Agebratt, Elisabeth Almqvist, Åsa Anderbalk, Patric & Micke Andrevstam, Susanne Bengtson, Ewa & George Bobjörk, Anders Carlsson, Dan Eriksson, Patric Fors, Morgan Gustavsson, John-Henri Holmberg, Jonas Holmberg, Janne Johansson, Sonja Johansson, Kurt Karnéus, Mats Lignell, Marcus Lindeberg, KG Löfvander, Ralph Lundsten, Sam J Lundwall, Staffan Mossige-Norheim, Anders Palm, Michael Pargman, Monica Ringheim, Olle Sahlin, Stefan Strand, Lars-Olov Strandberg.*

Just to mention a few to whom I owe gratitude.

This is the last Nasacon. Ahrvid points out that it may be a matter of controversy, but it is also the 14th or rather the 15th Nasacon (if you keep in mind that Nasacon 10 was held twice in the year 1989, and simultaneously). Some of us look back in reverence. We have made it through *the bad years*, but there is a bright future ahead. Utopia – here we come!

Signing off, Wolf von Witting



Footnote:

In spite of the fact, that Counterclock is at rest / or on ice – we still have a UK and a US agent, the Transatlantic is:

Dave Weingart, 17 Chapin Rd
Farmingdale, NY 117 35, USA

United Kingdom:

Jonathan D Jones, 136 Kendal Way
Chesterton, Cambridge CB4 1LT, UK



Afterglow 2012

No, I didn't go back on my words. Still for the past 12 years I haven't run any more conventions. It is not likely that I will any time soon, considering where I live. This is not the place for such an event. I am back in the pioneering seat. Yes, Italy does have a fandom and they do have conventions, but they are nothing like we are used to. Here, very few fans go to cons. Most of the people who attend a convention are some kind of professional, and they appear to be *looking down* on regular fandom population. In 2009, at Fiuggi, I talked to an italian fan, who was just a fan of sf and who felt... cast out.

This is a flaw of Italian sf-fandom. Those who are pro's ought to remember where they came from, if they ever were sf-fans themselves. But I doubt it.

My first convention was fortunately not Fiuggi 2009, but Kleve 1977. As a contrast I have to mention that the German author Peter Griese and I had lunch together in Kleve. This was before he became a *famous* Perry Rhodan-author, but he was already published (with Terra Astra). This was my first contact with a pro. And since then, in German as well as in Swedish fandom... and UK fandom too for that matter, I have always met and talked to NICE pro's who were less impressed about their own accomplishments than their Italian counterparts appear to be. In this country, every S*tronzo* who got something published acts as if he was an Isaac Asimov. At least the latter had the virtue of being it. And as far as I am aware, Asimov was a nice person.

What Italian fandom needs, is an injection of fannish fandom. But I doubt I can provide this injection, because I am not likely to publish anything in Italian language any time soon. More issues of CounterClock. Yes.

Until next...

Wolf von Witting