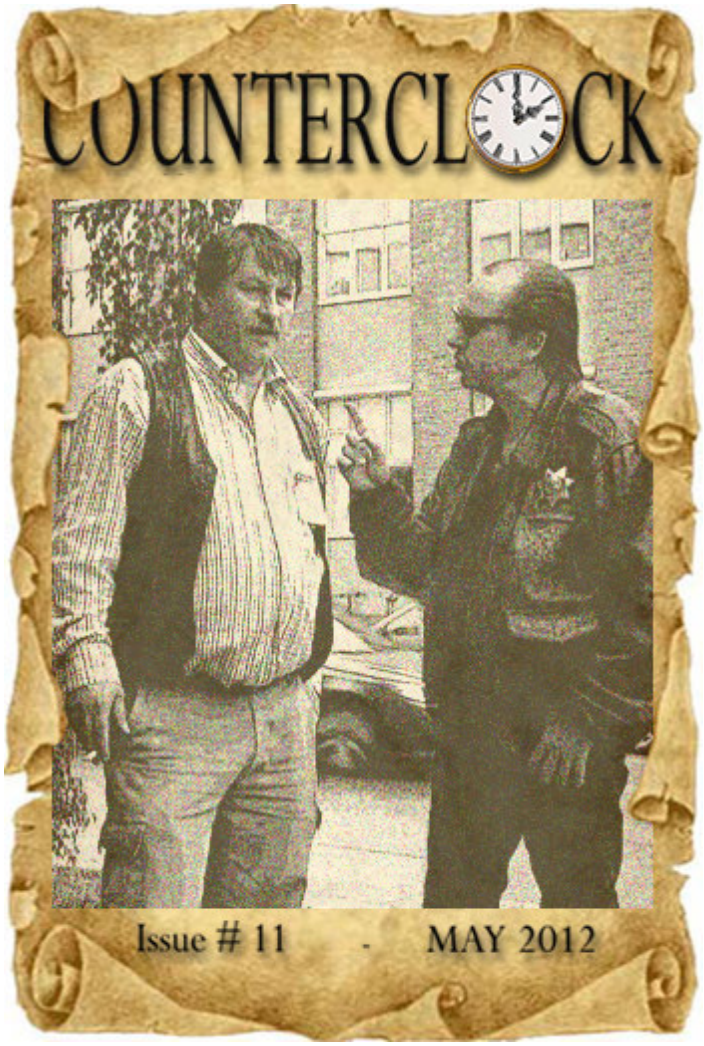


A randomly appearing fanzine by: Wolf von Witting, Via Dei Banduzzi 6/4, 33050 Bagnaria Arsa, Italy

- -

The kind of science fiction I grew up with was admittedly a bit naïve. For example, not every writer of juvenile SF knew that space was void of atmosphere. The bug eyed monsters were, of course, always green with antennas and the hero was a Flash Gordon-type, cruising through space in either a rocket or something which vaguely resembled fish, saucers, girdled meatballs on train buffers (in Perry Rhodan) or just an old-fashioned clothing iron (as in Buck Rogers). Whenever there was talk about Sputnik, Gagarin, John Glenn or the Apollo-program, my ears honed in on it. But after watching the German TV-series Raumpatrouille (Raumschiff Orion) in black and white I was hooked on SF in the late 60's. The Moon landing bolstered my awe and had me believe the stars were coming so much closer than they really were. First I read Wernström's Destination Mars. Then one of the 'Kemlo' books, which were written in the 50's by Reginald Alec Martin, under the alias 'E.C. Elliot'. I have to admit, these books would not catch my attention today as they did when I was a kid. Then again, they were written for kids. My mother further fuelled the fire in me by vividly retelling some of the classic movies of the 50's, such as *THE FLY* and *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN*. There was no escape. I was bound to become an sf-fan.

- -

"Writing is a balance act between self-deception and self-criticism. You have to tell yourself you are working on a masterpiece, while you are fully aware that it is not." (Roberto Quaglia in Genova on May 2nd)

Raumschiff Orion also had a clothing iron. It was built into the main control panel of the ship. Everyone could plainly see what it was. *Hey, but why not?* There was no constriction on imagination in those days. A spacecraft was generally made of welded sheet metal and of an alloy yet to be discovered, with rivets all along the girders and welded junctions. Rayguns were always deadly laser-energy-weapons of unknown configuration, designed to do near misses on the hero. It was generally assumed, and oddly enough still is, that the universe had come into existence through a big bang. So of course, the mad and evil scientist had to invent an even bigger bang to destroy it (laughing insanely) and when the hero didn't save the universe, then at least he saved our galaxy or in some cases *only* the planet Earth.
There was an asserting comfort in all this simplicity. The mundane world regarded us (sf-fans) as certified nut-cases, but what did they ever know about anything!?



Another one of my favourite features of the universe is in televised sci-fi, where virtually everyone is fluent in english, no matter what planet they originate from. Actually, I recall an episode of TIME TUNNEL, when the heroes ran into a (native American) Sioux or Cherokee indian and the heroes Dr Doug Phillips and the always hot-headed Dr Tony Newman were baffled when they found out the indian had learned their language, while at Troy with Achilles and Odysseus the Greek language was an obstacle simply to be ignored. I also have to point out, that Charlton Heston in the role of Taylor was a bit thick, when he didn't catch suspicion, he was back on Earth, until he saw the Statue of Liberty half buried in the sand. Shouldn't he have asked himself how it was possible for the apes to be fluent in English? It must have been far more traumatic travelling around the Globe, running into people who knew only… let's say Hungarian, than going to Mars. At least the Martians have the decency to scrutinize this planet with their envious blob-eyes and learn the one and only significant language spoken cosmos-wide. American English.

Film and televised sci-fi is of course not very bright, except on very rare occasions. Have you noticed how humans always can procreate with aliens and even with artifical life forms such as Cylons? BSG, Star Trek, V, X-Files, Babylon 5… Did it ever *NOT* work out between human and aliens in bed? Is that why some people have to try it with animals?

- *"I'm blasting to the East and I'm blasting to the West. Blasting where I think blasting is best!" Staffan Mossige-Norheim in his filksong "Laserblaster" based on the bad movie by the same name.*



Illustration by: Christian Holl

Anyway… I always loved science fiction and I still do.

My heroes were the true giants of litterature, such as Isaac Asimov, Walter Ernsting, Sam J Lundwall, Clifford D Simak, Sture Lönnerstrand, William Voltz and of course, my big brother (who let me have all his sf-books after he had read them). I had no idea one could go to sf-conventions and actually meet these people. The first encounter with Walter Ernsting was like meeting God. I was 17, you know. It was a mindboggling, stupendous moment in time. It was plain awesome.

I used to be envious in the 70's. I was envious the Americans had Star Trek, Batman, Lost in Space, the Twilight Zone, Outer Limits, Land of the Giants, etc and I was envious the Brits had Dr Who, the Prisoner, U.F.O and Blakes 7, while all Swedish TV had to offer was Mrs Pepperpot (an old lady who frequently and to her own inconvenience shrunk to the size of a tea spoon) and the Boy With the Golden Trousers (which actually were good shows), but only aired 6 episodes of Star Trek and bluntly ignored everything but Moonbase Alpha. The Swedish were simply too sophisticated to buy such "garbage" as "I Dream of Jeannie". I knew these shows existed, because I was fortunate enough to live three and a half years in Germany before returning to a dreary existence in Sweden 1975. But meanwhile at least Sweden had added a second TV-channel and gone colour. Mum's recaptures of old sci-fi was no longer sufficiently entertaining to compete with TV. Not only because she had exhausted her repertoire, but also because I needed to expand my perspective on life. So I learned about Akira Kurosawa, Andrei Tarkovsky and eventually found out that five ants are more than four elephants. Swedish TV wasn't all bad, just terribly mundane (which of course is the same difference).

Having 'brutally' been whisked away from a countryside village life in Germany, I needed to keep in touch with some of my old friends and of course with other Perry Rhodan-fans, whose adresses were published in connection with Letters of Comment to the readers-pages. That's how I discovered this weird phenomenon called fandom. It wasn't all that tangible yet, as it would become with time, but I recall writing at least one letter every day for years and spending a whole lot of pocket money on stamps and stationery (*avoid the confusion with 'stationary'*).

By 1976 I was already deep into *fanac*, but blissfully unaware that a major sf-convention (ScanCon) was going on in my town. My first con was destined to become a German one, almost one year later. In 1977 my brother and I also went to see this supposedly sensational sci-fi film Star Wars. It was on December 16th. Little did we suspect that we had just seen the movie which in spite of its childish simple plot, would become a landmark to change the face of science fiction in the eyes of mundane. Arthur C Clarke and Stanley Kubrick didn't succeed with 2001 – A Space Odyssey. That film was far too intelligent. George Lucas did however with Star Wars, a fairy tale for the juvenile. *Sancta simplicitas!* Now, finally, I understand what it takes to get through to you, mundane thickheads. And I am therefore also confident that none of you will ever read CounterClock. This is not for you anyhow. *–VVV-*

Since my sister didn't use her portable typewriter a whole lot, it seemed like a good idea, to appropriate it (in spite of her frequent objections) for the use of making fanzines. To make an impression on the stencils I believed I had to hit the keys really hard, and she didn't like that a whole lot. But her generous nature on the other hand, never allowed her to bereave me of the immense fun I had to publish total nonsense. She even joined the club and kindly pretended to read it. So did my mother and brother as I needed the club to grow bigger and bigger. After all, the number of members was an important issue, not if they really were interested to join. And eventually I could afford an electrical typewriter. An IBM Selectric model with a *typeball.* Then I ran into George Bobjörk on the platform of our local train station. In those days, I had no scruples about directing the topic of a discussion towards the realms of the twilight zone. To my surprise he was reading Sam J Lundwalls *JULES VERNE-MAGAZINE* and knew a little bit about Swedish fandom. In those days Seppo Laine was reporting activities from fandom in the above mentioned JVM. Sweden had fandom!!! This discovery struck me like an electric shock. Sweden had fandom, fanzines and conventions, just like Germany. I felt as Taylor must have felt, had he discovered, that in this world of Apes, there were still other Homo Sapiens who still had the ability to talk. You must realize how different we felt from other people. We were Slans! Not necessarily because we wanted to be different, but because the world of mundane had no understanding what so ever for a young man who was reading science fiction. In the 60's it was even worse. The world of mundane had no understanding what so ever for an old man (let's say a professor at a University), who was reading science fiction. He could get fired, in a worst case. For being an outlandish freak. It was the world of mundane who rejected us. WE always considered ourselves to be perfectly normal. Still… 22 years after Star Wars, I could encounter the occasional contemptful scoffing of a mundane. At least in Sweden. But then the Swedish maybe were extra thick!?

FANNISH PEAK in SVERIFANDOM

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair… *(Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities)*

Swedish fandom was about to shift gears early in 1979, when some of the youngest members of ScanCon'76 had digested its full impact. Yet nobody was still fully aware of their scope. Ahrvid Engholm and Anders Bellis had armed themselves with *secret knowledge*, gained from an encounter with John-Henri Holmberg, from Sture Sedolins fanzine-collection which was scattered in these days, from obtaining a copy of, and reading Harry Warner's *ALL OUR YESTERDAYS* and Richard Bergeron's *WARHOON 28*, the thickest fanzine of all time (aka, "the Bible of Fandom", aka "the complete works of Walt Willis"). Having learned about fandom of the past, they were suddenly in the position to dictate fandom of the present. Intelligently, eloquently and irrefutably. But they were fannish fans, meaning that they were more concerned with fandom than with science fiction, the literature from which fandom sprang. They made *sercon* (serious constructive) fan a dirty word. Beginning with the last week in the year of 1978 and throughout the following two years, 1979 and 1980, they published VHECKANS ÄVFENTYR (The Wheekly Adfentures), which as the name indicates appeared with an issue every week. Very few issues were a mere 2-4 pages. Generally, if you can imagine it, it was like an issue of CounterClock appearing every week. Every week for two years. Filled with news and reports of fandom. Interviews and articles by and with virtually everyone who was anything in Sweden related to sf. Sam Lundwall, John-Henri Holmberg, Dénis Lindbohm, Sture Lönnerstrand. They (re-)introduced Swedish fandom to marvellous and hilarious illustrators such as Arthur Thomson (ATom), Bill Rotsler and Bjo Trimble. They enlightened fandom of fan-speak, old fannish traditions, filk and fannish drinks. *Drinking tea was fannish, drinking coffee was not!* They bombarded us with nifty slogans such as "*The Reality of Fanac, the Hope of Egoboo, and the Promise of Bheer!"*, (which is of course what a Roscoeist is expected to say). Yes, they even introduced us to the new Ghods of sf-fandom. To the idea of the 200th Fandom as prophecised by Art Rapp in 1947. Like professional journalists, they left no stone unturned. They reported when a fan sneezed (Well… not really, but almost). Can you even imagine it? And as a result of this, every fan tried to make the headlines. Had Lindsey Lohan and Paris Hilton been sf-fans, they would have flashed their underwear to Engholm and Bellis every day. Most of Swedish fandom did. Uhm… not literally, but figuratively speaking. No deed was too trivial. It also resulted in a flood of fanzines, because everyone liked to be reviewed in VÄ, and everyone was impressed how Bellis and Engholm could keep the spell on all of us wheek after wheek.

Yes, the extra "H" in a word, or name, signifies its divine fannish nature as opposed to the plain or uneventful mundane equivalent. That is why the name of Ahrvid Engholm is unique spelling in Sweden. As unique as the person. He had all the creativity of a genius, no less. The only thing which surprised me, when I held his first book in my hand, was that it hadn't come any sooner. Anders Bellis was a completely different person, but made no less of an impact. Half Greek, he emerged from a family who immersed in dreams on celluloid. He was born to become a cineast, so to speak, but he could as well have become a second Humphrey Bogart, because he has all the charisma. Whenever Bellis made a statement, it reverberated as an imperative truth. He could be wrong, as when he believed Patrick McGoohan's "The Prisoner" consisted of 18 episodes, but if he told you Stieg Larsson was a former lover of Agatha Christie, then you felt inclined to believed it, no matter how preposterous the statement was. It is however no less a slightly surreal experience to read Stieg Larsson's Wikipedia entry. Skip to the third passage about Stieg Larsson, the sf-fan and chairman of SFSF in the days I am telling you about.

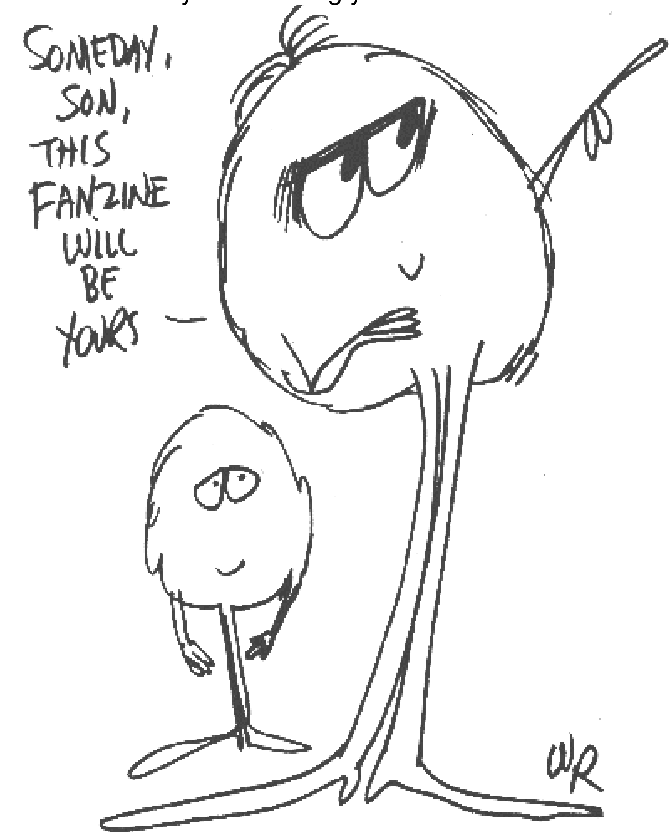


Illustration: William "Bill" Rotsler (July 3, 1926 - October 8, 1997) Rotsler won the Hugo Award as Best Fan Artist five times, in 1975 and 1979, 1996 (Retrospective Hugo for 1946) and 1997. He was famously willing to provide artwork for free to even the most obscure or struggling fanzines.

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Of course, not many were paying much heed to this emerging young author. We were all *way more intelligent* than he was, or at least we liked to think so. Come on, we were entering the twenties! The time of life when a young man is convinced he is on top of the world, just because he can get on top of a girl (in case of a mundane young man), or 'coz he is initiated into (DNQ) secrets of fandom. One reason why Stieg may have disappeared from Swedish fandom after 80, was that maybe we were not so cool after all. Maybe we were behaving really silly, all of us. And while some aspects of fandom were hysterically entertaining, other things we did were offensive and loathsome. What we would have needed, was an older fan with experience and authority, who could tell us when it was time to calm down. Someone with a voice of thunder, clear and solid

arguments, no objections withstanding. Then perhaps, the great tragedy of the late 80's in Swedish fandom could have been avoided.

To be recognised as a *real* fan, back then, you had to publish a fanzine. And the more you published, the more it was acknowledged as *contributions of lasting significance* to Swedish fandom. And wherever there was a hyperactive sf-fan, he created a fandom around him. So for example *Mika Tenhovaara (*with the fanzine: *ARNOLD LAYNE HAD A STRANGE HOBBY)* became the epicenter of Hallstahammar. It took considerable time before also con-running became recognized as having value to fandom. But it didn't happen until the 90's when the fanzines became more and more rare.

Feuding became already part of fannish life in the 80's. SF-Fans had firm opinions and they always considered themselves to be right. Some forgot one of the main purposes of sf-fandom, for it to be a ghoddam hobby and have fun. Instead it seriously turned into a way of life. Most seriously. Bizarre murder threats were uttered. A fan received a letter in his mailbox containing shredded red paper and a note *"THIS COULD HAVE BEEN A BOMB!"* It wasn't all in good fun anymore. It was sick. It was insane. One by one, fans who had enough of feuds dropped off. By the mid 90's Swedish fandom was reduced to… *the brave few who never gave up*. I believe it is safe to assume Johan Anglemark, Hans Persson and Carolina Gomez-Lagerlöf were among these. I guess they emerged during the days of what I call *Peak Fandom* in Sweden (mid 80's) and I dare say they have been instrumental in bringing a fandom back from the edge of that cliff from where we fell into GAFIA. An entire club went there for a while.

Sigma TC was/is a Stockholm suburban sf-club whose members generally were regarded as some kind of fringefans. Not only because it started off as a Swedish branch of a German Perry Rhodan-club, but also because the members of Sigma TC never cared much about what was fannish and what was not. In Sigma TC it never mattered for what reason one joined the club. If it was a fan of literature, a media-fan, gamer or comics-fan. I was the only *trufan* in Sigma until the late 80's when Mats Lignell was a briefly flashing star in the sky of Sverifandom. He came to us at age 14 and quickly caught up with everything, published an impressive number of his newszine *FANNIBAL & ELEFANTEN*, edited until this date the last issue of the club-magazine and ran NasaCon 11 in 1990 as chair of the club. George Bobjörk published a few issues of his fanzine *42nd Century Cat* in the days when everyone seemingly *HAD TO*, in order to be recognized as real sf-fans. The club-magazine *TID & RYMD* was edited by different people. Ewa Bobjörk, Christoph Mannich, Sonja Johansson (George's sister) and notably the issue # 12 by Olle Sahlin and # 13 by Elisabeth Almqvist (R.I.P). I did # 1, 10-11 and 14-19 finally Mats Lignell # 20. We actually did as many conventions. 12 NasaCon, InfintesimalCon 2 and 3 (a convention where everything is done just as at a real convention, including GoH-speech, GoH-interview, banquet, panels, vogon-poetry readings, film and filk-singing, but all performed very, very quickly to keep the whole of an InfinitesimalCon at a maximum of 5 minutes or less. The dead dog party then stretched over the rest of the evening). 2 CapriCon (local events connected with Sigma TC's 5 and 10 year anniversaries, 2 SaltsjöCon, JuniCon 1999 (with SFSF) and the SweCon - Fantastika 2001 (in collaboration with SFSF, Stockholm Trekkers and Stockholm Tolkien Society).

Sigma Terra Corps has been better known in online gamer-circles. In the years 2005-2011 it was a dominating force in Swedish universes of the online sci-fi-game *OGAME*. Several members also had clubs in the international football-manager game *HATTRICK* and the Swedish online IceHockey-game *LIVEHOCKEY*. Sigma TC Cyborg is still alive and doing well in live-hockey. Sigma TC Lightforce (Marcus Lindeberg) lasted longer than anyone else in *HATTRICK*.

Gaming wasn't something new for the club. In the late 80's we had tournaments and serial games in *frozen methane-hockey*, as a spinoff from the convention program item invented by Ahrvid Engholm. It was a regular table-hockey-game, but Ahrvid had the idea to have it all set in space. That is also why the puck always was disproportionally large (compared to the players). Asteroid and planetary moon miners (see: OUTLAND, with Sean Connery) were generally bored with their mining jobs on the outer rim of the Solar System. So they were playing hockey on ice of frozen methane. The puck needed to be huge and heavy because of the low gravity. Otherwise it could frequently be shot into orbit. We invented appropriate names for our teams; *HYPERION FLYERS* (Janne Johansson), *MIMAS RANGERS* (my team), *GANYMEDES HEINLEINERS* (Ahrvid Engholm), *CALLISTO JETS* (Bobjörk), *TRITON TEMPLARS, CERES ASTEROIDES, MIRANDA ICM* (Inner City Mutants), *TITAN UNITED*, *PROMETHEUS COM* (Champions of Mankind, Michael Pargman) and *PALLAS WANDERER.*



Johan Richter (co-founder of Sigma Terra Corps) & Michael Pargman, PROMETHEUS at CapriCon II 1986.

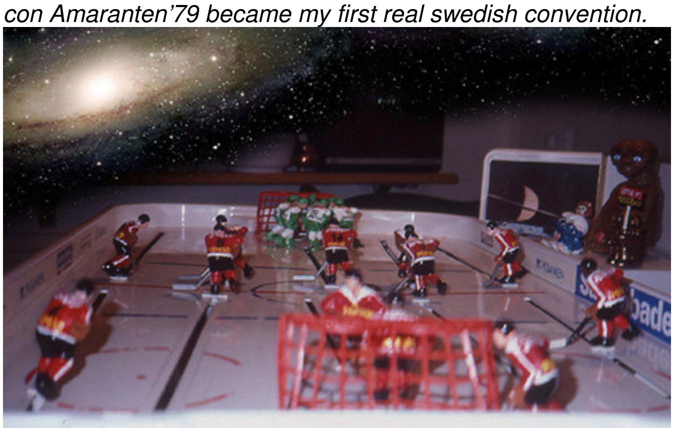
We even had a fictional first division from which teams could be promoted, or to which *TRITON* eventually had to be demoted after finishing 10th position in the one and only IPHL-Inter-Planetary-Hockey-League series ever season finished. When *PLUTO PROPHETS* eventually got

promoted and Stefan *(TRITON)* moved away to the city of Halmstad, we had already grown tired of this particular game.

A beaver looks up at me under the rim of his beanie, from the floor, tapping his tail on the tiles. *"What?"*
I believe Roscoe is telling me to shape up a bit…

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Other than SFSF's MiniCon 4 (not sure when) Sam Lundwall's con Amaranten'79 became my first real swedish convention.



Above: Mimas Rangers (black and red) preparing for a friendly game versus Ceres Asteroides (green-white).

But IPHL had its moments. There was "Totte" Bengtsson (Pargman's forward), who scored an alltime high in the series, or the IC Mutants player "Random goal" Barney (Lignell) who tended to score in both goals, for and against his team. I had (painted) two Nigeria-brown players on my team; defender Remus Kursaku and keeper Mawdryn Sankuma who eventually became the only keeper ever in IPHL to score a goal. This happened in a game against *TRITON* (all in good fun). It became *PROMETHEUS COM* and *HYPERION* who first secured their tickets to playoff in the IPHL. The positions 3-5 were still an open book when two games remained *GANYMEDES H* (Ahrvid) vs *MIMAS R* (me) and *TITAN UTD* vs *PALLAS*. We were quite sure *TITAN* was going to wipe the ice with *PALLAS*, so Ahrvid and I both believed our game could decide which one of us would end up in 4th and 5th position. It was a tight race for the season finale. Ahrvid had a nasty flip in his left wrist-defender Terry "Tough" Tucker, which kept him in the game, while my forward Nexus Atatkyo generally scored one goal after the other. I won the first period comfortably and relaxed a bit in the 2nd. The third period seemed to end in a draw when Tucker suddenly had a stroke of luck. Or let's say Ahrvid flipped his wrist twice and unexpectedly won the game.

We were both surprised. But Ahrvid, who always had a good heart, felt a bit guilty about winning and as a comfort he gave me a copy of *Terry Carr – Fandom Harvest*, which still is a most treasured book in my collection. Patric Fors did the unexpected in the final game and beat *TITAN*. They dropped from 3rd to 5th and both Mimas and Ganymede were in the semi-finals. *PROMETHEUS*, the Champions of Mankind did justice to their name. They defeated Hyperion in the finale and won the TC Cup of the year.
OTOH, Hyperion won the first NasaCon Cup and Mimas the last (both times Prometheus, the runner-up).

While fandom in general was not a whole lot of fun in Sverifandom 92-96 the former members of the club still kept on meeting because we had so many interests in common, computer (-games), sci-fi-films, drinking coffee, board games and gossip. It eventually spawned a second period of fanac 1997 to 2001 (a brief but intense period), after which our treasurer and vice chairman got married and decided that family life was far more important than fandom. One by one, the hard core of Sigma TC moved away from the Stockholm suburb of Fisksätra and in the year 2012 the club still exists, but will probably not create much of a fuzz anymore in any context. Actually, as of May 2012 after a bizarre communication with George Bobjörk I have to conclude that the future of this association now entirely rests in the hands of its next generation, meaning Isaac Bobjörk (and his brother) and Fredric von Witting (and his cousins). They are most likely to proceed along the lines of media-fans and gamers, which means that their contact with the fandom of literature will be limited.

Our conventions in the 1980's though, did plant a seed for the future. Maybe more than one. At least Carolina Gomez Lagerlöf (chair of EUROCON 2011) says her first con was in Villa Caprifol in Fisksätra, mid 80's.
Another fan, Andreas Björklind married Carina Skytt and moved eventually to Linköping near the end of the 80's. There he teamed up with Tommy and Hans Persson (not brothers as far as I am aware of) and founded Linköpings SF Association (LSFF). On a safe distance from the turbulences in Stockholm they slowly but surely built up a sercon community. Confuse 92 was their first convention. Then they repeated their efforts 1993, 1996, 1998 and 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2008.

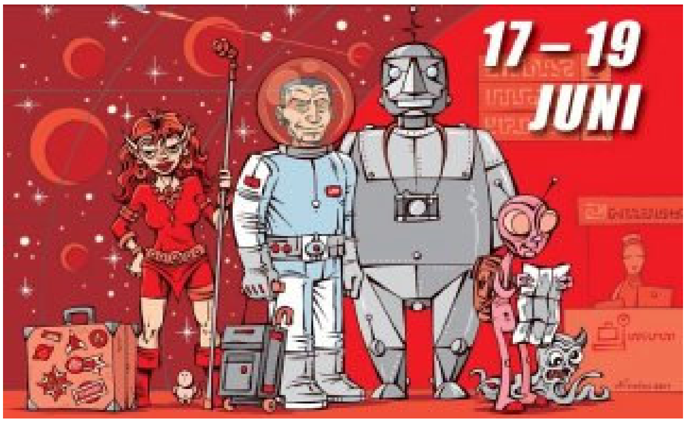


Illustration: Nicolas Krizan

The EUROCON 2011 in Stockholm

Friday, Saturday and Sunday - June 17th to 19th, 2011
GoH: Elizabeth Bear, Ian McDonald, Jukka Halme (FgoH) and John-Henri Holmberg.

From what I could see, people from Stockholm, Uppsala, Linköping and Gothenburg and other corners of Sweden worked together to make the Swedish Eurocon a complete success. It wasn't only one club involved, but some of the best of the best fans in their individual fields. The number of preregistered members was already close to 500 when the program book went into print end of may. At least another 250 people decided to pay at the door. And virtually everyone was there, including Sam J Lundwall who unexpectedly was showing up on Saturday to our great delight. Sam says every time (for well over a decade) that *THIS* convention will be the last he is attending. It follows that he will be right sooner or later. It is however fairly certain that Anders Bellis, Ahrvid Engholm, Roger Sjölander, Kaj Harju and me *NOT* will

be present at one and the same convention ever again. And if it happens anyway, I just have to eat my beanie.

Stockholm was the first time I was representing Italy at the ESFS meeting. It may seem strange for some of my fellow italian fans, but I don't mind to surrender my vote, if more Italian fans care to show up. I have known Roberto Quaglia personally since Dortmund in 1999, but as a name longer than that. Italian fandom is just not very outward. Maybe because they are not used to the english language. German fandom is steadily increasing their international ties and speak far better (and more) english now than 30 years ago, when it was virtually down to zero. They also don't stick together as one group at a convention. Thomas Recktenwald is often off on his own, Eckhard D Marwitz is usually to be seen with Matthew Kunkel, while Gabi and Arno Behrend were discovering Stockholm on their own. Finnish and Croatian fans appear in clusters, nice clusters, but clusters never the less.

Then there is the body of regular Eurocon-members. Lars-Olov Strandberg used to be one, even more so in the days when his friend Kjell Borgström (1929-1997) was still alive. It was good to see Jonathan Cowie (UK) again. We previously met in Dortmund over a decade ago. It is certainly a fan one doesn't forget. He is also an interesting speaker. I like to recommend the program items he is in charge of. I am not much of a program item fan. I prefer to hang out in the bar with a beer and with old friends. Now and then I do participate in program items, but I get a bit bored when I am always asked to do the same stuff. In Sweden I get film-related program items, in Germany they like me to filk, and so on… I like to do **different** things and I am always well prepared.

Old friends from the 80's turned up at this Eurocon. Leif E Eurén had not been seen at cons in Sweden for ages, Kaj Harju and John Sören Pettersson, were two more pleasant surprises. Kaj and me were not only in fandom together, but we also went to the same college. Without any doubts, the Swedish Eurocon 2011 was one of the best Eurocons ever. Carolina's team has done an immensely impressive job. It couldn't have been done any better. We who remember the awful time of senseless feuds, the terrible decline of Swedish fandom into the abyss, can't help but to admire the turn of events. Swedish fandom has healed completely from its wounds. I gave up. You didn't. I salute you!

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"It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." (Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities)

Proto-SweCons

In the time between ScanCon 1976 and ConFuse'98 until the national Swedish convention was established, there were lots of Conventions going on in Sweden. I would suggest my former fandom to establish a list of Proto-SweCons before all memory of them are forgotten. The following list is a suggestion. The idea is to only mention the biggest and most successful convention of a particular year in Sweden. My fanzine-archive was *slightly* diminished when I moved to Italy, but you people ought to have plenty of suggestions.

1976 – ScanCon
1977 ?
1978 – SFSF MiniCon, Stockholm
1979 – Amaranten, Stockholm
1980 – SerCon
1981 – RegnCon, Borås. 2-3 May. GoH: Sam Lundwall
1982 – KingCon, 28-31 May, GoH: Harry Harrison
1983 – SweCon, Stockholm
1984 – GöCon, Göteborg
1985 – SweCon, Stockholm
1986 - GöCon 3, Göteborg
1987 - NasaCon 8, Saltsjöbaden, GoH: Hans Arnold
1988 - NasaCon IX - GoH: Oyvind Myhre & Klaus Johansen
1989 Fantastika 18-20 Aug, Stockholm, GoH: Iain Banks, Bertil Mårtensson
1990 NasaCon 11, Nacka. GoH: Brian Aldiss, Harry Harrison
1991 ?
1992 Confuse, Linköping
1993 Confuse, Linköping
1994 ?
1995 Östan om Sol, Stockholm
1996 Confuse, Linköping
1997 Konfekt, 17-19 Okt, Uppsala, Sven Christer Swahn

Better still, if the list of proto-SweCons went all the way back to the 50's, as it should. But I have absolutely not enough archive material to do so. The only place it most certainly can be done, as far as I am aware of, would be at SAAM (Stiftelsen Alvar Appeltofts Minnesfond).

ON RELIGION

I have rarely said anything at all about religion in my fanzines. Yet I have read the Bible. All of it. From the first to the last page. Twice. Now, there you have a huge load of both science fiction and fantasy!

I have also read an English translation of the Quran, the Bhagavad-Gita and other works of supposedly sacred inspiration. And they were all quite limited in their perception of the universe, since they all were written in ancient times. One can argue contrary to this, based on interpretation of the written word, but I have come to the conclusion that none of these scriptures are satisfactory to me. I then studied ancient mythology and also read the norse Edda. The polytheistic pantheon was one which inherently had to be more tolerant than any monotheism. There was always an equal number of male and female gods and the world of animals had greater significance in polytheism.

Then it ocurred to me, that the original idea we once had. The most primitive one, pantheism, maybe was even closer to the truth. I found that a combination of simple zen, which is more a philosophy than a religion, combined with pantheism fits my view of the universe perfectly. Simple zen is of the distinct school, trying to see everything as it is. Without other sentiments. There need to be no teachers, nor priests or temples for this. Of course, every human seems to have a need for rituals, but we can decide ourselves what these rituals should be. We do not need anyone to tell us. A cup of coffee in the morning is more a ritual than an actual need. So, if you ask me… What do I believe? I believe that everything, which has life is divine. I don't even kill an insect, unless it is *deliberately* bothering me, as mosquitos tend to do. I am neither a good nor bad person. I'm just a zen pantheist.

"Blessed be the dead, because they do not have to get up at six o'clock in the morning!" (my own, 1980)

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Can somebody tell me why **every single page** of this Word-document has to be distorted when I install the frakking pdf-converter? Add one hour unexpected work!

GENETIC MEMORY

I have in my life had notions, which I have had difficulty in explaining. I do not believe in reincarnation. For a long time I was simply unable to explain my sensations. So, when someone said *genetic memory,* it made sense to many things, without being magic or supernatural in any way. But it could be the correct answer. It has been extremely helpful in my genealogical research. My genetic memories are not very distint, except on a "yes" and "no" basis. Sometimes a certain feel gives an "affirmative", and sometimes my inner self appears to have a revolution against a given argument. These notions, which I hope by now to be able to distinguish from *wishful thinking* and *prejudice* seem to stem from a different sector of sentience. Let's say that the *input* comes from ahead and prejudice is at the center of the mind. Then these "yes" or "no" notions appear to bubble up from below. They were not part of the conscious process of thinking, but invaded it from a storage space (maybe the spine) within. Wishful thinking, in my case, emerges from the process of thoughts. Then there is *instinct*, which is again a different sensation. I like to place it in the back of my head, among other luggage. But like the animal it is, it gnaws its way out of its confinement and jumps me from behind, when or if the situation so requires. The acts it provokes are rarely parts of conscious thinking, but only becomes so by post analysis.

SPHERE OF IDEAS AND BELIEF

Being at least bilingual as far back as I can remember and becoming a polyglot at young age, has thoroughly convinced me, that every language we learn is a different way of thinking. Every language contains words which don't even exist in other languages. Therefore I can now immediately determine some aspects which are typical German way of thinking, typical Swedish way of thinking or typical Italian, Russian, British or for example American way of thinking. Every individual is wrapped up in a bubble of ideas and belief which is limited by the languages he or she speaks and by the people they are in contact with. This bubble or sphere of ideas and belief is influenced by the outside through media, internet and random, chance encounters.

Speaking of random… I will allow myself to think a bit randomly… the way things rattle around in my head, and let you decide for yourself if you can make any sense of it. I'm not sure…

On september 11th in 2001, or 9/11 I was led to believe that a terrorist attack had brought down the World Trade Center and that a passenger airliner was directed to crash into the Pentagon. The only thing then, which bothered me about the whole story was the date itself. We all know that "911" also is the emergency number you have to dial in America. To choose this date for the attacks is typical American way of thinking. An Arab terrorist would not care about making it an easy date to remember. Just as gods do not really care about round numbers. Do you remember the deck of cards used to hunt the members of Saddam Husseins regime? That too was a typical American way of thinking. Americans love to have a *rule* for remembering things.

German and Italian minds of sufficient age have also been "conditioned" in regard to terrorist actions. Meaning, they remember what it was like when the Baader-Meinhof *gang* and the Red Army Brigade were terrorising Germany and Italy. A well educated mind can cause serious mayhem to a society. My military and professional education makes it possible for me to cause the derailing of high speed trains, and all other kind of trains for that matter. I can make phone calls, at the expense of someone else (random). I have required the knowledge to create bombs, strong enough to take out low priority objects of serious civilian significance, which could cause a great number of random civilian casualties. But all of this is and remains theory, since I am opposed to all use of violence, the use of arms and force unless no other option remains. I can therefore at best become a terrorist of words.

Compare the *List of terrorist incidents* on wikipedia with correspondent lists in other languages. Swedish people, don't bother – you had terrorism, but no one has cared to translate any part of the article. The German equivalent is limited to *bomb attacks*. 9/11 is not even on the list. The Dutch, French and Spanish articles are extensive, but nothing beats the English list, of course. No one in Russia or Israel, which have real and serious terrorist problems today, have bothered to write any wikipedia-article about it. But if I wanted to create terrorist-hysteria, I would of course talk about it as much as possible and make it seem as widespread as possible. And I wouldn't mind to include the act of a single madman (who knifed Anna Lindh to death) into the list of terrorist attacks.

The Russians must have had a laugh, when Putin after 9/11 offered the USA to defend American airspace, if the Americans themselves were incapable of it. This was an inside joke for all who had any understanding of military operations. But again… I want to point out that *I believed* the official story. My own son was among the first to point out details of the story which made me go "*Hm…?*" and "*Is it possible that the truth is a different one?*" So I began to ask questions and see if I could get any satisfactory answers to them. Yes, it did look like controlled demolition to me, but… what do I really know? But why did building 7 collapse? Why, when it was clear that a plane already had hit the first tower and there was so much time in between… How come NORAD was not in the air to at least shoot down the second plane? Why hit the WTC when there is virtually no one in it? If you want to hurt America, hit the buildings when they are full. When there are 50.000 people in the buildings.

After reviewing the official reports I have even more questions. How did the terrorists know that NORAD was incapacitated on this day? How did they know when to turn off the flight transponders in areas with limited (poor or non-existent) radar surveillance? Is it true that a seismic observatory registered the explosions and that there was a 17 seconds delay in the **live** reports we saw on TV? If 3000+ people really had died on 9/11, then how come the relatives of these people don't keep bothering officials about all these and other inconsistencies? How come George W Bush was the only one who saw the first plane fly into a building? I remember that interview, but I was still so shocked, it didn't strike me as odd at the time. I remember all the initial footage, I noticed it was re-edited when it was being repeated, but I didn't notice the mistakes which were made in the initial footage until I saw it a second time. Fairly recently. The *fun* part is that all the evidence is right before our eyes, everyone can buy a copy. We just refuse to believe it, because how could we possible

all have been so hoaxed? An Italian sf-fan and Genovese author, Roberto Quaglia wrote a book about it: *IL MITO DELL'11 SETTEMBRE e L'Opzione Dottor Stranamore (The Myth of September 11th and the Doctor Strangelove option).*

Modern technology will eventually reveal the hoax. It is a curse or a blessing, which we can't escape from. This lie is too big, to be left in peace. People who try to disprove the conspiracy (theory) end up believing it instead, because they can examine all the evidence in the comfort of their own homes. The mistakes in the footage and audio files are blatantly obvious once they have been pointed out to you.
By now the internet reflects well what people *really* believe. There are websites such as Pilots for 911 Truth, Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth and Firefighters for 9-11 Truth. They're all ordinary decent people who still have unanswered questions.

Dr Strangelove (1964) by Stanley Kubrick was never among my favourite sf-films, but then I never in my youth or adulthood had the patience to watch it without prejudice and my personal aversion against Peter Sellers acting, but now when it again has become a relevant argument, I see it for the first time without carrying my old shades. And finally I have to concede the film to be far better than I ever gave it credit for.
"Some decisions should not be in the hand of politicians."

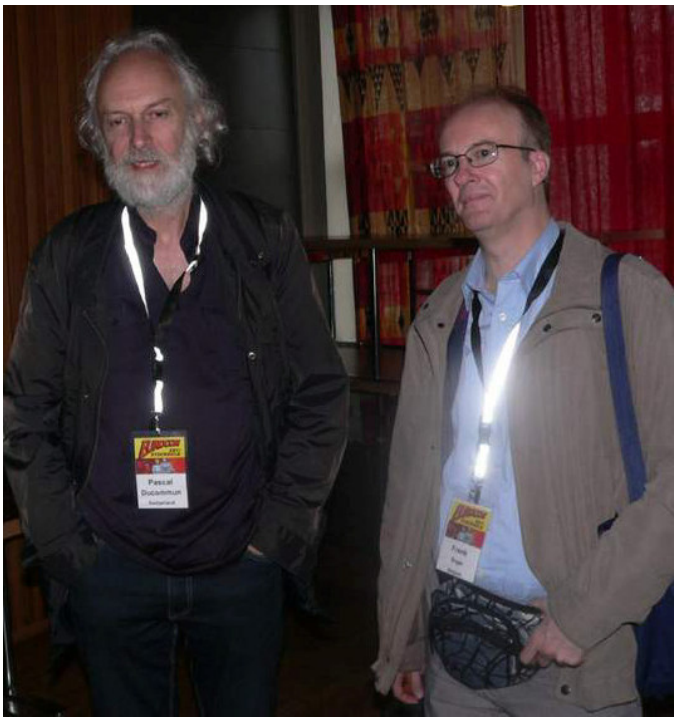
The human spirit is such devoted, that it will keep struggling against malfunctions in automation until his final breath, if duty so requires. The politician, in accordance with his duty, has often a sincere desire and intention to do what is best for his people. I have to believe it now, since my brother also has gone into politics. The military in accordance with their duty, looks at everything from a strategic point of view. What is missing here, is the corporate mind, which best can be compared to the mind of a psychopath. A corporate mind doesn't care about people or lives at all. He only looks at the numbers. And they should favour the stock holders, which is his only loyalty and duty. Most of humankind is so under stress and bombardment of information, that we really don't care much to look beyond what our duty requires us to.

Cube (1997) was like the faint memory of a nightmare to watch. I woke up inside the cube many years before this film was made. I don't remember what happened in my dream, but the events in the film make sense as an allegory to the world we live in. The Cube is society itself and it is out of control. We are all prisoners in it. Nobody can see the big picture anymore.
"Nobody is in charge. It's a headless blunder operating under the illusion of a master plan." (Worth, Cube)

Maybe Goldman-Sachs believes they still have a grasp, however, not even they can control everything. There are too many factors, too many variables of now and ten years from now. Only thing for sure is, there's a whole range of matters which we think are important now… And 20 years from now, the world will be, *has to be*, a completely different one. With different sets of values. Oh, and I'm very sorry to bombard you with these seemingly random sets of thoughts.

GOIN TO CONVENTIONS

How many conventions have you attended? One, two or three? Ten, fifty or more? Lost count? I have. Really, I do like the small cozy ones best.
Everyone attends the program items in the beginning. A very good way to get to know other fans, is to work with a convention. Start as a gopher, if you haven't done that before. There are always things which need to be done.
As time is passing, these people you meet in this context only, become a special breed of friends. Some of them you see every year, some you run into every ten years, or so. Depends what kind of conventions you go to. I don't mean differences such as media-con, comic-con, filk, fantasy- or sf-literature (the original) con. I mean differences as regional, national or international and differences such as sercon or fannish. The longer you've been at it and the bigger a con is, the more stressful a con becomes.



It brings a certain sense of order and stability to the universe to see Pascal Ducommun (Switzerland, left) and Frank Roger (Belgium, right) at a Eurocon. This picture is from Stockholm.

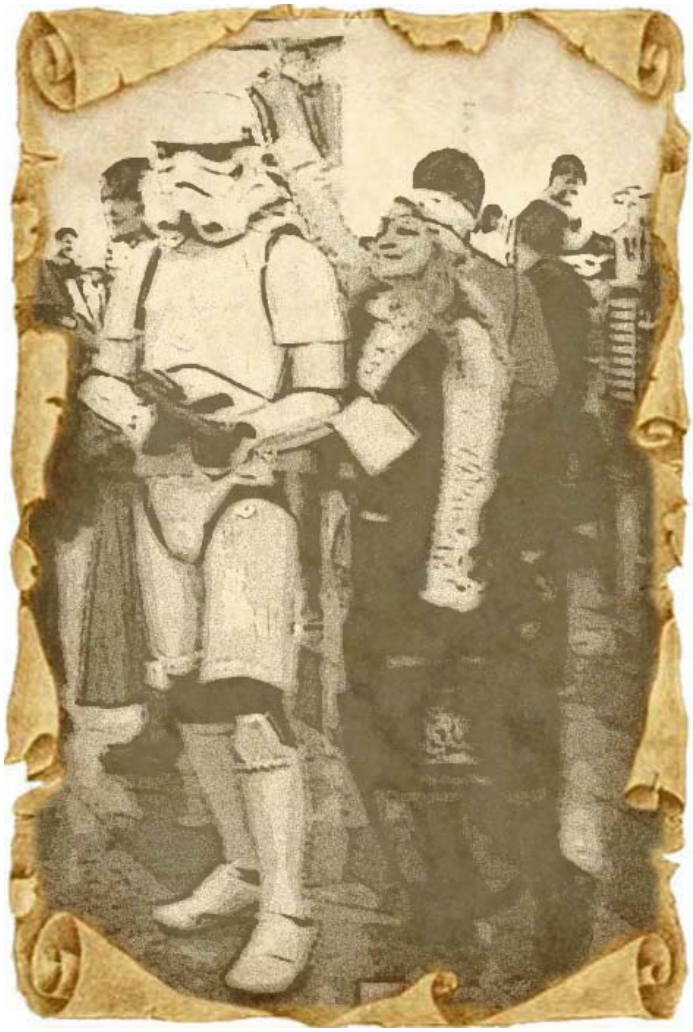
Nowadays I just prefer to sit back and relax at conventions. I've done my bits. I have decided not to committ myself to more than one or two program items a day, and never before lunch. It's the other fans I like to talk to. And I like to take my time with everyone I talk to. Not three minutes here and three minutes there.
Worst of all is, having to switch between 3 languages or more throughout the day. The Eurocon is of course the worst kind of convention from this point of view. Not only for me, but more or less for every polyglot.
Maybe this is another reason why I have made it a good tradition to miss out on WorldCons. They're just too big.
Yeah, it's kinda nice to have all sorts of things going on, including the gamers and costumers (whatever they are doing). Sometimes one even learns something new. As I always enjoy doing.

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World population milestones (USCB estimates) 2 billion 1927, 3 billion 1960, 4 billion 1974, 5 billion 1987, 6 billion 1999, 7 billion 2012, 8 billion 2027. In my lifetime we've already gone from 3 to 7.

EUROCON 2012 in Zagreb – The Long Con

GoH: Dmitri Aleksejevič Glukhovski, Darko Macan, Tim Powers, Charles Stross and Cheryl Morgan (FgoH).



Imperial Stormtrooper defending the coffee vending machine (assisted by a female pirate) at the Eurocon in Zagreb.

Thursday April 26th - Trieste - Zagreb.

Looking at the map, one would expect the connections between Trieste (Italy), Lubjana (Slovenia) and Zagreb (Croatia) to be good. Three major cities of which two are capitals, so near to each other. But in reality the connections suck. They suck like a Hoover.

From Trieste there is one bus only, and it departs from Trieste at 17:00 to arrive (according to schedule) at 20.45 in Zagreb. The rest of the time table is empty space, void and vacuum.

This particular bus didn't even make a stop in Slovenia. We all expected to be in Zagreb before 20:00. But then came the border and an additional hour of passport checks. So it was already dark when we arrived in Zagreb. In addition to this... I had been very clever and forgotten to print out exactly where the convention was going to be held. It meant I had to sniff my way to the convention site. After 35 years of attending conventions all over Europe, this was something I was pretty good at, only it needs a bit of time. However skilled you are, I do not recommend the method. You could eventually be looking for the convention site until the event is over.

But the stars still shine as bright and the planet Venus has been twinkling particularly bright in the night sky lately, next to Jupiter, which reminded me that not all is always as it seems. We all know that Jupiter is the bigger planet. So we have been told and we like to believe what we are being told, because we like to believe it is the truth. Yet, behind every statement, the first question we have to ask ourselves, if it is indeed true. And the second question is why a statement is being made. I will not immediately dive into the complexity of thoughts which surrounded my journey, but limit myself to the rememberance of events along the road in the past weeks and where it is suitable hint at a continuous strain of thoughts.

And I was lucky! Using only my fannish vibes detector, I curiously enough went directly for the Hotel International, where many of the international guests were staying. Signs of peculiar activity were left behind, but the convention guests and members had already diverted their further activities to some brewery in town. In the lobby sat a person reading an sf-novel. It all smelled right, so I asked the reception, which confirmed that weird characters (with bow ties and with beanies on their heads) have had sinister deliberations in the hotel earlier in the day. Next step was to check out the noob in the lobby. Turned out to be a fan indeed, a swedish fan even, *Johan Ahlander*. And another mindboggling fact was, he had never heard of me before. Not even any gossip. I decided quietly to retire for the day, since this guy obviously had no clue as to the reverence my fannish dignity had come to expect.

I mean, what is the point trying to hint at what extra-ordinary BNF he had the privilege to talk to, if he didn't even know what a BNF was? Well, that is the problem with fandom. Old guys out, new guys in. In an ever-changing, never-stopping cycle. A miniature-universe of life itself, I dare say. So, they (the new guys) don't remember the days when sf-fandom was like a small society of secret initiates, when we hardly could be distinguished from freemasonry. They days when every fan carried a bow tie, a beanie, a bottle of corflu and a pack of stencils. I also realised that one can not rest on old laurels, such as hundreds of (nonsensical) fanzines produced and 20 years of conrunning behind. OTOH, if it could be any consolation, they don't have a clue as to who Walt Willis was either.

Then *Eckhard D Marwitz* and *Matthew Kunkel* entered the hotel after a stroll in town. Fans! Real fans! Well.. German fans, but nonetheless… Fanzinemaking fans of the old school. The kind of fans one would expect to meet at cozy cons such as the HanseCon in Lübeck.

Gentlefen, which reminded me… Still needed to find some crashspace…

Young Croatians were out in the parks at night until dawn. Fortunately it was a warm night. City lights dim out the stars, but it would have been a really beautiful starry sky, had all the lights of Zagreb just suddenly gone out. Everyone ought to have the privilege och watching the night sky at least once without city lights interfering. Have you? I mean absolute and total darkness, except the stars above. It is an awesome sight. City dwellers really don't get to see that a whole lot. Neither did we on thursday.

Slept in the park that night.

Friday, April 27th - Zagreb

Early in the morning, I left my bag at the Hotel while I explored the vicinity. I was carrying enough Euros for my journey, but it wasn't the currency used in Croatia. There had (as always) been plenty of opportunity to withdraw cash from a dispenser, but you should know it isn't

nearly as easy to put cash back on your account if you are living in Italy. Main reason is my reluctance to deal with Italian banks. In Italy, you pay for opening an account, pay for having an account and pay for closing an account. Which is ridiculous, unless you have money coming out of your ears. I don't, so I keep my Swedish account. Only problem is, one can not add to the account in Sweden as easily as one can withdraw from it. Everything has been made easy to *spend* money. Not to hoard it. And it's not like I'm hoarding it. I just prefer to spend my money wisely.

And my first priority was to find somewhere to stay at a reasonable price. I don't believe I could have endured a second adventurous night under the stars. No matter how delightfully poetic it was. My own investigations had not been successful. The cheapest alternative seemed to be a hotel at 54 Euros/night, which is more than half of what we pay in Italy for a month of living.
Time to *test* the committee. At the information desk of the convention, I was fortunate to run into *Vanja Kranjčević*, the *deputy head organizer* and she wasn't wearing her title merely for her good looks. She set me up for the following nights in virtually no time at all. At a hostel (which are not on the map and neither seem to be part of the general tourist information one can get). You just have to *know* they are there and a lot cheaper than any hotel ever can be.

Finland was being well represented in Zagreb. By now, I recognize some of them and *Saija Kyllönen* and *TJ Hämäläinen* being two of those. The others were *Ville Vuorela, Leena Marjatta Romppainen, Eeva Kukkonen, Katja Mielonen, Mika Autio* and finally *Tuuli Saarikoski* from Regensburg in Germany. The latter one made the impact of having at least a minimum of one additional layer of thoughts going on at all time, other than the ongoing conversation. I recognize this immediately, because I am a bit like that myself. I just believe that I have become better at disguising it with the years. This to avoid questions like: "What is *really* going on in that head of yours?" This is a question I usually don't want to answer. If I can't bring order to the chaos in my head myself, how can I expect anyone else to understand it?
Sometimes the parallell strain of thoughts are clear, but totally unrelated to whatever we talk about.

Spent some time getting to know *Gareth Kavanagh*, from Dublin / Ireland and lamenting the fact that I haven't been to Ireland yet, even though I always wanted to go... Yeah, the Eurocon in Dublin 2014 should be an excellent opportunity. Again, if I can afford it.
Also spoke to *Peter Redfearn*, Uk, for the first time. I've seen him at several Eurocons, but only now I have learned to identify the man in a crowd of sf-fans.
It's easier with fans like *Martin Hoare, Jim Walker* and *Dave Lally,* being as outgoing (social) as they are. Also the FgoH, *Cheryl Morgan* is someone I've known for a very long time by now. Before CounterClock I practiced by writing a few reports for *Emerald City*.

And of course, having lived so many years in Sweden, I would of course notice the Swedish fans at every international convention. They are mostly the same every year; *Carolina Gómez Lagerlöf, Tomas Cronholm* and *Sten Thaning* seem to be becoming the new hard core, replacing the old team Strandberg-Borgström.

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The road to success is always under construction.

Anyway. Friday evening was party-time. I was sticking to mineral water all evening. Which makes it a bit odd that I can't remember what we were talking about. Well, at least some part of what I said to *Frank Roger*, from Belgium and *Pascal Ducommun* (Switzerland) seem to have blanked out.



Illustration: Christian Holl

Can't remember social experiment nr 1 and 2 either, but I remember social experiment nr 3. Maybe because I liked the result. Making these social experiments was something I started doing while I worked on the train in Stockholm as a conductor. Someone pointed out to me that I had a trainful of guinea pigs for social experimenting, whenever I was bored. This is something which sometimes can turn out to be hilarious and sometimes can provide profound insight, but of course, it can also go horribly wrong. This particular experiment was of the kind which could go horribly wrong. It involved myself, standing by myself with my glass of mineral water, not approaching anyone. Just being there.
Theoretically one can be standing there all evening. Alone. With no one to talk to. I know. I've done it before. But not at a sf-convention. How long would it take before someone started talking to me, and who would it be? The result was somewhat of a surprise.
I had to stand less than five minutes. And the first fan to approach was a swedish fan - *Sten Thaning*, which was kind of a pleasant surprise, because I have some prejudice against Swedish people, that they are not sociable at all.
Sten Thaning disproved this, unknowingly.
I must say… *Peter De Weerdt* on the dance floor is a poetic sight. He doesn't really care how others dance, but moves to the music with his own rhythm and

embracing of the music (in this case - an infernal pounding beat, vaguely reminiscent of what we once used to call disco music).



Alice Lawson and James Shields in Zagreb 2012.

Saturday, April 28th - Zagreb

Woke up after a long good night of snoring, but… seemed to have lost my voice, somewhere… I must have sounded something like Darth Vader, but without the sonor bass of *James Earl Jones*.

Trying to find my way to the convention site, near the Hotel, the Polish delegates *Radoslaw Kot* and *Kinga Kowalewska* happened to be the first fans I ran into on saturday morning. Kinga being a huge *Game of Throne* fan insisted having pictures taken in front of its Croatian poster. *Bridget Wilkinson* was in a good mood that day. She rented a bike and went around Zagreb on it. Good idea, but I was already physically worn out by searching all over town for a decent hostel. Went instead for a coffee with *Thomas Recktenwald,* sitting down and enjoying the sunshine at a street café.

Back at the convention site, there were legions of fans in costumes. Some of them really good. I posed with *Martina Hreljak*, who was dressed up as the Star Wars Queen Armidala. If I understood correctly, then *Maja Mirkovic,* won the costume competition. A personal favourite of mine was *Natasha Prodic.* I will let you all just guess as to why.

The ESFS-meeting was maybe the only program item I actually attended at this convention. All this to get my idea sanctioned, which I already regretted having: A **EUROCON MARKETING DIVISION** – Being a group of people (hopefully the same every year and best taken off the Eurosmof/Intersmof-formation on FB) who 1) assist the elected Eurocon-comittees (if so desired) in their work and 2) provide fundings/sponsors for the ESFS (peanuts in administrational cost) and for the Eurocons (practically a barrel with no bottom).

As *Martin Hoare* commented, "all which is business, needs to be done transparently." And of course, he's right about that. At least we have now official mandate by the ESFS to present (for the next Eurocon) how such a marketing division should be formed.

The legal kinks need to be worked out first of all. And I prefer to have a simple set of rules for it, that everyone will understand. Understandable in simple English.



The fat guy, with the sheepish smile is me, and to the right behold; Queen Amidala aka Martina Hreljak.

There were people at this convention of both male and female gender. Of course, I welcome the presence of female fans at conventions. At Swedish and German conventions female fans were rare throughout the 70's, 80's and still not awfully common in the 90's. Mostly they appeared in company of their boyfriend who was a fan. Anyway... we didn't engage in much of a chase in those days, because it was utterly pointless.

What sometimes bothers me is *the chase*. Why do some otherwise perfectly sane gentlefen, suddenly have to rush off in all directions simultaneously in futile attempts to charme the present ladies? Hey, guys! Remember the days when we said: "Better to have science fiction, than no sex at all!?" Ah, yes… that was in German fandom, where the word *fiction* has a slightly obscene ring to it. Took me **years** to understand why the German fans considered it to be a hilarious statement. Anyway… we used to talk about things… not necessarily science fiction, but things… the things boys talk about. We didn't chase skirt. There is always the right time for things. There is a time for fannish activity, time for drinking beer and even time for chasing skirt. But it was never the same as going to, being at and enjoying oneself at a science fiction-convention. Not for me.

Maybe that's why I had to do my own satirical version of this (for me) new phenomenon at a convention.

Bearing in mind that the only difference between an old man and a dirty old man is that the old man knows his limit.

What to do at a convention, when the person you talk to suddenly rushes off, because he has spotted some very attractive piece of posterior: Keep calm at all time!



No shortage of fair maidens: Maja Mirkovic, the ever so handsome Eugen Lenghel and Natasha Prodic in Zagreb 2012.

Remember why you are at the convention. Remember why the others are there and what they want to talk about. If possible, have a look at how *Roberto Quaglia* handles the situation. He does it with all the possible skill and grace of an Italian. And he can keep the ladies in thrall for hours. Actually, he doesn't really come alive properly until he has a part female audience.
I can understand that. And I can fully subscribe to his approach. Which is yet another reason for me to get back to typing. And immediately when I am finished with this fanzine, I have to start on another project.
Anything, as long as I keep typing.

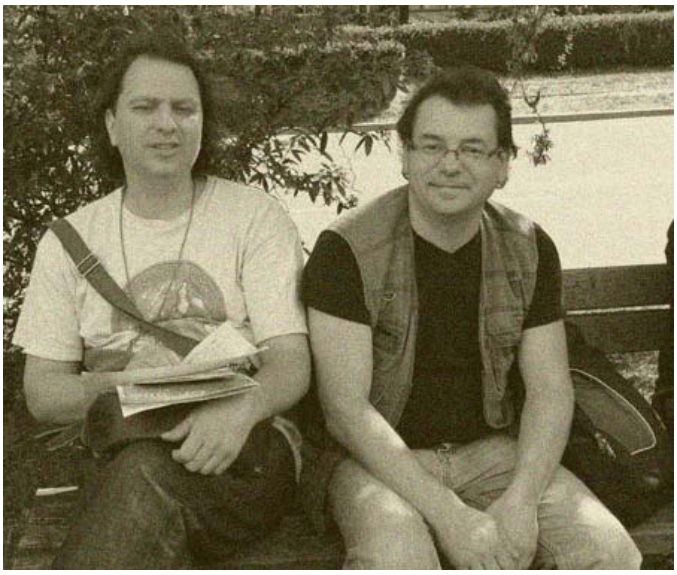
Sunday, April 29th – Zagreb

It is difficult for me to estimate how many people actually attended this convention. The official numbers may be somewhat exaggerated. I spotted in the list of preregistered members at least half a dozen people who had paid for, but didn't appear at the convention. In spite of all the gamers, animé-fans, trekkies, costumers and other fringefans, the feel was definitely smaller than Stockholm, yet the official numbers were higher. There are different ways of counting. I don't care to investigate who is right and what is what, it is not really interesting to me. It was a good convention with plenty of interesting program items for me to miss out on, while I chatted with fans over a beer, coffee or mineral water.
The closing ceremony was short and concise. Not much of a spectacle there.

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Words of praise make people happy, and they are for free. So spend them generously!

The *Dead dog party*, sunday evening was really nice. The convention itself had no filking program item, but in the evening two guitars turned up and me, still without voice settled down next to *Ivana Delac*, *Miroslav Wranka* and *Marina Grškovic* in a bit of singing. The local authority on filk, *Dalibor Perkovic* joined us for a while. But as filking goes in Croatia… they still seem a bit… underdeveloped in that area. They do have the potential though. The people I mentioned here, all have fluid music running in their veins. I believe they could all become very good filkers.
Fans I talked with, but where I feel it wasn't enough: *Tomas Cronholm*, Sweden (who I actually have known for years, but only spoken to on all too rare occasions without understanding why. He is a nice fellow and I guess he has just been part my fannish environment in a very non-intrusive way for such a long time. I ought to know him better than I do). *Mårten Svantesson*, Sweden *Saija Kyllönen,* Finland and *Caitriona Hamman,* Ireland.
Fans who also were in Zagreb, but who I didn't get the opportunity to talk to much, though I would have liked to: *Steve & Alice Lawson*, UK, *Nina Horvath*, Austria and *Piotr Cholewa*, Poland.



Kaspar and Andrei, two Latvian delegates in Zagreb 2012.

Monday, April 30th - Zagreb – Trieste

We left the hostel Mali Mrak on Dubička 8, Zagreb in the morning, still dizzy after the dead dog party. *Roberto Quaglia* slowly returned to planet Earth after having dwelled among profoundly metaphysical and poetically harmonious altercations over beer and distilled liquids in the patio behind the hostel. *Imants Belogrivs* was sober. *Kaspars Berzins* was completely unaffected by anything all along. And *Andris Krumins*, that would be Andrei… I guess… he had his hip flask.
The five of us were just about the limit of what Imants car could hold. We crammed together in it, to boldly go where no fan has gone before. Actually… a lot of fans have been in Trieste, since the first Eurocon was held there in 1972. Read all about it, as *John-Henri Holmberg* told the story in the Eurocon booklet 2011 on page 39.
But we went to see James Joyce…
Because Imants wanted to see him. Not the real one, he has been dead since 1941, but the statue of him, who is standing in the street of Trieste. Just like the man once did himself. Roughly 100 years before us.

Then it occurred to me that we were in town exactly 40 years after the first Eurocon and coming from Zagreb

and the Eurocon 2012, we just *had to* commemorate the **first** one, right then and there. An occasion at which Roberto's digital video-camera came in very handy.
I hope the video will be available on youtube eventually.

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- *Recommended reading: Desmond Morris - The Naked Ape: A Zoologist's Study of the Human Animal*

Tuesday, May 1st - Castions delle Mura – Venice
This was probably (at least I hope so) my last visit to Venice as a *tourist*. I loathe tourists and loathe it even more being one. Where's the fun in squeezing in among all those people? *"And why is it called tourist season, when we can't shoot them?"* There are so many nice places to see, one really doesn't need to suffer this.
Five hours of walking, to the Piazza San Marco and back to the train station.
Along the road, all refreshments at totally unreasonable prices. And actually at different prices for tourists and at another price for italians, *of course*! Been there, seen it, not impressed. I prefer places like Artegna, Cividale and Aquileia. Less crowded. Similar gosh-wow feelings.



SF-Fandom comes to Venice, in May 2012.



Wednesday, May 2nd – Genova
I have seen most of the region Udine, Trieste and I have been to Venice. In 2009 I visited Rome, while heading for nearby Fiuggi and the Eurocon. But now I got to see Genova in Liguria and a new part of Italy.
As a tourist guide, Roberto must have caught more than a fair share from his sister Daniela, who is professional in this field. As he guided his three Latvian guests and me through Genova, the substancial facts about town where mingled with his natural sense for comedy. The result was a strain on all muscles. Not only the ones needed for walking, but also the complex set of muscles involved in smiling, giggling and laughing out loud.



SF-Fandom in Genova, May 2012.



The famous genovese writer Roberto Quaglia and his Latvian guests. Among them the main publisher of science fiction in Latvia, Imants Belogrivs aka "Carne di Culo".

Among other interesting sites in town, we visited the "Neptune" which was the set for the film *Pirates* (1986) by Roman Polanski.
In the evening we had dinner at *Guido Gambardella*'s place. Which again reminds – you can eat Italian food, but eating it in Italy is a particular experience. First because there is such a wide variety and secondly because the Italians are very much aware of what they have in their food. There is difference in the meat you get from a supermarket and the meat you buy from a butcher. There is a huge difference in taste between genetically modified vegetables which you can buy any time of year (no matter if it is in season or not) and fresh vegetables from the Earth it is accustomed to grow in.
I am always pleased to discover the neverending stream of culinary delights in this country.

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How to become a successful writer:
"Finish the book!" (Robert A Heinlein)

A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit.
(Richard Bach)



A profound moment, Imants realises that not all is what it appears to be. This is what Imants looks like when he is flabbergasted…

Just as an example, there is the house of Christopher Columbus in Genova. No one, resident, seriously believes that Columbus actually lived in that house. No one has a clue, as to where and which house he **really** lived in, so it might as well have been this one. It has been chosen randomly to do the honour. Randomly and, of course because of its location, where it can render more profit from acting as the home of the great explorer than as anything else. It works for the tourists. They like to believe it. But…truth is, the house itself, looks like it has been around long enough so Columbus at least could have walked past it. Maybe he did. Maybe he didn't.



The stolen cathedral in Genova…

The Genovese are a peculiar breed of people. Let's build a cathedral here, they said. And they started this ambitious and a bit pompous building… They intended to make the towers as impressive as possible, but then they ran out of money… and "Fuck it! Let's make the second tower a bit shorter…

For the walls, which you can see should have the typical stone pattern of one layer dark stones, then a layer of bright stones… Again a layer of dark stones and so on.

To maintain this all around the cathedral became eventually a bit problematic, since they were running out of bright stone material. So for appropriate stones on one of the sides, they had to run off to the local cemetary to snitch stones of the right colour. All in the name of the good lord, of course. Let nothing say, that their dedication for the church wasn't what it ought to have been. So, maybe the people were poor, but they were resourceful, if nothing else.



At a closer examination, the patterns on this wall can lead to no other conclusion. These stones were taken from the dead.

And the lions at the pompous entrance stairs? Well… Lions were not particular for Genova. They are most likely stolen goods from Venice.



This lion appears to be in dire need of a beer.

I regret not being able to deliver these comments in the comical way Roberto does, when he is in the gears.

Thursday, May 3rd - Genova

On thursday morning we took the bus 34 across town to the famous cemetery of Genova of which we already had heard so much. Imants, Kaspar, Andrei and I.

Personally I wondered if there were any stones left, since they had to use so many of them for the above cathedral. But then again, people die all the time and it is big business for some. Personally I would prefer to avoid it all together. Not dying. Can't avoid that. But the whole business-shabang surrounding it. Well, I mean… when I die, eventually, I have by doing so avoided it already.

But I don't want anyone living after me to make much fuzz about it either. Can't my mortal coil just go with the organic waste disposal? I will not have any use for it anymore. Neither will anyone else, or so I hope.

Which doesn't mean that I disapprove of other people's need for having a gravestone to weep at.

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"I believe you need to write a million words of crap before you get it right." (Simon Moore, screenwriter)



Visited the grave of Oscar Wilde's wife.

After a late lunch we split up to explore Genova on our own. In the process I discovered a bookshop named Fahrenheit 451, after the novel by Ray Bradbury. Couldn't resist the temptation to go in there. There were two young guys *working* there, well at least one of them was an employee. They had both read the novel. But it wasn't a science fiction-bookshop. It was related to the local university. So I took the opportunity of telling them the story of our book-panel in 1981, when we examined the worst sf-literature of all time. The first idea was to make it a homage to Fahrenheit 451 and burn the books after the panel. Then we decided, we had far too great respect for books to burn them and instead sent them as far away as possible. To the other side of the planet. After the convention we made a package and wrote the address (without any return address) to: Central Library of Wellington, New Zealand.
16 years later, when I attended a meeting of WorldCon-runners at The Royal Oak in London, I happened to overhear this talk about a science fiction-archive in Wellington, New Zealand. "Uhm, excuse me. But since when do they have an sf-archive on New Zealand?"
"I think they started in the early 80's!"
So, one can only imagine their faces when our parcel arrived. A selection of sf-books, some in English and some in Swedish. They probably didn't guess our thoughts behind it…

Back to Fahrenheit 451, the university book-shop. Them NOT being sf-experts I thought it being a good opportunity if they ever had heard of *the famous genovese sf-writer* Roberto Quaglia. They had not. But now they have.

Friday, May 4th Genova – Bologna, and back home
Woke up to be informed that Guido Gambardella was heading for Bologna this day. One could call it *perfect timing*. Of course Genova had been a perfectly pleasant experience, but I only prepared for a brief detour after the convention, so the prospect of going home seemed like a very good idea at the time.
And it was good to see Bologna before the earthquake. I wonder what it looks like now…

The arrival back home, at the train station of Cervignano del Friuli was at 21.11 or as an American would say: at 9.11 p.m. Now, Roberto Quaglia would probably call this a poetic fact.
Not that it actually has any significance as such, but having his book about 9/11 in my pack makes a tiny entirely coincidental and poetic connection there.
And so the convention was finally over.

COCLOCK 21st CENTURY DICTIONARY

aftermath – basically the 2nd half of the 21st century
American – a person, who in average consumed the resources of this planet 11 times faster than it could be produced
apocalypse – a major mid 21st century event
bank – an institute, creating money out of thin air
banker – a person who legally obtains your money
bonds – a method of government to steal or borrow your money (not to be confused with *tax*)
border – obsolete method to keep friends apart from each other
Brodsky, Chuck – brilliant American poet of the 21st Century. Among other things to be noted for his wonderful baseball ballads.
car – energy inefficient vehicle for transport of goods and passengers a fraction of its weight
China – country, conquering the world by buing it
city – a human zoo, where peole lock themselves in
coincidence – method the universe is using
computer – tool for multiple use, can replace the typewriter, calculator, slide projector, stereo, radio, cd-, dvd-player and TV
concrete – hiding place for corpses
demography – an increasingly disturbing curve, when observed from the global angle
defenestration – an alternative to the use of weapons
destitute – person having less than basically needed
Earth – planet shamelessly exploited by humankind
electrical appliance – energy consuming device which breakes when its guarantee expires
energy – something we have to consume less of
European – a person, who in average consumed the resources of this planet 6 times faster than it could be produced
fashion – a lame argument to keep you buying stuff
friends – invaluable assets, good investment
Ghana – country in Africa for dumping electronic waste
gold – overpriced indigestible metal, useful for teeth
government – a group of people who has the right to use force against you
greed – cerebral dysfunction, resulting from fear of scarcity
hate – human self-defeating sentiment
history – a version of the past, entirely depending on who is writing it.
honesty – applies to your current perception of truth
human – bipedal primate, impressed with itself
internet – primary candidate for the Nobel peace prize
journalist – a person who reports what he understands
law – a method to obscure justice
military – an obsolete institution for solving conflict
mobile phone – personal surveillance device
money – paper or metal pieces of fictional value
mountain – natures topographical reminder to us, how small and insignificant we are
open source – generous gifts from generous people
pay it forward – a principle, if someone does you a favour, you be nice to the next unknown person who comes along.
pharmaceutical industry – most successful con-artists of modern times. has invented countless fictional ailments.
politician – an elected person, who 1) invents ways of limiting your freedom 2) doesn't

believe you can cope with the truth
politics – the art of lying, and to make it sound credible
poor – wanting to have more than you need
press – a media containing the news you are supposed to believe in
religion – outdated belief systems for poulation control
rich – having all you need
school – institute for indoctrination of minors
stuff – things you can buy, but you don't really need
Sweden – American vasall state in northern Europe, pretending to be neutral, but never failing to do their masters bidding
tax – a method of government to steal your money
thief – a person who is unable to distinguish between *mine* and *yours.*
universe – too big for humankind to pollute, but if we could, of course we would
USA – bancrupt country which used to rule the world
water – paradoxically enough a scarcity already
wealthy – having surplus to share
weapon – primitive tool for solving conflict

FILM TO WATCH WHILE YOU FLOSS

The past six years have been a long walk through desolate plains when it comes to good sci-fi on the big screen. There were *Déjà Vu* and *Stranger Than Fiction* (2006), *I am Legend* and *Next* (2007), which all were fairly decent. Star Trek fans could rejoice in *Star Trek – Of Gods and Men* (2007). But then it got worse. 2008 had *Jumper* which barely rates as ok. 2009 had *Avatar, District 9* and the *Imaginarium of Dr Parnassus*, which actually were quite good and *Moon* was ok. Also *Star Trek* was ok. In 2010 we have *Predators*, which was acceptable and *Inception* which was good, but by no means as great as it has been hailed. The year 2011, on the other hand, was an unusually good year for sf on the big screen. Ok, so the *Green Lantern* was a disappointment, but I was a teenager when I read the DC comics and maybe I would have liked it a lot better, had I still been in my teens. All this super-super, big and silly evil just doesn't do it for me today.

The Adjustment Bureau, directed by George Nolfi, with Matt Damon and Emily Blunt was a film entirely in my taste. Based on the short story "Adjustment Team" by Philip K Dick, whose stories have been quite successful, when turned into movies. The sf-comedy *Paul*, with Simon Pegg and Nick Frost was very entertaining. To be honest, I haven't had so much fun since *Men in Black* (both I and II) and *Galaxy Quest.* We will see, if the upcoming *Men in Black III* will do as well as the previous ones. Also the *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* with James Franco and Andy Serkis exceeded my expectations. Judging from the trailer it seemed to be some kind of remake of *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes*. It is not. It is far more cleverly done and IMHO one of the best *Planet of the Apes* films. It doesn't beat the first one from 1968, but that's because I loved the first one so much. Otherwise the latest entry to the Apes beats all the other sequels and remakes. Also the prequel to John Carpenter's *The Thing* (1982) was better than expected. Not nearly as good as the 80's version, but I was prepared to interrupt the viewing of *The Thing* (2011), because that was indeed how bad I expected it to be. But I didn't. I neither fell asleep. It was ok. Now I look forward to Ridley Scott's *Prometheus*, coming in June. Of course I will have to wait a bit longer before I see it. I simply refuse to watch it with lip synch to Italian.

Sci-Fi TELEVISION in the 21st Century..

Lately as CGI has improved, and the big reset button between every episode has become obsolete, televised shows generally have the potential to be better than movies. You can't save planet Earth in every episode, so you have to focus on smaller issues. There is more time for character development. You can build up an entire season for one emotionally packed moment, which hits you far harder than anything could after two hours of viewing. Spending so much time with the characters, they eventually become your friends. You feel as if you know them personally. In *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*, the episode *The Body (2001)*, in which Buffy's mother had recently died, it was a deeply profound moment. Things like it happen in real life, just like that and never before have I seen any death so realistically treated on film. But it happened on TV, not in a movie. A good TV-series is as long as it needs to be. Don't wait until you run out of ideas and the show eventually is cancelled because no one wants to watch it anymore. The X-Files were running on fumes for a long time and when things eventually improved by the appearance of *Robert Patrick* as agent John Doggett (2000-2002) it was too late. What sucked most about the final two seasons, was the ridiculous *deification* of Fox Mulder. It only reveals how stupid people can be.

If wishes were horses, beggars would ride. And if I had it in my hand to reboot the *Star Trek* franchise I would definitely go in a completely different direction than where J J Abrams is taking it. I would begin researching which of the actors from Next Generation, Deep Space Nine and Voyager are willing (and at what price) to become regular or re-occuring characters in my new series and who woudn't mind to make a special appearance. Then I'd concoct a series which initally would appear to be an anthology series with as good story-telling as money can buy. The scenes would be varied. Starfleet Academy, aboard a space station or a Klingon ship, a Federation ship. In every episode someone of TNG, DS9 or Voyager is somehow involved. By the second season some would be overlapping (running in to each other) and a new threat to the Federation slowly emerges. It would be something we already have seen before, for example the inter-dimensional species which were hi-jacking members of the Enterprise crew in the TNG-episode Schisms (1992). I would answer old questions, such as: "What happened to Ensign Sito?" (Lower Decks, 1994) or "Did Cmdr Maddox ever succeed in his endeavour to create an android like Data?" I believe in taking a story forward, not backward. Making prequels is generally a bad idea. The future is always a frontier. *STAR TREK : ENTERPRISE 2001-2005* was not so bad, but it wasn't what we (Trekkers) were hoping to see. With the scope of the universe that was built up in TNG, DS9 and Voyager much grander things could have been done.

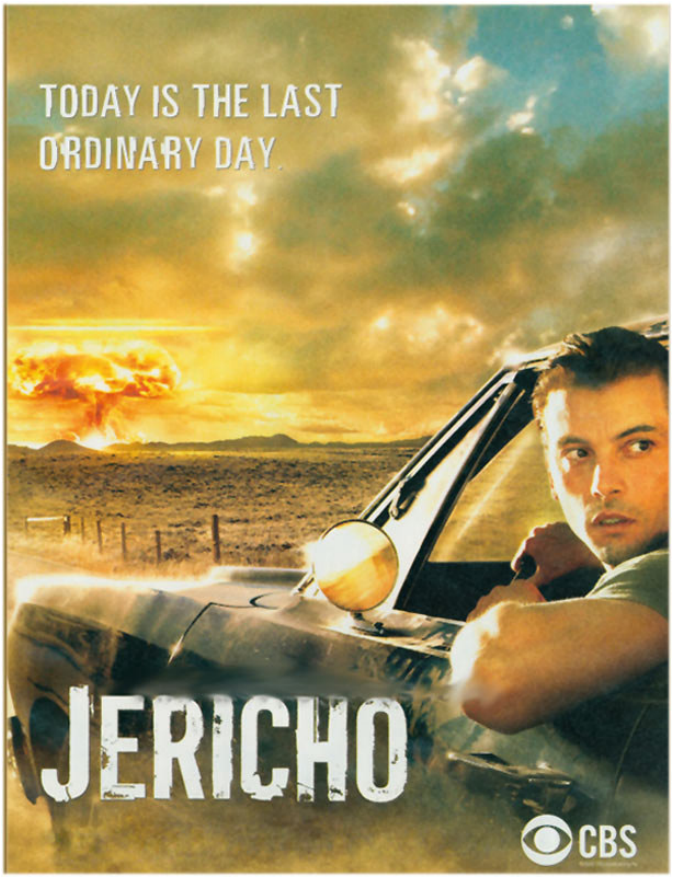
F*ARSCAPE* 1999-2004. At last it came! The complete Farscape (32 dvd) at 80 Euros. SOLD! Farscape was an absurdly expensive series for a long time, compared to other TV-shows. I'm not paying 100 Euros or more for one season anymore.

B*ATTLESTAR GALACTICA* 2003-2009 didn't catch my attention immediately. Having been turned off by the original series 1978-1980 I didn't expect the new one to be a whole lot better. I saw the mini-series and had the first season on the shelf for viewing at a later time, when I would be *really* bored. And after a couple of months, it happened. I started watching the first season and I admit I had been wrong. This was not the same at all. A few names were familiar, but the new BSG takes events in an entirely different direction. This new BSG was not a remake, it was an update. As it is, with all good things, they must end. But what happened with CAPRICA (2009)? Why only one season? Why hasn't it been released on DVD in the UK yet? What's wrong? Was it that bad???

S*TARGATE SG1* 1997-2007, *STARGATE ATLANTIS* 2004-2009, *STARGATE UNIVERSE* 2009-2011, at the moment it appears as if the saga is over. 8 seasons of running around on different earthlike planets, fighting the old Egyptian gods, aided by old Norse gods (who all look a bit like *Paul*), then a slight shift of characters and two more seasons fighting the Ori (another religious sect). Personally I enjoy anything with Claudia Black. But here she really got an interesting character role. Then five seasons of *ATLANTIS* which was more hardcore sf, but never really got a fair chance. It was cancelled in favour of *UNIVERSE*!? You've got to be kidding me! Ok… haven't come around to watch it yet, but the box was now available for a fair price, so I am just waiting for the moment when I am sufficiently bored to watch it without feeling that I waste my time if it sucks as badly as I have been led to believe. I will probably like it, since I except nothing.

V 2009-2011, Kenneth Johnsons old show about Lizards from outer space, coming to eat us in the most unpleasant sense of the word, has been given two more seasons and 23 more episodes in a fresh version, which *almost* had me going there, for a moment. I'm sure *David Icke* loved it, since he is into reptilians, but like all other dull shows with these I'm-so-cool-look-at-me-I'm-oozing-people just fail to wake any sympathy at all. *The 4400,* 2004-2007 was just like that. The grown up Isabelle Tyler was so uncool, she created nausea in me everytime she appeared on screen.
Why did we like actors and actresses like Brad Dourif, Jack Nicholson, Vincent Schiavelli, Linda Hunt, Gary Oldman, Whoopie Goldberg, Ron Perlman, Danny DeVito, Brion James, Morgan Freeman, etc when they are clearly NOT particularly beautiful? Because they have character! Hollywood should try that a bit more. Character. People that the viewer can identify with. *LOST* 2004-2010 actually had one overweight (normal American) character. Does anyone remember ANY other overweight character under 50 years of age in any show? I don't. J.J.Abrams sure got me hooked with his method of giving away one small piece of the mystery in every episode, without revealing it all too soon. It was so beautiful, how the mystery was growing and growing until it only could be explained by applying some science fiction-solution. But eventually he had too many loose plot-balls in the air to juggle with and the end of LOST was no more exciting as if he had just chosen to fart instead.

M*EDIUM* 2005-2011 was something totally different and new. A wife and mother as the hero, with three girls at home, Bridgette (Maria Lark), the middle kid had some of the best lines in the show. I liked her. The story-telling was generally good for the first five seasons. In season six it seemed kind of obvious they were beginning to run out of good ideas. But I recommend this show anyway, because a lot of neat things are being said about family life. The only objection I have, is that Allison Dubois sometimes was a tad over the top righteous. From what I could see, she has been unparallelled in phoney nobility since ST-Voyager. What a writer (and why not the viewer?) of TV-scripts also has to keep in mind, is the gulf between thinking and doing. When it comes to extreme actions, such as murder, the first one **has got to be** a traumatic event for whoever commits it. It can happen by accident, but the likelyhood that two people who know each other both think of, plan to **and** then commit it? C'mon, not in an otherwise *normal* environment. Not even in Hollywood. I refuse to believe it.



J*ERICHO* 2006-2008. When you watch this show, bear in mind it is more of an allegory. It is not being made as distinctly clear, as in *THE PRISONER*, so you may wonder how a small town like that makes do with only one shop and one pub, where people gather. Also, the farmers don't seem to do a lot of farming and one can ask, what people in this town are doing for a living. But that's because Jericho, Kansas is a real symbol for the average American small town. What had me a little worried in the beginning, was the notion that this could be another indoctrination / propaganda show with the sole purpose to justify such extreme security measures which have been taken in the US since 9/11, including the patriot act. But the people of this town seemed to me being depicted like ordinary (mis-informed) Americans. As such they initally have stupid notions (since the government already has told them what to think) such as terrorists acts, Iran, North Korea or China being behind

the attacks on their country. But it is not so. The writers of this show have already understood that the enemy of their country comes from within. In corporate interest and the greed of individuals, now that's where you can look for the real bandits.

As the Allied States of America is rising from the Ashes, they notice the content of the History books have changed. Well, how truthful were the books before? Do we ever get to know the truth?

D*OCTOR WHO* 2005-, *TORCHWOOD* 2006- and *THE SARAH JANE ADVENTURES* 2007-2011 the Brits are more successful with less budget, better actors and better plots. Christopher Eccleston was fantastic as the Doctor. He should have done at least one more season. David Tennant was even better. As of lately, the 11th Doctor is maybe a wee bit too spectacular, but I guess it awakens the young persons intellect after attacks of insomnia at school. The spin-off *TORCHWOOD* is just as brilliant, but has occasionally been rubbing the gay-aspect of the main character too much in our faces. Fair enough. The hetero-sexual have imposed their preference on gay people much longer. It can be regarded as payback. Sex scenes just don't carry the plot forward. If they are necessary, then so are eating and excrementing scenes. But we don't have a lot of the latter, do we? *The Sarah Jane Adventures* is an excellent show for children of all ages. I liked the no-guns aspect of it. Even if *the bad guy* carries a gun, doesn't mean that the hero has to carry one as well. The use of guns simplifies every argument and takes it to the extreme. "Stop, or I'll shoot you!" With these words, the highest card has already been thrown into the game and no further escalation is possible. Well… ok, so let's say the other guy can pick up a bazooka and blow the first away, but at this point it is already becoming silly. Imagine instead the multiple layers, which can build up an argument. The best threat is always the one which is unspoken. Because we all fear the unknown. And tallking gives you time to prepare…

- Stop!
- Why?
- Because if you don't, I will be put out.
- So what?
- You don't want to do that.
- Why not?

At this point, Sarah Jane has already used her *sonic lipstick* to jam the barrel of the aggressor. I would like you to *think* every time anyone picks up a gun anywhere and ask yourselves the question: Is it really necessary? I am not saying that every situation can be solved without the use of violence. The Aliens as depicted in the movie *Aliens* were difficult to reason with. They didn't even understand proper English. But there are *way too many* trigger happy, gun toting nincompoops out there, alongside with the truth.

L*IFE ON MARS* 2006-2007, *ASHES TO ASHES* 2008-2010. Well, well, well… the element of sf in these shows is minimal and somehow they belong together, while they are two separate shows at the same time. The first is set in 1973, the second in 1981. Maybe our preference will be where we have our own childhood memories, but *Life on Mars* is the superior version for several reasons. First, it has John Simms, whose acting capability comes to its full use, since he is in virtually every frame of the show. And he is good, really good. I rarely get this impressed by individual performances, since most performances are mediocre (professional), but Simms is top notch. Secondly it sprouted the original idea(s). *Ashes To Ashes* is more of the same, but with a female character instead of Simms. And she (Keeley Hawes) is not so bad either. If you liked Gene Hunt and his minions, then you may also like *Ashes to Ashes*. The first show is a *must see*, if you care to watch clever TV. I've seen it two-three times already and look forward to seeing it again. But then I have my teens in the 70's. I found only one 'error'. An old guy with long hair in a scene. The 60's and 70's was a time when the older generation bothered to comment on haircuts of the younger generation, while the younger generation didn't bother to cut their hair at all. An old (50+) person with long hair in the early 70's!? It simply didn't exist! Trust me, I was there, One tiny, tiny error in a scene which flashes by in seconds. Otherwise the feel of the 70's is so well recreated, that I felt myself catapulted back in time just like Sam Tyler. It was eerie.

R*EGENESIS* 2004-2008 is a Canadian TV-show mixed into our shuffle. "*Geneticist David Sandstrom is the chief scientist at the prestigious virology/micro-biology NORBAC laboratory, a joint enterprise between the USA, Canada and Mexico for countering bio-terrorism." (IMDb)* But why are these joltheads who decide which DVD's to make available, releasing only half a show? And why one which is this interesting? I want to see the rest also… *(sigh)*

T*ERMINATOR : THE SARAH CONNOR CHRONICLES 2008-2009.* Accepting *Lena Headey* as Sarah Connor, took me a while, but *Summer Glau* as the *good* Terminator was a brilliant choice. From the moment on when she gets her head smashed through the windshield of a car and looks at the terrified and stunned family inside, saying; "Please, remain calm." I had to admire her performance. Again… you don't have to be a centerfold, to be a good actress. Personality is far more interesting. Being a *babe* is something I would hold against you, simply because I am so prejudice to believe that you never needed to work hard in your life to get anything. The only *babes* I can think of at the moment who doesn't fall into this category are *Katee Sackhoff* and *Jeri Ryan*. Well… and *Summer Glau*, coz her charisma compensates for a plain façade. We tend to overrate women when we have had long good looks at them. How else could *Gillian Anderson* be voted the sexiest woman in the world (while the X-Files were still running? Sometimes I get the feel that tits and asses are ruling the world (while it is really just the asses). But anyway, I liked the Sara Connor Chronicles and would have liked it to run for another season.

T*HE PRISONER* 2009 and *SURVIVORS* 2008-2010, remakes of good old classics? What for? In case of Survivors, its very purpose is perfectly clear. Both times when the series was made, it coincided with an outbreak of the swineflu. Had they not attempted this remake at exactly the same time, then I would never have noticed, that also the first show most likely was sponsored by the pharmacy-industry. And when this trick was revealed, also the new show got cancelled (ran out of fundings). The Prisoner is on the other hand a completely different kind of Prisoner. Maybe the show should have chosen a different name, to avoid any comparation with the original series. They had after all very, very little in common.

***T**HE LONE GUNMEN 2001, FIREFLY* 2002, *ODYSSEY 5* - 2002-2003, TRU CALLING 2003-2005, *SURFACE* 2005-2006, *LOST ROOM* 2006, *BIONIC WOMAN* 2007, *DOLLHOUSE* 2009-2010 The good shows are often short, or get cancelled when they either become too smart or too silly. It seems obvious that we don't want people to watch intelligent stuff either. They might begin to actually **think**. And that is dangerous.

DARK ANGEL 2000-2002, ***T**RESHOLD* 2005, *INVASION* 2005-2006, *HYPERDRIVE* 2006, *STARHYKE* 2009. Have them. Seen them, No comment, except *Invasion* was the first time I saw an alien shoplifting and as comedies come and go. After *RED DWARF* we have been a bit spoiled with it. *Hyperdrive* just doesn't reach up there and *Starhyke* was even worse.

TERRA NOVA 2011, ALPHAS 2011-, WAREHOUSE 13 2009-, GRIMM 2011-, DIRK GENTLY 2012-, BLADE 2011- , FALLING SKIES 2011- But seriously… do you have time to watch them all? Yes, even I have limited time and resources for this purpose. Haven't seen these yet. And… we will see what the future has in store, because at the moment there appears to be a big vacuum of zero interesting sci-fi shows coming from America.

Summary: TV has since its inauguration more deliberately become a tool of manipulation. Not only by advertisement by sociopathic enterprises, aimed at intellectually defenceless youth, but also a tool of mass deception, indoctrination and control. Everything you see on TV must be the truth. You saw it with your own eyes, didn't you? This household rid itself of TV before the beginning of the 21st century. I have stepped out of the system. I will not be pushed, indexed, briefed, debriefed, or numbered. My life is my own. But even some sci-fi shows are obviously being influenced by the occasional corporate or political agenda. *SURVIVORS* and *JERICHO* are two of the most blatant examples. It is not a new idea. *INVASION of the BODYSNATCHERS* 1956 was made to warn against communism. The good thing about sf is, that the principles remain universal, so if you don't think about communism, it might as well warn against Jehovah's Witnesses. The effect is the same. Once a person has reverted, you won't recognise him or her anymore. It's a different person in the body of your brother, wife or best friend…

Also the *Planet of the Apes* was a political movie. *Taylor*: "How did this upside down society ever come into existence?" Dr *Zaius*: "You may well call it upside down, since you are at the very bottom of it!" Since then, the wheels of time have been turning. We now lay our sacrifices at the altars of all we can see, hear or taste. Once invisible values were the most important things in life. Truth, honour, compassion, generousity, valour, kindness. None of these things matter much anymore. You need to buy stuff you don't need, look and smell good (but for gods sake, not like a human being), because the façade is now all you are being judged by. You believe money, power or fame will make you happy. It is not going to. All it can do is to have you less bored for a while. The pursuit of wisdom, and the desire to constantly better ourselves has become obsolete. The world is full of bored wankers who don't give a shit about my opinion. I just had to say it anyway.

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

Here a list of the conventions which I would like to go to. If my personal economy did allow it, I'd be there. Alas, I already know, my finances do not allow it. And I can't be in two places at the same time either.

First to collide are the German and Finnish national conventions. If **you** have a choice, I'll give you a hint: The Finnish cons are bigger! Don't know if one can say the SFCD-Con is the same as the national German con anymore. Cologne and Dortmund are bigger events.

NOW:

ColoniaCon 2012, Cologne, May 26th – 27th
http://www.coloniacon.eu/

Fantasticon, Copenhagen, June 1st – 3rd
http://www.fantasticon.dk/

FinnCon 2012, Tampere, 20th – 22nd July
http://2012.finncon.org/en/

Urlaubs-Con (SFCD), Kiel - 20th – 22nd July
http://www.sfcd.eu/

ChiCon 7, 70th WorldCon, Aug 30th – Sep 3rd
http://www.chicon.org/

Every year, it has been on my wishlist. Haven't been there yet, but it is only a matter of time until…

FilkContinental 2012, Freusburg, September 28-30th
http://www.filkcontinental.de/2012/home/

Kontrast, SweCon, October 5th –7th
http://kontrast2012.se/

OctoCon 2012, Dublin, October 12-13th
http://www.octocon.com/

The HanseCons in Lübeck are very small, like precious stones. They are more of the fannish kind, than sercon, if you speak German I'd definitely recommend them:

HanseCon 28, Lübeck, October 26th – 29th
http://hansecon.sf-heinz.de/

It has been 10 years since I last visited the British Filk Convention. I really wish I could go to this one:

Quarter Tone, the 25th British Filk Convention
Grantham, Lincolnshire, February 1st – 3rd
http://www.contabile.org.uk/quartertone/

If I could pick only one convention from this list of upcoming conventions. Then this is the one I look forward to most of all. Of course I am biased. I always had the best time of my life in Dortmund.

DortCon 2013, Dortmund, March 9th – 10th
http://www.dortcon.de/

British Eastercon 2013:
EightSquaredCon, Bradford, 29th March – April 1st
http://www.eightsquaredcon.org/

Eurocon 2013 Kiev, Ukraine on 12-14th of April
http://www.eurocon.org.ua/

FinnCon 2013, Helsinki, 5th – 7th July
http://2013.finncon.org/en/

71st Annual WorldConvention, San Antonio, Texas
http://lonestarcon3.org/

Eurocon 2014, Dublin – ShamroKon

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"Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we." George W Bush jr, Washington, D.C., Aug. 5, 2004

SCIENCE FICTION IN MUSIC:

Since my first convention in 1977 I have always connected sf with electronic music, mainly the music of Tangerine Dream and Klaus Schulze. This may be, because Karl-Heinz Schmitz (Düsseldorf) was a fan who in the late 70's and early 80's always brought his music to the conventions in Germany. It created a certain atmosphere, which I still closely associate with science fiction. Then there was Ralph Lundsten, the swedish composer of electronic music, who became one of the first and then one of the long standing members of Sigma Terra Corps.

Isao Tomita leaned heavily on science fiction and even though Jean-Michel Jarre didn't, his music was heard a lot in the same connection. Klaus Schulze produced several albums which clearly marked his affiliation with the genre such as Cyborg (1973), Timewind (1975) and Dune (1979). Tangerine Dream went in the same tracks, even earlier, with works such as: Alpha Centauri (1971), Zeit (1972) and Mars Polaris (1999).

At BärCon'80 in Berlin, the convention was treated to a concert by Rolf Trostel, whose work is in parity with TD and Schulze.

As of the 80's, the Americans have their own composers of electronic music. Steve Roach being one, worthy of some attention. *"Composer and performer of ambient and tribal-ambient music, whose recordings also are classified in the genres of space, drone, New Age, and electronic music. Roach is recognized as one of the "leading innovators of contemporary electronic music."*

And then there is Jim Kirkwood, who is *not bad* at all.

Most members of Tangerine Dream have released solo works, before after and while they were TD-members.

Edgar Froese, Chris Franke, Peter Baumann and Johannes Schmoelling are some to look for, if you enjoy this kind of music.



Ralph Lundsten's – Universe(1978) is an audio-experience in sound and music from throughout the cosmos.

END OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE PROGRAM

42 years after the moon landing. *Atlantis*, the last Space Shuttle landed, as BBC reports on July 21st in 2011 after 30 years of space exploration and which together with 4 other shuttles has been flying a total of 135 missions. Test yourself: Can you name all six space shuttles which were built, without the help of Mr Google?

778 PLANETS KNOWN

New planets are being discovered every year. As of May 16th 2012 there are 770 planets known outside the solar system. And we have barely scratched the surface yet. There are still many more to be found. It reads like science fiction, but it isn't. It's science. Bertil Olsson, a swedish sf-fan who works for NASA, told us at a con, a couple of years ago, that our technology has come far enough to put up a telescope in space which will be able to discern continents on planets up to 500 lightyears away. This is one objective of Project Planetfinder. Most important of all, we will be able to see if there is water before we send a spacecraft to such a remote planet.

http://exoplanet.eu/catalog.php

FOOTNOTE

Usually I prefer to print out a copy and edit it on paper. This time, I have not been able to do that. Partly because I set a deadline which I intend to keep and also because the resident printer is getting old and is now unable to print more than one page after which it needs at least two hours rest before it can print another page.

So… I fear a lot of errors will not be discovered before it is too late.

Also, I may have written some utter drivel, which I normally would have deleted the entire paragraph, had I seen it on paper. Now, as it is, it will be way too late for that as well.

I just hope there is not too much crazyness here. We will see, when/or if any letters of comment arrive.

Lost my gmail-account when I was unable to provide them (Google) with my mobile number. I will not have my conversations monitored. I will not let anyone have my precise location at all time. That which I let to be known about me, is accessible through Facebook. It is quite a lot. There is no need for anyone to gather more data about me. My private thoughts are my own. My private deliberations are my own.

If anyone needs to contact me, he or she can use the regular telephone, send me a letter on paper or write me a message on Facebook. There is also an email-adress published on the FB info-page. Since this fanzine will be available on the internet, I do not need to publish that email adress here as well. You already know how to get in touch with me, if necessary. It can not be done instantly unless you are really lucky and I already sit at the computer when you message me on FB. And if I decide to reply immediately. And I do not chat.

- **I** am sitting back and staring at the pages. Who the frak is going to read any of this? Did you? Are you still reading? C'mon! You're kidding me! Why am I doing this to myself? It used to be more fun when it was done on paper. Which is strange, because it usually cost me a bundle in printing and postage. And I am confident most of my production has gone to recycled paper. So, sometimes I really feel that I am wasting my time with this. Like right now. What is all this drivel about? Suddenly I don't understand *any* of it. But I wrote it.

Wolf von Witting