CounterClock

Issue # 15 - August 2013

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FANDOM WORLD RECORDS p.14
JEAN-CLAUDE DUNYACH ON
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GARCHING-CON 9 - LoCol

"Its mission: To explore strange new fanac, to seek out new fandoms and new conventions, to boldly go where no trufan has gone before."



Waldemar Kumming enters the Order of St Fantony. Walter Ernsting (right) Thomas Schlück (in the middle) photo: Hans Sigmund

Tomas Cronholm, p.29: Swedish Fandom Today

BREAKING NEWS * BREAKING NEWS
ANDERS BELLIS DISCOVERS FANDOM IN GREECE
BREAKING NEWS * BREAKING NEWS

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Occasionally individual sf-fans who have been unaware of our sub-culture for decades find their way into fandom or are found by other sf-fans. It is, however, a rare thing indeed to find an entire, parallel sf-fandom which has been isolated from the rest of fandom ever since its beginnings.
Bellis reports from the very cradle of human imagination itself, the country which has fascinated the world with its mythological creatures, with their fantastic tales of gods and demigods, and last but not least, the sunken continent of Atlantis.



Artwork: Christian Holl

FANDOM IN GREECE

by Anders Bellis

Would a fannish mantra be called a fantra? In any case, it has, through the decades, been a fannish mantra that there is no fandom in Greece. Most of the people repeating this fantra have been me, since I am half Greek and live in Athens in Greece and have never seen even the slightest trace of any kind of fandom here, in spite of not looking very hard.

So, whenever asked, I've simply stated the obvious: there is no fandom in Greece, there never was one, and there will probably never be one.

By Ghod, was I wrong. (And I share at least some of the blame, but not much of it, with those repeating my fantra.)

On the 26th of July, 2013, I got the following message from my good friend Nikolétta "Nikko" Voútsa on Skype:

"I'm going to see my cousins tomorrow at noon for a cup of coffee on Solonos Street 101. They are members of the Greek association of science fiction literature, holding meetings each Saturday at a café that is situated there. Do you want to tag along?"

I stared at this message, replied that it sounded like fun and yes, of course I wanted to tag along! Then I immediately contacted my good friend Wolf von Witting, known to one and all in European fandom, and informed him of what had happened, asking if he could help me spread the news. There *is* a science fiction association in Greece! Ghoodness!

When I showed up Nikko had just arrived, but her cousin Stamátis - it turned out that one of them, not both, showed up this Saturday - was not there yet. Ten others were, however. Since Nikko didn't know them either, there were introductions all around and then the meeting, that had already been going on for about an hour, progressed in high spirits.

I talked at length with two members of the association, Aléxandros and Antónia. I will do this the easy way, now, by listing a few of the rather astonishing things I got to know:

* A. L. E. F., the Science Fiction Association of Athens, founded in 1998, has 120 members, 50 to 60 of them active. Informal meetings are held every Saturday in the café Enastron on Solonos Street 101 in central Athens, from noon and onwards. There is a bookshop in the café, stocking quite a lot of science fiction literature. More formal meetings, featuring short story readings, screenings of sci fi films, talks, and so forth, are held every second Sunday, but not in the café. One can check the web site for further information.
Link: http://www.alef.gr/

* A.L.E.F. publishes an impressive, quarterly magazine, Fantastika Chronika, containing factual

articles, short stories, fannish convention reports, news, and reviews. And more. See picture.

* The 6th science fiction convention in Syros, an island in the Greek archipelago, was a great success when held last year, with a programme of film screenings, talks, readings, a writer's workshop, and so forth. What struck me is that it also featured fannish programming, with a Greek slant - using Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics as their model, the members of the convention were asked, in view of the current crisis in Greece, to write Three Laws for Politicans, detailing the way they should be allowed to behave - if at all. I heard some of the entries and they had me in stitches!



The magazine ***Fantastika Chronika***

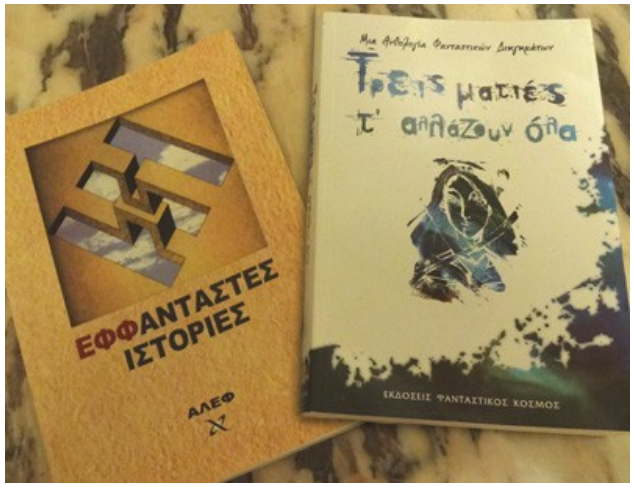
* This year also saw the 8th incarnation of the Greek Science Fiction and Fantasy Film Festival - SFF - in Athens, running from the 10th to the 17th of April. Just seeing a programme booklet from the event impresses me and of the shorts screened at this yearly festival, A.L.E.F. releases a selection on DVDs. (And I have to add that of last year's full-length feature films, the big draw was, not surprisingly, the restored version of Fritz Lang's Metropolis.)

Link:http://joobili.com/athens_sci_fi_and_fantasy_film_festival_athens_14660/

* And by the way, they do publish science fiction in Greece. See picture for two recently published science fiction anthologies, all the contributors being Greek authors (and some of them active fans - among them Stamátis, mentioned above).

* Greek fandom is on Facebook. Get in touch with them - remember, most Greeks speak English:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/aleflist/?fref=ts



Science fiction-anthologies in Greek

(Should the link not work, just use Facebook's search engine. Punch in: ALEF list. Then click on the result with Greek letters in it.)

There is a lively, very active sf/fantasy/horror-fandom in Greece. Being half Greek and living in Athens, I find this to be good news indeed.

I hope you do, too.

- - Anders Bellis

DISCOVERING EUROFANDOM

The EUROSMOF group on FACEBOOK has taken on a life of its own. It is now one of the best sources to get *inside information* about events throughout European fandom.

EUROSMOF was initiated by the Brit fan Fiona Anderson in the late 90's, reconstructed on FB by me, but now I feel it is out of our hands, as it should be. Fans from all over Europe now help spreading news.

Enthused by the EUROCON 2012 in Zagreb and discovering the pleasant winds of progress for sf-fandom in Croatia, I've went on to find and contact Slovenian fans and Spanish fans. I knew of them, they just needed to be located. A fandom in Greece, however, came as a complete surprise. Albeit a nice one.

The main disadvantage we have in Europe are all the different languages. For small countries, it is not a problem, they all know English as their second language. It is more difficult to motivate fans from Spain, France, Germany and Italy to go outside the realm of their language. But by now, the combined forces of fandom outside their realm is bigger than one of them.

And I advise all to come together and post their news on the European SF Portal:
http://scifiportal.eu/

INRODUCTION

As I ought to have concluded at the end of # 14; German fandom, Gerfany is a bit like ALIEN 3, resolving their commotion, but not in a way we could have hoped for or expected. To understand what went *wrong,* It may help to read *The Enchanted Duplicator* by Walt Willis and Bob Shaw. The more thorough thinkers among us may enjoy the article *Toward an Updated Insurgentism* and the following *Fan Philosophies In Brief by* Arnie Katz's in *Fanstuff # 35*.

He postulates that seven fan philosophies shape the attitudes of individual fans and their entire subculture. These are serconism, scientism, (tru-)fannishness, professionalism, commercialism, communicationism and insurgentism.

Gerfans, by nature, keep stumbling into three traps, as illustrated in chapters 8, 10 and 14 of the *Enchanted Duplicator*. The first is the strive and ambition to achieve perfection, which in itself is not a harmful idea. But when failing to achieve it, one does not need to give up the entire thing. The in Gerfany predominant attitude *"Alles oder nichts" (everything or nothing),* brings many fans to give up before they even get properly started.
Secondly, the bureaucratic spirit celebrates its greatest triumph in German clubs. SFCD being no exception. And thirdly, the sycophant has become the prevalent form of sf-fan in Gerfany.

In spite of Walter Ernsting and in spite of the fannish re-injection of the 80's, Gerfany has walked down a path, which appears to have been inevitable.



"Jophan meets Perfexion" from the German translation of the Enchanted Duplicator, illustrated by Wolf von Witting (INKHEAD).



"Profan" Der Verzauberte Umdrucker, ANDROMEDA # 111.

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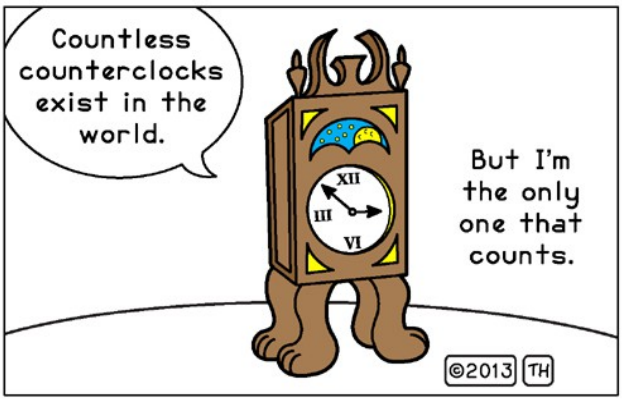
As previously mentioned in CoClock # 4, my first encounter with any author was Peter Griese, 1977. Fortunately, I dare say, because his attitude was one of a perfectly normal person. Many of the Perry Rhodan-authors were fans in their hearts (and some still are). They were sf-fans of a time when it wasn't okay to like science fiction. When sf-fans were treated like idiots by those who thought of themselves to have a more down-to-Earth view on matters. Strangely enough, the race to the moon didn't change this, but Star Wars - a fairy tale set in space did. Perhaps because it generated so much money. And too many things in this world have been revolving around money. Fandom, at least *true fandom,* was never about money. But while serconism, professionalism, commercialism and scientism and even communicationism flourished in Gerfany, fannishness didn't.

MUNICH ROUND UP was perhaps the closest German fandom came to fannishness by itself. But strangely enough, fannishness never managed to grab much of a foothold in the country. Perhaps because Gerfany never had any strong fannish characters. As soon as fans had any success, they went and became filthy ol' pro's, like Ernsting himself. Voltz, Schlück, Alpers and Rottensteiner, they all went pro ASAP.

Insurgentism was unheard of. Perhaps the Capai unknowingly fulfilled some of this role. For a time. If we'd have had more fannish pride, we might have realized that fandom has intrinsic worth and isn't merely a footstool for professional sf (*thanks for that one, Arnie!)*.

LIFE split us. Coming of age, having to go through all that mating, procreating and family raising stuff. Job career, job- and family turmoil...
So I lost touch with some of my best friends. It was sort of... natural. We would not want to be bachelors for ever. Spending our days in pubs, playing pinball

and thinking about what silly things to write about in our next fanzines. Some inspiration came from Swedish fandom and from burlesque and mischief by students at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm in the early 80's.



Cartoon by Teddy Harvia.

In some way I saw myself as an heir to Sture Sedolin, the Swedish sf-fan who represented most of the contact between Swedish and German fandom in the 60's. I entered the scene when Sture Sedolin was just about leaving. The major part of his fanzine-collection was available for free grab in a box at ScanCon'76 in Stockholm, just about the time when I started to communicate with other Perry Rhodan-fans down in Germany. Sigma Terra Corps was founded the same month in which Alvar Appeltofft died (which reminds me I ought to *flip casually through the pages of Swedish Fandom history* as well. Some day). I met Sture Sedolin (or Carl Hällström, as his real name was) once, at MiniCon IV on Pontonjärgatan in 1979. That was perhaps the last time he appeared in any fandom context.

Alvar Appeltofft (1942-1976), son of Ellen and Hugo Appeltofft, was the fan who caused the Swedish Alvar-award to come into existence. This is the most prestigious sf-award to receive in Sweden. It is bestowed upon the recipient through votes by all active sf-fans for achievements within fandom. Initially Lundwall intended to inaugurate an award for achievements within Swedish sf. Through a poll in his fanzine SF-Nytt, the name "Alvar" was chosen. The name was picked up by the Swedish Academy for SF and used as a nickname for the awards handed out by them between 1963 and 1976. When the Swedish SF Academy silently *fell asleep*, the Award was in its stead handed out annually by the Alvar Appeltofft Memorial Fund.

Perhaps this is the main reason why Swedish fandom is a lot more fannish than German fandom. Germany has the Kurd Laßwitz-Award, Deutscher Phantastik-Preis (DPP), the Deutscher SF-Preis (DSFP) and the Deutscher Fantasy Preis (DFP). And as if this wasn't enough sucking up to prodom, they also have the Curt Siodmak-Preis for best film and TV-serial, which in my humble opinion is a totally pointless award. A simple poll would suffice. Hollywood couldn't care any less what the Germans like. There you have a big problem of German fandom. It simply sucks to be a German fan, since you never ever are likely to get any recognition what so ever...

The man who stands at a strange threshold,
Should be cautious before he cross it,
Glance this way and that:
Who knows beforehand what foes may sit
Awaiting him in the hall?
[Hávamál, verse 1]



The GarchingCon (near Munich, Bavaria) was, as I had been informed, a Perry Rhodan-convention. Not any less interesting as such, because I had never been to any Perry Rhodan-con before. But some of the people who work on the series, have been my friends from *way back* in fandom.

On my way to Garching, by train, I thought about the circumstance, that I once again had to do such a journey alone. It is definitely more fun going to conventions with someone. But I have never had any difficulties finding company and this would be no exception. I was sure. And while alone I pondered upon whether or not I really was alone. The moment I write about the event, you have the possibility to be with me at the scene, as silent observers if nothing else. I carried a small black back-pack and a bundle with my sleeping bag in it. I am used to zero comfort when at sf-conventions. I have been sleeping on countless floors since the gym hall in Kleve 1977 and the floor of Dieter Steinseifer 1978. When fans such as Johan Richter (Berlin 1980) had a sofa to offer, then it clearly had to count as luxury. Not forgetting LatCon III in Riga 2002, when Imants Belogrïvs even had a real bed to offer. But many times, floor space did suffice. Intense years, there were 3-4 conventions to visit. As a student, I could not really afford it, but I had to go anyway. Now I still can't afford it, for other reasons. But nowadays I only go when I have sufficient resources.

Vikings didn't have any organized religion, no temple in honour of Odin or Thor, no priests. How can men presume to know what gods have on their minds? Yet, the verses of Hávamál are attributed to Odin.

Fire is needed by the newcomer
Whose knees are frozen numb;
Meat and clean linen a man needs
Who has fared across the fells,

Water, too, that he may wash before eating,
Handcloth's and a hearty welcome,
Courteous words, then courteous silence.
That he may tell his tale,
[Hávamál, verse 3-4]

Prelude

I had found the site, but came several hours early. The first fan I ran into at Garching was Michael Wangenheim. He is, what I would estimate to be a *typical* Perry Rhodan-fan. Perhaps he was younger than most, because he was only *forty-ish*. We had plenty of time to get to know each other. Of course I was curious about many things. How long had he been reading the Rhodan-series, had he been to conventions before, and so on... The most confusing question he had to me was if I *was going to sign up with any of the stars*. Sign up? Stars?

Well, the stars, so it turned out, were the PR-authors and if anyone wanted to talk to them, one had to sign up on their kaffeeklatsch-list. No, I did not exactly have in mind to sign up. I felt more like an observer here. And I wasn't sure yet if I was observing any cultist tendencies here, or not.

To make a long story short. A PR-convention appears to be some kind of a hybrid between a regular sf-convention and a media-convention. The horrors of commercialism are present, the tendency of cultism is obvious, but the stars of the cult are still pretty cool customers who haven't lost touch with reality yet. And I'm not sure it's their fault this event had a media-flair over it.

The organization was running smoothly, but fortunately the SFCD had a table at this con or else I would have been obliged to carry my backpack and sleeping-bundle with me throughout the event.

GarchingCon 9, May 17-19th 2013

I have to admit, in the end I only attended one program item. It was in fact a rather entertaining one. The rest of the convention I spent hovering over a bheer or a soda, talking to the *stars*. It's not that I intended to talk to stars (GoH's) only, but they were the only ones I knew from before and the only ones I could relate to. With a few exceptions. There was a dutch pair of fans who had come to this event, trying to endure the nights in a tent. One of them was a fan I recognized from Trinity 1999, Dirk Bontes.

Dirk has this aura of *mad scientist* around him and his theories are indeed extraordinary. He is a personality prototype, as Adams gently would have put it. But I have to admit, that it is people like Dirk who *can* come up with new and original thoughts.

Who travels widely needs his wits about him,
The stupid should stay at home:
The ignorant man is often laughed at
When he sits at meat with the sage,
[Hávamál, verse 5]



Dirk Bontes conducting an interview with Helmfried Protsch (right) and Lillie de Winter (left).

Roger Murmann comes across as the silent type, when you meet him in person. Having exchanged a number of messages on FB with him, regarding German fandom today, I expected him to be more talkative. He knows what fandom used to be and he knows what German fandom is today. He has made the transition with it and he appears to accept things as they are. At this he is far more apt than I am.
It was also a pleasure to meet Simone Edelberg, who found a safe way of hiding how grey ones hair turns, while running a convention. She shaved it all off. In October (25-27th) she is responsible for the next SFCD-Convention, MucCon 2013, which is set to use the same location as this PR-Con.



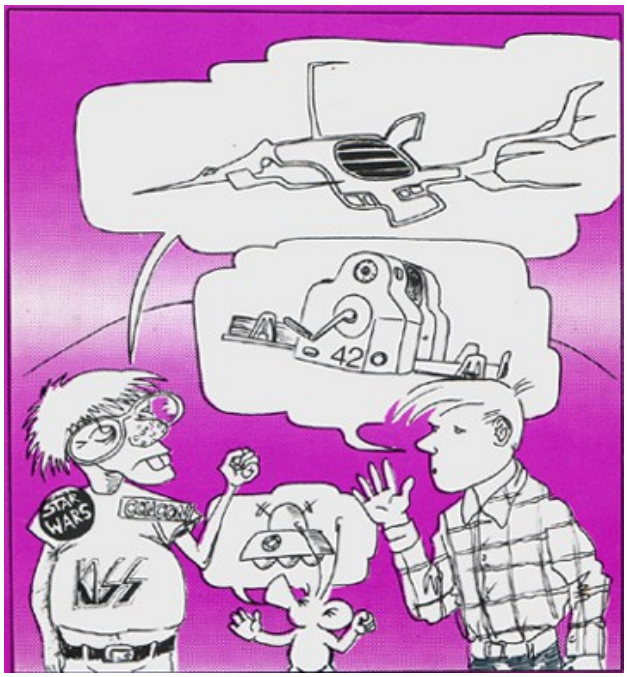
Roger Murmann (standing) and Simone Edelberg at the SFCD-table at GarchingCon 9.

Later on we were also joined by Birgit Fischer, the previous SFCD-chair. She is older, yes, but hasn't changed at all (as a friend). We reminisced old memories from ColoniaCon 1989, when we went mini-golfing with her cuddly marsupilami (that was before two-headed bears became popular). For a moment, it felt like fandom still was the same, even in Germany. But of course, I knew it wasn't.

Of his knowledge a man should never boast,
Rather be sparing of speech
When to his house a wiser comes:
Seldom do those who are silent Make mistakes;
mother wit Is ever a faithful friend,
[Hávamál, verse 6]

I brought along a couple of old fanzines. A facsimile of the Rael Foxboro-magazine from 1979. It was a Perry Rhodan-parody I had made in which the hero, Rael Foxboro encounters small, cute green beings from the city of Ipan on Mars. Hence they are called Mars-Ipans. Yes, it is the ones all over the CoClock-header of my FB-page. The parody was only in the layout very similar to PR, not in content. I brought them, just in case I would run into Olaf Brill, who apparently remembered the first issue of this fanzine. He never saw Nr.2 and only Joachim Henke and I knew how for we got on Nr.3 It was never finished, so instead I had compiled Mars-Ipan toons in it, the first filksong we wrote together, Jo and I. It was *Vurguzz in the Jar*. Some outstanding covers to our clubmagazine. Among others, the one made by Horst Hoffmann (for # 8) and *other goodies*.

Brill was absolutely delighted. He held the small bundle of old fanzines like a great treasure in his hands. Somehow over the years, his issue # 1 of the Rael Foxboro-fanzine had been lost. Now he got it again. There can be no greater reward than to see this kind of genuine happiness for something so small. We were all a lot younger then. Often when I look back, I look at myself with contempt for my past pride and foolishness. All too often I forget, that we did good sometimes and had fun all of the time.



Trufan, a Mars-Ipan and Jophan argue about the value and wonders of modern technology. [from the cover of Andro # 111]

Another great joy was to meet Hermann Ritter again. We did meet before, but my arrogance and stupidity in those days, allowed him to go *under my radar*. I used to be full of self-importance in the mid-eighties. Which was a shame, of course. Over the years, I couldn't help but taking notice of him.

One reason was the job he did with Klaus N Frick on ANDROMEDA # 136-137 about Christian Worch. Another was that my friend Joachim Henke kept mentioning Hermann Ritter as a great guy to know. Now that we met again, I noticed first of all that he has many similarities with Klaus Frick and it is obvious they have spent a lot of time together. As friends do, they rub off on each other. Klaus and Hermann are so much alike, that I can't say who is the origin of their common idiosyncrasies. Both have the same quirks, but who did what before the other? I really can't say. I wonder if *they* can!

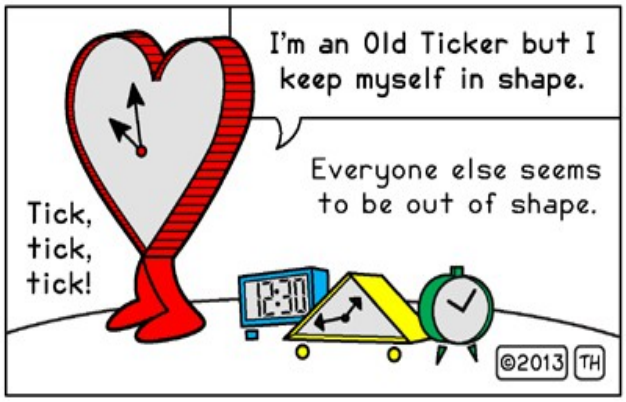
When I *recently* had contact with Hermann Ritter, it was sad news. Joachim Henke died in 2010 at age 48. It was a blow to all of us. And I have to admit, before GarchingCon I had not yet completely gotten over it, even though three years had passed.
I thought we had all the time in the world. And so suddenly, we didn't. We had lost touch for a while, as life had drifted us apart. But we were going to see each other again, and it would be just like old times.
I was sure of it.
But... suddenly the time had run out.



Hermann Ritter and his wife Claudia at GarchingCon 9

- -

A guest should be courteous
When he comes to the table
And sit in wary silence,
His ears attentive, his eyes alert:
So he protects himself,
[Hávamál, verse 7]



Toon by Teddy Harvia.

Like I said. Life drifted us apart. The family, work and procreation demands. Meanwhile, Joachim Henke discovered his personal preference and was not obliged to live the same kind of life as I did. It didn't matter to me. We had always had a good time together. He knew and respected my preferences and I had no reason not to respect his. But I never actually got around telling him this. I didn't know, if he was wondering what my attitude would be.

Hermann Ritter set aside all doubt. Jo knew, he said. Mundane life had come between, nothing else. And he was sure when/if we met again, all would be just like old times. This was a huge relief to hear, because not having had the time to tell him, was a weight on my soul. Jo got there first. He is now in 200th fandom with all the other BNF's.



Toon by Teddy Harvia

Blessed is he who in his own lifetime
Is awarded praise and wit,
For ill counsel is often given
By mortal men to each other,
[Hávamál, verse 9]

Gerold "Gerry" Haynaly (from Graz, Austria) is one of those sf-fans who remembers my early years in German speaking fandom. We have known each other for... what? 30-35 years... But we never met until this GarchingCon. And now he too, is a Perry Rhodan author.

Speaking of Perry Rhodan-authors. The sun was shining and PR-author Frank Borsch felt his Kaffee-klatsch was better held outdoors. Suddenly he and his stellar-eyed fans came outside to sit right next to where I was having a conversation with... was it Dirk or Hermann? I can't remember, because I suddenly was given the opportunity to listen in on one of those chats one actually needed to sign up for. Not having signed up, I felt it out of place to comment. Most PR-fans have already come of considerable age. There were no Rhodan-fans of the younger generation, so here were all men with a life largely behind them. Many of them older than the author himself. Frank was born 1966, so he is approaching 50. It was interesting to see how he should sit like a guru in the midst of his fans and radiate wisdom. I'd say he did a fair job of it, though I am not sure he was entirely comfortable with the role. The questions were of various dignity and I can see how completely and utterly frustrating it would be, if the fans had any less brain than a PR-reader. Don't get me wrong, I am not saying PR-readers are stupid, on the contrary. For easy entertainment, reading still beats the weekly TV-show as an intellectual challenge. Even if it is Perry Rhodan. And of course, not every viewer of a TV-show is a dimwit either.

But as media-cult-fan-guru-wisdom goes, the pedestrian Rhodan-fan is on par with the bright among Trekkers. This is not a bad verdict at all. It's just that, anyone vaguely of sane mind, would not want to be responsible for what people understand. Only for what we say. And Frank Borsch seemed to me like a perfectly sane and intelligent man.

He also likes to keep a healthy body around his healthy mind, so he tried to convince the fans to do some bodily exercise. But it appears, the fans much prefer to stick to their reading. I was not surprised.

Being aware of the vast size of the cosmos, where can you possibly run to, which gets you a significant distance away from the despondency of this island Earth? PR sweeps you to the edge of the universe.

Better gear than good sense
A traveler cannot carry,
A more tedious burden than too much drink
A traveler cannot carry,
[Hávamál, verse 11]

I remained in the pub with a round of new-found friends. Claudia & Hermann Ritter, Olaf Brill, Eckhard Schwettmann and others. Also ran into Hermann Urbanek, author of the series of articles Fanzines in Deutschland (1981). I gave him a copy of CounterClock # 14 and so thanked him for his contribution. Urbanek is another of those fans who have endured German fandom for ever. At two o'clock in the night, they closed the pub.

Quarters

It's not that I don't *have* the money. I just do not like to spend it. Two nights at 70 Euros each, was the cheapest lodging I could find in this place. For someone who can spend this amount (140 €) for eating an entire month, it is a lot. And I just don't feel like spending it for sleeping two nights. I wasn't worried, even though the night was drizzling with rain. After a short walk I came to a street named Heisenbergstraße and paused. Heisenberg!!! It just had to be some kind of an omen. I had to follow this street and find out where it ended. I came to a park on what appeared to be at the outskirt of Garching. On the far side of the park, a ridge limited the view beyond the park. Somewhere beyond the ridge was a mildly trafficked road. The rear end of the park was fenced off for some kind of industrial complex, which appeared to be closed for the weekend and a half of the park was formed like a crater. In the middle of this crater was a wooden playhouse for children. Its opening was facing away from the street.

It was absolutely dry inside. This was better than a tent. The morning felt rough, but I had slept well. As I headed back for the Heisenbergstraße I noted that only the roof of the playhouse was visible from the street. Now I was going to find out where the other end of the street would take me. It led me with a short-cut back to the convention site! I washed and had a good breakfast.

At which point I encountered Uwe Anton, who was staying at the hotel, where I chose to have breakfast. Anton was another Perry Rhodan-author, as well as one of its outline-authors and somewhere in the back of my head I had sorted him among the *sharp minds* of German sf-fandom, meaning that I associated him with Alpers and Pukallus. Of course he knew them and remembered them well. But we were perhaps both left wondering what the left wing movement of German fandom had come to.

It would indeed be interesting to interview one of them. Actually... come to think of it. Horst Pukallus would be my first choice for this. The fact that Uwe Anton now was working with Rhodan, proves that he never was particularly extreme.

BTW, Uwe Anton was one of three (together with Hans-Ulrich Böttcher and Werner Fuchs) who initiated the new Kurd Laßwitz award in 1980. Since 1991 this award is administrated by Udo Klotz, which happened to be the next fan I ran into.



Udo Klotz, administrator of the Kurd Laßwitz award.

With Udo I talked about the value of having awards also for idealistic work. Something which German fandom is utterly short of. It's not about money. Fans are not into their hobby because of the money. It's the recognition and that moment on stage, when receiving the diploma (which in essence is just a nice piece of paper). It has great value of egoboo to the recipient. It's treasure money can't buy. Well, Udo agreed on this and would give it some thought.

The coward believes he will live forever
If he holds back in the battle,
But in old age he shall have no peace
Though spears have spared his limbs
[Hávamál, verse 16]

Next to the SFCD-table, was another table. It was a table for small German publishing. Most of the time it was covered by one of the publishers, Helmfried Protsch and/or Andrea Stevens.

What Helmfried told me, confirmed that I probably didn't mishear there being > 65,000 titles published in the UK every year. He told me there were about 100,000 titles published in Germany every year. The mind boggles! I've noticed already, there being many writers in the world, nobody has ever heard of.



Helmfried Protsch, Andrea Stevens and Arndt Drechsler.

How does one get noticed in this ocean of books? So you're a published writer. Yeah! How many have read your book? When you get over 250 readers, you are slowly approaching the number of CoClock readers (*when I peaked 1999, still have to get back to that point*). How to get noticed? Many ask themselves this question. Many believe *their* idea is unique. And it doesn't even matter if the writer is good or not.

Word-of-mouth only carries one so far. Sex and depravity sells, but perhaps you don't wish to be about these kind of things. I recall a piece of advice given to me by Sam J Lundwall in 1999. "When you get a shot, you have to be good, or else you're forgotten just as fast." By *getting a shot*, he meant of course a big publisher.

One promising emerging author I talked with, was Miriam Pharo. A French-German writer with a highly visual style. I believe the visual style has the advantage of sooner than others, be turned into film. Among all those emerging talents, I feel she has potential. Not only may the French connection sprout interest in the neighbouring country, but at the moment female writing is celebrating one victory after the other.

Next I had to investigate the claim by Greg Benford, that he himself had heard Walter Ernsting mentioning his presence at Stalingrad. I talked with the author of the Walter Ernsting / Clark Darlton biography Heiko Langhans. Nope, Heiko had not heard about this either. But someone recalled a scene from a Perry Rhodan-novel by Walter (in the # 300-350 range) in which a spacecraft is thrown back in time and passes over the battlefield at Stalingrad.

Undoubtedly, Walter Ernsting has had his thoughts about this historical bloodbath.



Me, Heiko Langhans and Olaf Brill at GarchingCon 9

It is not a favourite topic, but I feel Germans today are no longer restrained from talking about WWII. The war ended 68 years ago and very few people alive recall the actual war. But most of the Germans living today *ARE* still affected by it, in some way.

He who has seen and suffered much,
And knows the ways of the world,
Who has traveled', can tell what spirit
Governs the men he meets,
[Hávamál, verse 18]

It was spooky, how much Robert Ernsting resembles his father. We ran into each other more or less by chance. I didn't know he was there until Birgit Fischer told me. I had no idea how to approach the issue, but life *as always* solved it by itself. Suddenly I noticed we sat more or less back to back outside. All I needed to do, was to turn and greet him, "Hello Robert!" And from there on, words came more or less by themselves.

The first issue was *resolved* swiftly and clinically. Neither Robert nor Sonja (his sister) had ever heard WE mention having been at Stalingrad and as far as they knew, he has not. But Sonja is reading Walters diaries and she has not yet come to the time of Stalingrad. If it is mentioned in his diaries, we will find out.



Sonja and Robert Ernsting at GarchingCon 9

Next we talked about other things. But one question in the back of my mind, I refrained from asking; *"What is it like, being the son of a legend?"* I didn't ask, because it felt like a silly question. Robert knows his father was loved by many. What I don't know, if he feels he need to live up to expectations. This is a very hard thing to do, because we all want to live our lives our own way, unimpeded by the opinion of others. Of course his interests have been tainted by his father. He keeps his mind open to phenomena which are not part of contemporary scientific consensus. This includes UFO sightings, crop circles and Bosnian pyramids. We can agree on science of today being far too materialistic, and that there are still several unexplored frontiers.

I do not subscribe to scientific consensus, since I regard consensus as a limitation. Theories, like the *Big Bang* are so rooted in *scientific* minds, that the thought it might be otherwise will come as a

complete surprise one day. Every time something doesn't conform with BB, an explanation is made up for why it doesn't. Instead of keeping an open mind and admit; *"We really don't know!"*

Scientific consensus is a slap in the face to everyone who is seriously trying to think about how and what the universe is. I have to agree with Dylan Moran, who finds the BB a boring theory anyway...
"Bang! - ...monkey sounds... - Honey, I'm home!"
Yes, indeed, it would have been much more fun in the reverse order.



Female fan, Uwe Anton and Eckhard Schwettmann

GarchingCon 9 was well organized. It attracted more or less 500 Perry Rhodan-fans from as far away as France. A French contingent had set up their table at the far end of the main corridor. Their display of PR-related stuff was fascinating, including toys, books, games, posters and magazines. They were from the PR Fanclub Basis (founded 2000) which is based right smack in the middle of France (if you draw a line between Lyon and Le Mans and another from Paris straight south, where the lines meet, is pretty close to their base.



Président : Claude Lamy, Web: http://www.stellarque.com
Adresse : 16 rue de l'Hirondelle, 18 130 Dun-sur-Auron
E-mail : association.basis@wanadoo.fr

Perry Rhodan is evidently BIG in France and in the Netherlands.

A dealer at the other end of the corridor attracted my attention for his remarkably assorted offers of science fiction on dvd. What frequently pisses me off when I see such splendid wealth of possibilities is... that I already have them all and can't find anything to buy, no matter how well they are stocked. The better they are stocked, the more of a nuisance it is. Well, at least I found a flight-control-Tardis in scale with my collection of the eleven Doctors action figures. Isn't it just like me, a 53 year grown up man, to buy and come home with **a toy**! Turns out eventually the dealer was one of my FB-friends, Robert Vogel. We didn't even recognize each other! Apparently we both went under each others radar.


Robert Vogel is well stocked on dvd.

The convention was a pleasant experience, but mainly because the *old dogs of fandom* have remained the same and there were plenty of them at this event. But now they're all experts of one kind or another. The people mentioned in this report, are the ones I enjoyed talking to. Well... yes, I also enjoyed talking to Michael Wittmann, Swen Papenbrock and Arndt Drechsler, who provide cover-art and in-magazine illustrations *(Wittman)* for the PR-series.
And finally a word of praise to young Jürgen Müller and his con-organizing team. I know what it means to work ones butt off for an event like this. I've done it for twenty years. And we hardly ever succeeded to do it any better. Well done there!

I haven't yet had time to write to my 3-6 new found friends at this convention. I will. Patience.
Perhaps you understand I needed to finish this report and issue of CoClock first.

The herd knows its homing time,
And leaves the grazing ground:
But the glutton never knows how much
His belly is able to hold,
[Hávamál, verse 21]



Cool costumes at the GarchingCon masquerade.

An ill tempered, unhappy man
Ridicules all he hears,
Makes fun of others, refusing always
To see the faults in himself
[Hávamál, verse 22]

Stockholm-fandom Pubmeeting, June 18th, 2013
Monk's Café in central Stockholm usually hosts a dozen or so, sf-fans at the monthly pub-meeting. This one was unusually well attended.

Among the attending sf-fans I noticed Sverre Schriewer, who has been along since the 70's and who once upon a time was one of Sweden's early filkers. Gunnar Gällmo, who is a veteran among the translators in this *small* country. Most of the science fiction I read in Swedish language was translated by him. Ylva Spångberg, another sf-fan from the 2nd half of the 70's and highly respected translator.

Tomas Cronholm, a fan who has been part of Swedish fandom since the 50's and has become more and more active with passing years. He is also author of the excellent report on the Eurocon 2013 in Kiev *(which can be found on the pages of the European SF Portal)*: http://scifiportal.eu/eurocon-2013-a-report-by-tomas-cronholm-sweden/

Among the international fans attending I noted a UK fan, Chris Barker and of course the Swedish-Greek fan Anders Bellis (*aka the Sheriff*). By now I have also started to notice Mårten Svantesson, who belongs to the *new generation* of Swedish sf-fans. From the *old generation* I came to have a lengthy discussion with Anders Holmström, who was nominated for TAFF in 2004. He felt *let down* by his fellow Swedish fans and believed he would have won if the top 5 Swedish fans would have voted for him. Upon investigating this claim, I found that he lost with 82 votes against James Bacon's 112. Not 5 votes, but rather some 30 votes. It may well be that he was let down by Swedish fandom. It may also be that he got as many European votes (59) as he did **because** of Swedish voters. Sorry Mr Holmström, my vote (had I known it before the race closed) would not have affected the outcome at all.



Toon by Teddy Harvia

CREDIT CARD FRAUD - ANNO 2012

I am currently totally indisposed when it comes to voting in any race. This is so because someone hijacked my credit card numbers and went shopping in the UK for electronics. On a Sunday in the fall of 2012 he or she spent about 1,000 GBP of my money. I discovered it Monday morning before any amount was even withdrawn. The Swedish police never even bothered investigating the case. The bank couldn't or wouldn't stop the withdrawal of my money, since any such transaction would be covered by an insurance anyway. All I could do for one week, was to sit and wait, watch my account and see if or when my money went to this unknown person's purchases. Two of six transactions were eventually executed. I wrote to one of the companies who withdrew my money and asked them to send me the information they had on ME.

The company refused politely, because it would of course lead me to the potential criminal if they gave me any delivery address they had. In this they protect the criminal.
A - A stupid or greedy person would hijack your

credit card numbers and have the goods sent to himself.
B - An evil person would send the goods to someone he or she doesn't like.
C - A *funny* person would go shopping with your money and have the goods sent to YOU.
Don't immediately assume anything.

I still have my credit card at home. It has not been used in any shop. I have only been shopping over the internet with it. There is only one database in the UK which had my credit card details. There has been no malware on my computer.

Well, at the moment I don't feel like spending 40+ Euros to get a new credit card unless I can be guaranteed this incident cannot be repeated.
So, no credit card it is. Cash only.

Was a little bit fun on my flight to Stockholm with RyanAir. It was a Cash Free Flight. Whatever this should be good for. It must be at least a tiny bit embarrassing for the crew when they come through with their goods for sale and you can't buy anything, because you only have cash. It's *they* who want to sell, isn't it?
On a brighter note, this particular flight was 90 minutes late, so I didn't have to listen to their silly jingle about planes arriving on time.

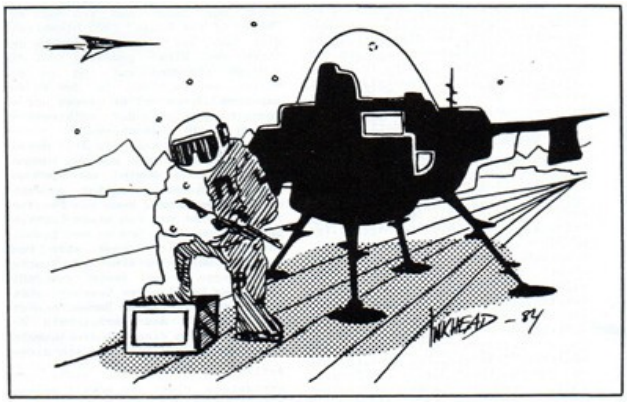


Illustration: Wolf von Witting 1984

PARALLELL UNIVERSEs

As in FRINGE or SLIDERS. Why it can't be. I find it a very naïve idea that suddenly an entire universe would spring into existence simply because I choose to stay in bed instead of walking down to the pharmacy on the corner.
Consider the vast expanse of the known universe. Now imagine all of this being duplicated, simply because some nincompoop on an insignificant little planet, orbiting an insignificant little star in a small, small galaxy of a small, small galaxy cluster, decides to walk left instead of right. You find this likely? Not that I am entirely opposed to the idea of parallell universes, I just don't believe they can be near copies of the one we live in.
I like however the idea how the parallell universes exist in AD&D. Parallell universes are (probably a limited number) and all of them refer to their own universe as the prime material plane. If gravity is a pan-dimensional force, it would explain why several planets occupy the same space, but in different material planes.
Everything we can see and what we think of as being solid is actually mostly empty space. In scale, there is more empty space in an atom, than what there is in the Solar System. We do not actually touch objects, but the cohesion (force fields) between our atoms and molecules touch each other.
If this cohesion force is tied to a certain frequency of existence, we could pass straight through objects which exist on another frequency. We wouldn't even see them.
Particles come and go out of existence randomly, or at least so it appears. In every solid object we see.
Where do they go? Nobody knows.
But what if there *has to be* a fifth dimension, in which a certain cumber of parallell material planes are needed to provide cohesion for each other? This idea seems less farfetched than an anthropocentric and rather silly view at universe creation.

Language and math make things possible, which are not possible in the real universe. There is no evidence that time should go backwards inside a black hole, simply because the math of it says so.
The math must be wrong. If time indeed would go backwards within a black hole, then why doesn't a black hole immediately revert back to the moment before it became a black hole?

Time in the universe outside the black hole keeps moving *forward*. Not because it is a law, but because time is a word we invented, to define something which we perceive, but which we have a narrow perception of. But even if a physical event appears to be running backwards, such as water flowing back into the tap, then the time itself with which we perceive this backwards motion picture, is running forward. Time can not rewind.

Let's for a moment assume, that an infinite number of parallell universes do exist after all. And that they all differ from this one by small random fluctuations.
These fluctuations have been going on for at least 15 billion years give or take a few hundred thousand years of human existence. The percentage of variations in which human society, similar as it is today would be infinitesimal. The probability of encountering such a universe, if any at all, would also be infinitesimal.
So, the idea that there might be another you, or another me somewhere... It's sheer nonsense. Quite frankly, none of us is significant enough for that.

The fool who fancies he is full of wisdom
While he sits by his hearth at home.
Quickly finds when questioned by others .
That he knows nothing at all.
[Hávamál, verse 26]

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KUBB - a viking game



Pluto Prophets vs Team Sigma TC, kubb. Summer of 2006

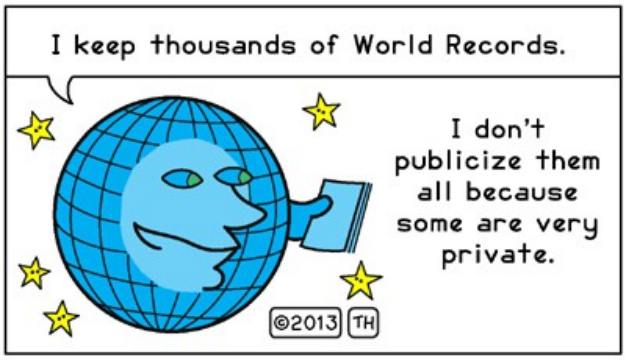
Kubb is spreading like a wildfire. It is a simple lawn game with wooden pieces. You need 6 round batons to throw, 30 cm long and roughly 44 mm thick. Ten logs 15 by 7x7 cm and a king 30 by 9x9 cm.
The lawn should be 5 by 8 meters and the king is placed in the middle. It is works best with 4-6 players (total) and the age and gender of the players don't really matters. No one has any advantage. You can have up to 6 members on one team.
Each team lines up five kubb (15x7x7) on their baseline. With the batons, using underhand throws only, you try to bring down the kubb of the other team. All kubb which has been thrown over are thrown beyond the king by the other team.
If any of these kubb still stand after the other team has made their throws, your team can advance to the line where the kubb closest to the king is.
When all the *enemy* kubb are down, you go for the king last. When you hit the king and he tilts over, your team has won. Got it? If not, see wikipedia for rules in English, Deutsch, Italiano and 10 other languages. Note that helicopter-throws are not allowed (the baton spinning horizontally) and that all throws need to be under-handed (as in softball).

Sweden has won 17 of 18 Kubb-World-Championships. It is time to break their smug and annoying superiority! Italy has had national Kubb championship since 2006, Germany since 2002 and they have scored a silver and two bronze in the Worldcup.

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To ask well, to answer rightly,
Are the marks of a wise man:
Men must speak of men's deeds,
What happens may not be hidden.
[Hávamál, verse 28]

SF-Fandom World Records



Toon by Teddy Harvia

Ever since I first held Warhoon # 28 in my hands, I had this notion of compiling the fannish World Records. This column is only the beginning.
I would like you to submit your knowledge and ideas about fannish world records to me:
wolfram1764-at-yahoo-dot-se

Conventions:
Big: The 42nd Worldcon 1984, L.A.con II, Anaheim, California with its 8.365 members constitues so far the official record. It has been estimated FinnCon 2006 Helsinki may have had 9.000 attendees, but even though FinnCons generally are of super-size, they don't count quite the same as entrance is for free at these conventions and the number of sf-fans is an estimate (unconfirmed).
The Smallest WorldCon: would be the 3rd, in 1941, Denvention I, Denver, Colorado with 90 sf-fans coming to see the GoH: Robert A Heinlein.
Many: 70 WorldCons is also the most editions of any convention made by different teams, while the HanseCon in Lübeck possibly is the convention by one and the same team, (being Eckhard D Marwitz, Christoph Lühr and the SFC Lübeck) which has by now reached its 28th edition. It is a small fannish German convention. And they are not finished yet.
Shortest: Swedish people have always been big fans of the Guiness Book of World Records.
No wonder it came into Swedish minds to run InfraCon, shortest convention ever. If memory serves, it was done in the early 80's and all was done within the fraction of a second. I'm not 100% sure about this, but I believe it was Mika H Tenhovaara and the Hallstahammar-fans who did this. Or was David Nessle somehow involved (wouldn't surprise me). I have to investigate this properly for future editions of this column.
Shortest Reoccuring: InfinitesimalCon, which I suspect to have sprang from the mind of Ahrvid Engholm preceded InfraCon. The difference is, that InfinitesimalCon was such a fun idea that I picked it up and made it into the shortest reoccurring con.

The idea was to do everything that was done at a regular convention, but on a small scale. We had badges, program booklet, a 4-minute film and GoH's. The average time for an InfinitesimalCon was five minutes. The last time it was held, was in 1999 (see CoClock # 7, page 7).

Fandom: *Biggest:* US of A, no surprise there.
Small: It can be argued how many sf-fans it takes to constitute a fandom. Until the end of July 2013 we believed the Swedish-Greek sf-fan Anders Bellis who lives half of the year in Athens to be the only one in his other home country, which would have made Greek fandom ½ a person. This was wrong. So now I would hazard a guess that Slovenian fandom still is smaller than Luxembourg-fandom.
Fans: no particular records yet

Fanzines:
Big: Warhoon # 28 by Richard Bergeron must be the thickest fanzine made so far. With more than 600 pages containing the complete works of Walt Willis, it is regarded as the Bible of Fandom.
Small: Pulsar, by Niels Dalgaard, Denmark was the smallest fanzine I ever had in my collection. It was so small I mislaid it. This particular copy was printed onto a microfiche card and contained about 32 pages A4 or so. I put it in a book as a bookmark one day and haven't seen it since. I'm sure it's still around somewhere...
Many: Vanamonde by John Hertz must be the world record in most issues. I have # 917 from January 5th 2011 in my possession, but I have the feeling John hasn't given up publishing just yet.

HUGO: Dave Langford, UK has received 28 Hugo's of which 21 was for best fan-writer and five for his fanzine Ansible (best fanzine). I guess it will take a while before anyone catches up. Mike Glyer, US on the other hand, holds the record of having been nominated for HUGO's the most times (45). Alas, he has won the prestigious award *only* 9 times.

Miscellaneous: I'm not sure if it ought to count for anything at all, but in 1984 I went 1600 km on a bicycle from Stockholm to Orscholz, Saarland in Germany, near the border to Luxembourg and France. Upon arrival we, the editors of Andromeda issue # 111 could assemble the issue. The team consisted of Hans-Jürgen Mader, Willmar Plewka, Joachim Henke, Klaus Marion and I. On my way back, the bicycle broke down after 900 kilometers and I had to take a train the rest of the way back to Stockholm. What kind of record is this?
Most arduous journey to assemble a fanzine...?

Are you aware of any fannish world records? Submit your own records, or challenge any of the ones listed here. This is only the beginning...

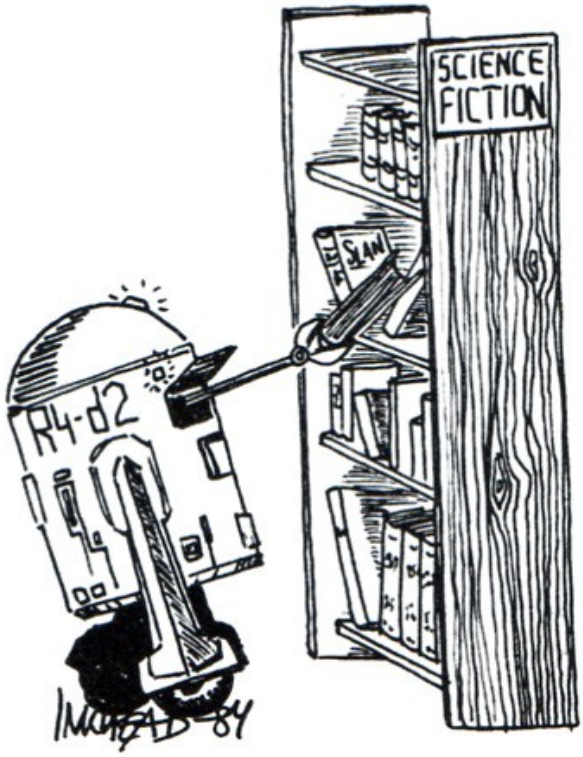


Illustration by Wolf von Witting, 1984

When Cars Collide...

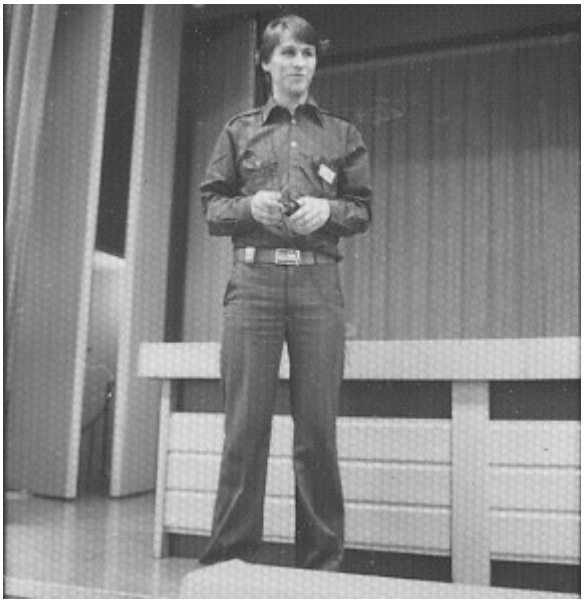
Two cars bump into each other at a street corner. If the drivers both were Japanese, they would step out of the cars, both admit their guilt and apologize to each other.
If the drivers were Swedish, they would step out of their cars and calmly inspect the extent of damages, then exchange their contact details and agree upon whose insurance get to pay.
Two Brits would also exchange bitter sarcasms.
Two Germans would step out of their cars and start insulting each other with loud voices.
Italians would stay in their cars, but insult each other and waving their hands in obscene gestures.
Two Russians would insult each other using even more colourful metaphors than the Germans.
Two Romanians would get into a fistfight.
If two Americans, one would exit his car with a 12-gauge shotgun, but before he has time to point it, the other has already gunned him down in self defence with his semi-automatic Baretta.
If one of the drivers is Greek, he would light a cigarette and wait for law enforcement to arrive, if the other driver is me, I'd be in deep shit, because I don't have a driving license. *-W.-*

A man should be loyal through life to friends,
And return gift for gift,
Laugh when they laugh,
but with lies repay a false foe who lies.
[Hávamál, verse 42]

NasaCon (Nacka-Saltsjöbadens Con)
January 4-6th in 1980 (Stockholm / Sweden)

My first convention, my first... as in the first one I decided to run, felt like a complete disaster. We had printed some 500 flyers and distributed at least 300 of them. We were located in Skuru school in the municipal of Nacka (Stockholm), and we were prepared for a big event.

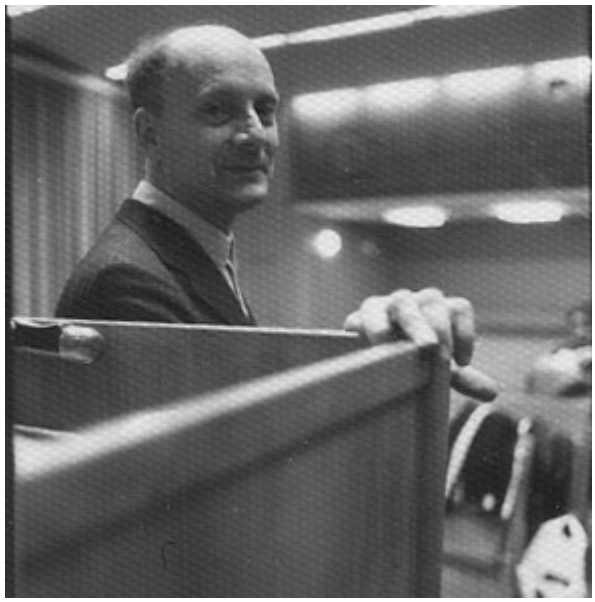
Some 23 brave souls were there and that does include the Polish-Swedish international chess master Konstanty Kaiszauri (since 1977, at current world rank 5303), who happened to work at the school as a janitor at the time. It also included 1½ year old Isaac Bobjörk, who still was in his diapers.
Here are some glimpses from this event, which I rather would have chosen to forget entirely at the time. All photographs by Peter Bahrke.



Wolf von Witting's first time on the convention stage.

The program wasn't so bad. Except there were no people there to see it, at times. Sunday at 12:00 I was sitting alone on the stage. The silence was only broken by the audible and annoying blinking of a neon light tube at the far end of the auditorium. And at 12:05 when I took a sip of coffee. At 12:10 Lars-Olov Strandberg came in, to see the sorry state of affairs. He went out again, only to come in and go out again five and ten minutes later. At 12:30 I end the panel debate with myself about Swedish fandom just as Lars-Olov enters the auditorium a 4th time.
At 12.55 Konstanty checked in on us, to assure himself we were there. And a few minutes later, the Bobjörk family arrived. Ahrvid Engholm came at ten past one and said he was sorry for being late, but it was after all his 21st birthday.

At 14.20 three more fans arrived; Kaj Harju, Erik Andersson and Kent Larsson, bringing the total up to 13 fans on Sunday. i just wished the Earth would open up, swallow me, and never let me see the light of day again.



Lars-Olov Strandberg has been to almost every sf-convention in the history of Sverifandom.

But as Ahrvid pointed out, we should perhaps have distributed the flyers among sf-fans and not among mundane people who have no concept of what a sf-convention is about. Also... the time of year was perhaps not the best choice.



But Ralph Lundsten, who was there on Saturday, was not a bad choice of GoH. Here he (right) is listening to the wisdom of John-Henri Holmberg (left).

Ralph Lundsten was one of the first to support our science fiction club, Sigma Terra Corps, when we went public with our existence, early in 1979. He

was, and still is, a Swedish composer of electronic music, as well as a film director, artist and author.



Me (back turned) talking with Klaus Reimann and son, before one of the film program items.

George Bobjörk was in charge of the film program. This was something he always was good at, and he kept at it for 10 additional consecutive NasaCons.

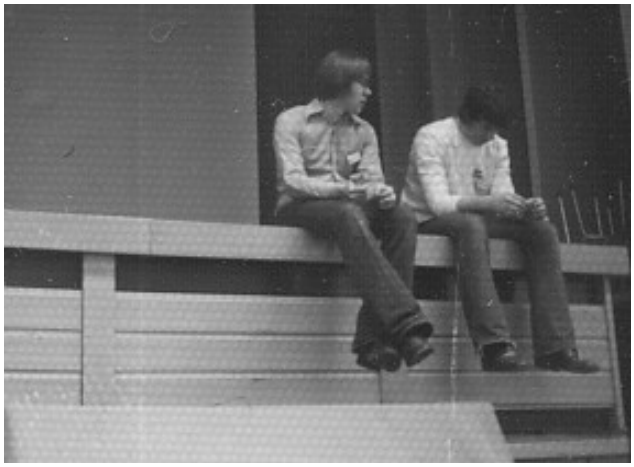
It did take considerable pep talk from Ahrvid, for me not to go into hiding after this event which is best remembered for its many empty gaping chairs. Move the event to summer, find a smaller location and make it less ambitious! Excellent advice. Actually, it is excellent advice for anyone who thinks of trying something like this. 23 people at home in your living room is perhaps an overcrowded event. But if it is overcrowded, then is a whole lot more successful, than if you only fill up 5-10% of the present space.



Kent Larsson, Erik Andersson, Anders Bellis, Kaj Harju, Ahrvid Engholm and Roger Sjölander around the table to the left. Lars-Olov Strandberg, Kjell Borgström, Ralph Lundsten and John-Henri Holmberg around the other.

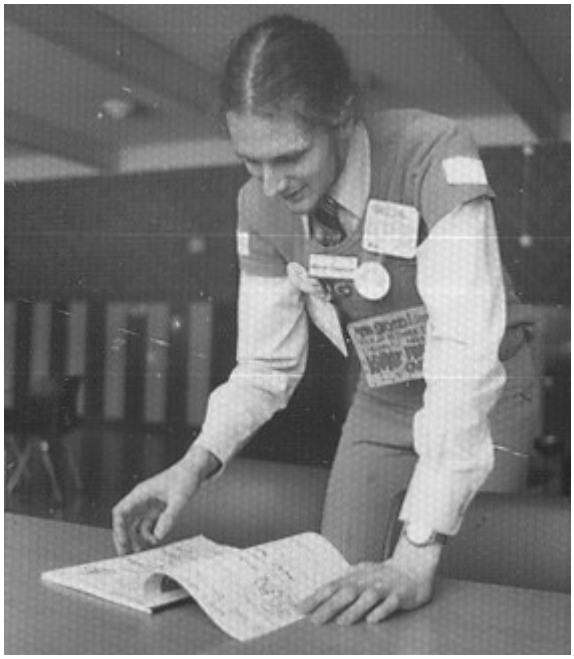
We even had international attendance: From Germany, Wolfgang Bolz and his brother Georg had come. Not that this was any less embarrassing for me as a first-time around smof.

What can I say? It is **not** a fond memory. It was one of the worst mistakes I ever made. I was 20, I was ambitious. It was a perfect example of how not to do. My dreams were always bigger than my reality.



Wolfgang and Georg Bolz, probably more bored than most at this event. Since they didn't speak Swedish.

But thanks to Ahrvid Engholm, I had a second go at it, the following year. I squeezed it in, during the summer days, while doing military service. The 2nd attempt was no bigger than the first, but we had a smaller, much nicer location. And after the 2nd we really wanted to make a third. And we did. NasaCon 7-9 (1986-88) and 11 (1990) were the biggest sf-cons in Sweden (in their years). The best years and the most fond memories are from the time in Villa Caprifol in Fisksätra (81-86). It was worth doing.

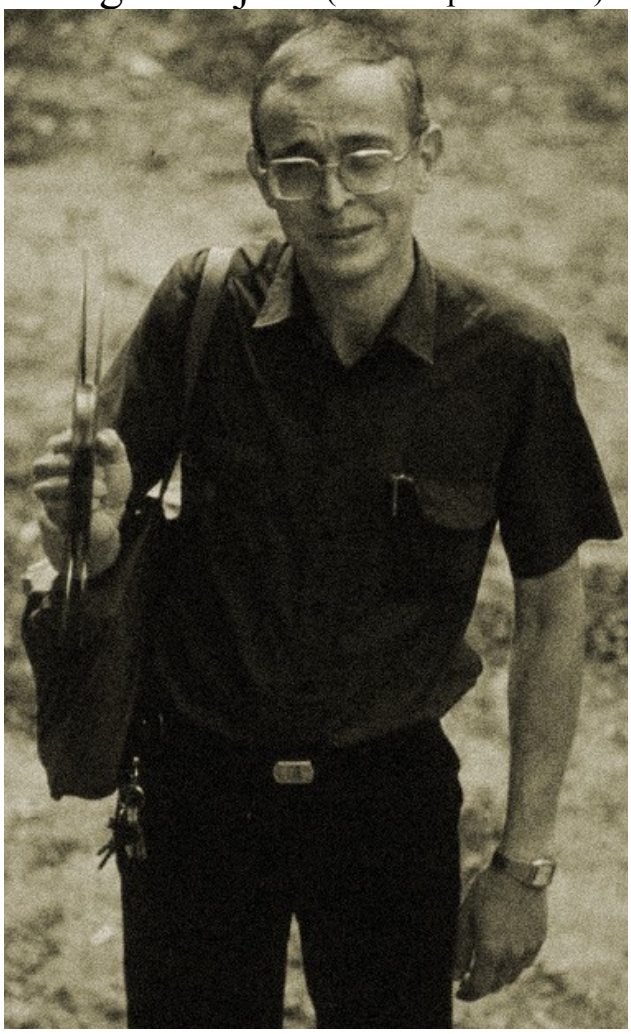


Ahrvid Engholm, 21 years of age, NasaCon 1 - 1980.

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If you find a friend you fully trust
And wish for his good-will,
exchange thoughts, exchange gifts,
Go often to his house.
[Hávamál, verse 44]

George Bobjörk (*17th April 1952-)



George used to provide the film reels at NasaCons, but he did A LOT MORE than that.

We met on the train platform in Fisksätra in the spring of 1978. He was just about to become a father, but his first son wasn't born yet. Somehow we started talking about science fiction, because at the time it was more or less the only thing on my mind.
Perhaps it was because of the movie Star Wars, which I had seen on the 16th of December, a few months earlier with my brother. But George was the first other person I met in Sweden, who also was interested in SF and who was so interested, that he even was reading Seppo Laine's fandom column in Sam J Lundwall's *JULES VERNE-MAGASINET.*

It was the beginning of a friendship, which lasted for well over thirty years. But of course, I was unaware of the significance of the event at the time.
George was a programmer, working with punch cards. Don't laugh! It was the standard recording medium in offices in those days. George knew what hell it is to drop a box of punch cards. Even if they were numbered. And he remembers what it was like to look for computer-bugs on punch cards.

When his son was born, on May 24th, I wasn't the least surprised to find him to agree with his wife Ewa on the name of Isaac for their newborn. Named after Asimov, of course. An excellent choice, if I may say so! I might have suggested it myself, had they not come up with it.
It was George who made me aware of there being a fandom in Sweden as well. Until this point I had been *crossing the river to fetch water,* so to speak.
I published a fanzine, in German, and I went down to Germany to meet fans and I went to German cons. George changed all that. In December the same year, we sat and talked about what we should name the Swedish part of the club. It was unlikely, we would find any Perry Rhodan-fans in Sweden, so it was better with a more general approach to SF and fandom.
Sam J Lundwall's published since 1973 SF through his own company, DELTA publishing (which he kept up until 1988). John Henri-Holmberg was just about to launch his Alpha science fiction publishing. So we agree upon the Greek letter Sigma to suffice adequately for us. It could stand for Saltsjöbaden, which was the area for our postal code. It could be S for Stockholm or even Sweden, Scandinavia or for the Solar System, depending on how big the club would become. We wouldn't have to change letter.

From then on Isaac Bobjörk shared the cradle with Sigma Terra Corps. In January of 1979 we invited Swedish fandom to a first fan-gathering in Fisksätra. Little did we know, that Fisksätra already hosted several fannish dignities, BNF's such as Mats D Linder and Torkel Franzén.

As much as George Bobjörk meant for the early days of Sigma TC, he meant for the entire duration of its existence. When Ahrvid Engholm and I went on to improve on NasaCon, turning it into a success, he was the order to the chaos we created. We had the ideas and the drive, he kept the records and made us play by the legal rules. I recall several times when George and I kept pushing trolleys with refund-bottles and cans until two o'clock at night after conventions, cleaning up on the sites. And while we did it, we always talked about if we we're crazy enough to go for it the following year.

Many a time, I went to buy some bread to go with coffee and turned up unannounced at his door step. Throughout the 80's, 90's and through the greater part of the first decade in this millennium. 'Til I moved to Italy. We used to sit and recall the *good old days*. I guess it wasn't so easy on him when I moved away. As of 2012 we finally lost touch. Sigma Terra Corps, its further adventures, if there will be any, are his. The club would not have lasted this long, had it not been for him. George Bobjörk was never much of a fanzine-publisher. He made 3-4

issues of a fanzine *42nd Century Cat* in the early 80's, when Swedish fandom exploded into fanac and every fan with a minimum of self-respect needed to have a fanzine.
OTOH, he was involved in running more conventions than some have made fanzines. At least... 14. But he usually kept himself out of the spotlight and was never nominated for any awards.



George and I on a genealogical expedition in 1985.

George is a big fan of Brian Stableford's books. The passion for film and scifi-tv-series is something else we had in common. Football manager games. We did them all, starting with *The Double* on C64 and later Championship Manager on Amiga, then on PC.
We didn't need the club, we kept seeing each other also while all fanac was down 1993-1995.
I was lucky to have such a friend. I would like to say *I wish I could have been as good a friend to you as you have been to me.*
As of 2012, *we're out of touch*. Why? Does there need to be a reason? We just went separate ways.

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ORNAMENTS OF DIGNITY

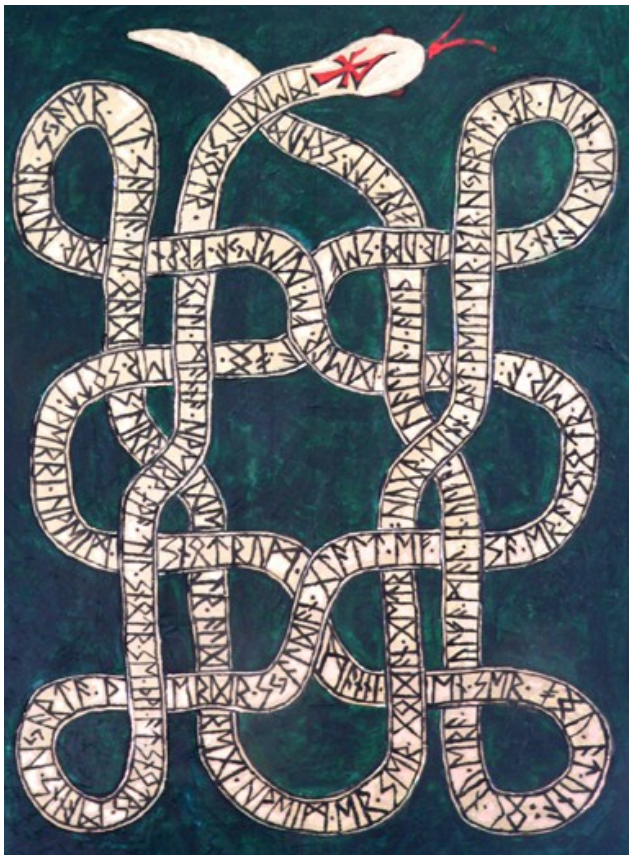
How do chants of battle
Fit glory into your head
If the best we left behind
To wither among dead

Ask us not for courage
We're brave enough to live
Let us grow to better friends
Have only joy to give

In the end, do ask yourself
Be there flowers on your grave
Are they placed for conquered realm
Or for the love you gave?

(Wolf von Witting, July 21th 2013)

Two wooden stakes stood on the plain,
on them I hung my clothes:
Draped in linen, they looked well born,
But, naked, I was a nobody
[Hávamál, verse 49]



Hávamál, verse 55, 76 and 95 in ol'norse. WvW. painting.

Wikipedia: *Hávamál ("sayings of the high one") is presented as a single poem in the Poetic Edda, a collection of Old Norse poems from the Viking age. The poem, itself a combination of different poems, is largely gnomic, presenting advice for living, proper conduct and wisdom.*
The verses are attributed to Odin, much like the biblical Book of Wisdom is attributed to Solomon. The implicit attribution to Odin facilitated the accretion of various mythological material also dealing with Odin.
For the most part composed in the metre Ljóðaháttr, a metre associated with wisdom verse, Hávamál is both practical and metaphysical in content. Following the gnomic "Hávamál proper" follows the Rúnatal, an account of how Odin won the runes, and the Ljóðatal, a list of magic chants or spells.

- -

It is best for man to be middle-wise,
Not over cunning and clever:
No man is able to know his future,
So let him sleep in peace.
[Hávamál, verse 56]



Waldemar Kumming at the bar, photo by: Hans Sigmund

Behold the Fan, Waldemar Kumming

by Thomas Recktenwald

Q: How do I find Waldemar at a convention? A: Just go to a microphone, grab the line and follow it to the other end.
There, with a high probability, you would find a massive tape recorder surrounded by cables, plugs, headphones and a pile of magnetic tape reels. Behind this equipment were, for almost five decades, the head quarters of one of German fandom's most famous members - Waldemar Kumming.

Waldemar is in international fandom better known as editor of Germany's longest-running non-club fanzine, "Munich Round Up", which started in November 1958, and in the 1960s he co-organized a couple of German national conventions in Bavaria which also attracted European fans. He was chairman of the Science Fiction Club Deutschland (SFCD) in turbulent times during the club's early years and already a honorary member when I joined the organization in 1983. But German fans and pros associate his name first and foremost with an institution called "Phonothek".

After the war Waldemar worked as sound engineer for Munich-based "Radio Free Europe" where he collected not only experience but also remainders of magnetic tape which was much more expensive than today. Although there were some fan groups in Germany producing and recording amateur audio dramas or fans who taped SF radio dramas Waldemar was the only one who, supported by other members of the SFCD City Group Munich, used his equipment to travel to events where he recorded talks, panels and other program items. The oldest record in the Phonothek contains the speeches held at the very first SFCD convention (Bad Homburg, 1959), and you can hear the voices of, among others, Walter Ernsting, Jesco von Puttkamer and Forry Ackerman. Over the next 25 years Waldemar taped every major German SF convention, the second European Worldcon and some other international SF events, but in the late 1980s his health deteriorated and he restricted his attendance to SFCD cons and Worldcons. In 2009, at the age of 85, he was no longer able to travel, but we hope his health will allow him to be a special guest at this year's SFCD con in Garching near Munich.

Fans who visited Waldemar in his apartment at Fürstenried in Munich's South-West corner, encountered two heavy Revox B77 tape machines and shelves filled with electronic replacement parts and tapes of different sizes (from 30 down to 10 cm in diameter), all crammed into Waldemar's bedroom. The larger reels were mostly used for conventions and other mono recordings, the smaller ones for radio recordings in stereo. Other rooms were reserved for his book and fanzine collection. Waldemar listed the content of the Phonothek in the issues of MRU, at first the complete inventory, in later years only new material, and he offered copies on music cassette to every fan who was interested in. You only had to pay for the cassettes and postage plus one Pfennig (about half a Euro Cent) per minute run time of the items you wanted. This was the easiest way to get a talk you enjoyed or missed at a convention or an SF radio drama broadcast by a station in a part of Germany too far away from your antenna.

In the beginning of the new millennium the SFCD board looked for a possibility to use new technologies to preserve Waldemar's collection because costs for hardware and media to create and store information in digital form were decreasing, and it would also be less time-consuming to produce digital copies. In 1998 I had retired as chairman of the SFCD, and three years later I found a job in a company located in the highest part of the Black Forest where snowfall sometimes starts in September and ends in May, so time and place were right to take over the project "Digitizing the Phonothek". A board member of the SFCD transported one of Waldemar's Revox B77 from Munich to my house, together with a first delivery of tapes in more or less chronological order. I purchased a CD burner, a sound card, cables and recording software and started to get familiar with the handling of the analog and digital sides of this challenge.

I was impressed how clear these more than 40 years old records of SF conventions were: AGMs of clubs founded in the 1950s and 1960s, now long gone or merged with the SFCD, talks about space exploration, Black Holes and nuclear energy, early SF radio plays spoken by actors who later became famous on German TV, Stanley Kubrick interviewed in a Munich movie theater promoting "2001 - A Space Odyssey". The only annoying aspect came from Waldemar's efforts to collect spare tapes at his place of work and stick them together at home. The flexibility and adhesion of the special scotch tape he used to splice the parts had gone, and the joints often dissolved when passing the audio head. So I had to stop the recording process, repair the tape, rewind it a little, continue the recording and put the pieces together digitally. And occasionally I had tapes where the surface abrasion was so bad that I had to clean the audio heads every ten minutes although I did rewind the reel a dozen times before I started the transfer. But that was nothing compared to the trouble I had with material used for magnetic tape in the 1980s. Waldemar had started with products from Scotch and BASF, but then he changed to Shamrock. The first 20-30 minutes of the digitizing process were ok, but then these tapes started to squeak. First I thought I could neglect that as long as it didn't influence the digital result, but at a certain noise level of the squeaking the high frequencies of the recorded sound were affected. Multiple rewinding of the reel and cleaning of the audio heads didn't help. First I suspected electrostatics, but research on the Internet unearthed the information that these tapes had been advertised as progress in recording technology with high flexibility and longevity, but enclosure of hydrogen atoms in the surface over the years now leads to this negative behaviour.

Proposals to solve this problem ranged from going to a professional sound studio (too expensive for the number of reels affected) to putting the tapes into a baking oven and leave them there at 80 degrees Celsius for a couple of hours (which I didn't dare to try). I finally found a way to suppress the noise by impregnating a cotton bud with isopropanol and putting it left to the audio head so the tape passed it before.

Now I have digitized about 90% of Waldemar's tape collection which means about 52 days of continuous listening if you want to do so for the Guinness Book of Records. Some pieces like the SFCD AGMs are especially suited for the sado-maso type of fan, some give you insight into the changing subjects German fandom was interested in across the decades, and there are records that surprised long-time fans all over the world.

In 2005 I handed over sound files of the 1965 Worldcon in London to the Glasgow Worldcon committee who put it on CD to be distributed at the convention, and two years ago, at the British Eastercon in Birmingham, I was able to present the records which Waldemar did at the 1971 Eastercon in Worcester. The Heicon 1970 tapes are now known to fans from Canada to Australia who attended the only German Worldcon so far.

But what about the future of the Phonothek since Waldemar is no longer able to continue his work? Fortunately not only storage has become digital but also the recording process itself. The days of carrying a 10 kg tape machine plus a supply of magnetic tape from one program room to another are over. In the meantime the SFCD purchased a ZOOM H2 recorder, and I bought a modern ZOOM H2n for myself, so I'm able to cover a 2-track convention program which is normally sufficient for German events. But if you think it is much easier now to record and rework a program item you are wrong. Since these devices are very sensitive it takes a lot of time to remove coughing and other disturbing noises or amplify questions from the audience. As a rule of thumb one hour of recording needs four hours for reworking.

The SFCD is, of course, very proud of maintaining and preserving this institution. The Phonothek, however, is not restricted to SFCD members but open to all interested fans in Germany and abroad. Offering copies of radio dramas for private use is still a legal problem although they were produced by public radio i.e. public money, but records of program items can be considered as documents of historical interest. So if you want to use the treasures of the Phonothek for research or simply enjoy them just send me an e-mail asking for a table of contents.

Once read in an issue of MRU: "Waldemar, how did you find the convention?"
"I don't know yet - I have to listen to my tapes."



Photo: Hans Sigmund

Email requests to Thomas Recktenwald can be sent to:
thomas-dot-recktenwald-at-worldcon-dot-de



A convention in France I would like to visit is the UTOPIALES NANTES which this year will last from October 30th until November 4th, 6 days.
To find information about this convention I went to their website: http://www.utopiales.org/



In pictures, one is given an impression of what to expect, when coming to Nantes. People standing in line can mean several things. That the event is very popular (which probably is the purpose of showing this image), or that the check-in is slow. Or both.



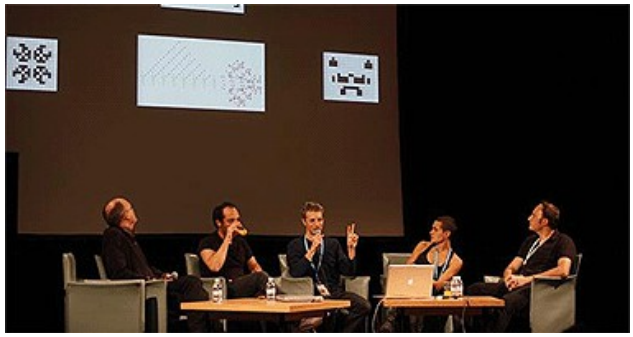
Business as usual, though you would have to expect all publications you see to be in French. Of course, you are in France.



From the looks of it, Utopiales is very much like most other sf-conventions around the world. Here I guess the local stars sign their work. (to see the images in greater detail, visit the Utopiales website).



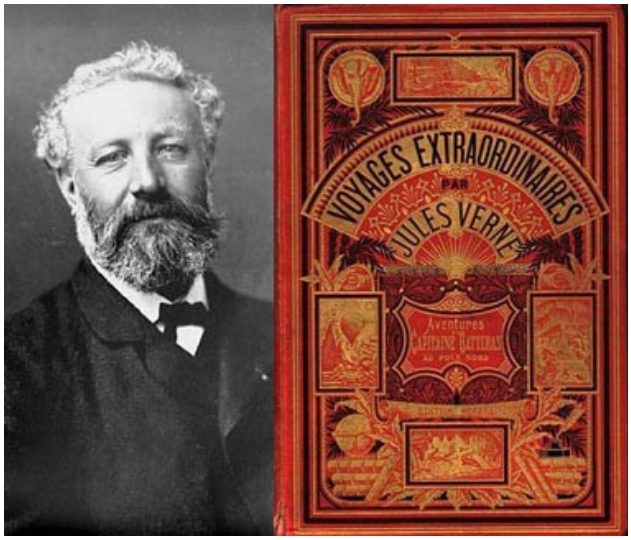
The program items are likely to be in French, with renown French authors such as Ayerdahl, fan & author Jeanne-A Debats or illustrators as Thomas Allart. I realize, as I browse the pages, that all of these people are still unknown to me.



Undoubtedly, the French are capable of running sf-conventions. They have been doing it for a long, long time. What I would like to know, and what you perhaps would like to know, is how well does one do in France, if one can't speak French?



France, Italy, Spain and Germany synchronize their movies. The idea came from Joseph Goebbels. He didn't want the Germans to understand the propaganda broadcasts of the enemy. It is a deliberate dumbing of the audience. Therefore it is not so easy for people in these countries to learn foreign languages. Only 5% of the Italians speak English. I guess it is a similar figure for France and Spain.
If the 2019 Worldcon bid would be for Nantes, I might not be worried. But Paris? Many things still need to change in France, one of them being the Parisians. Their city does not come across as a tourist-friendly place, from the reports I've received.
But Nantes? That's a different story.



Jean-Claude Dunyach's
"The Hitch-Hiker's Guide To French Science-Fiction"

French SF has a glorious past (remember Jules Verne?) and, hopefully, a bright future. But the present situation is a little more contrasted and difficult to decode. Especially when you try to evaluate it on the same scale as US SF — or Anglo-American SF. The definition of the word SF is not exactly the same on both sides of the Atlantic. It is often confused with Sci-Fi in the US ('Star Trek' juvenile, lite fantasy series or shared universes to name a few commercial examples) while most French authors claim that it is 'literature at its best'. Disney versus 'The Louvre' if you catch my meaning. Of course, both formulations are too narrow to be entirely true but they're not entirely false, either. Let's see why.

1) The Cultural Background

First, one has to understand that France — and most of Europe, in fact — has a distinct cultural background and that SF does not play the same role as in the English-speaking world. French TV, for example, is not really interested in SF. French mini-series are often based on novels from the 18th or 19th century (not as boring as you might think but rather short on special effects and light sabres — and Depardieu is always playing one of the main parts). Famous TV series like 'Star Trek', 'Babylon 5', 'Millenium' or 'Doctor Who' are almost ignored in France. 'The X-Files' was a huge success although we are one year behind the US, which means that several details from 'The X-Files - The Movie' were not understandable to most of us at the time.

Neither do we have the equivalent of comics books. No Batman, X-Men or Spider-Man. No shared universes where Judge Dredd meets the Punisher to fight against the villains… No equivalent of Sandman — which is bad. But we have tons of SF 'bande dessinées', with plenty of famous artists from Moebius to Caza, Bilal, Bourgeon or Mézières (who worked with Besson and was an inspiration to many US series like 'Babylon 5') and lots of newcomers. Scenarios are often elaborate and quite complex and they are considered as acceptable cultural objects. But an album of 'bande dessinées' is often priced over $10 US. Parents can buy it. Not kids.

And if you're a famous filmmaker who wants to shoot a SF movie (Luc Besson, for example, or Jeunet), you're almost forced to work with Hollywood. It seems that there's no money available for SF projects in the French cinema, even if the situation may change in the near future.

So, what we call SF in France is mainly 'written SF'. The cultural gap between French SF books and the visual equivalent coming from the other side of the Atlantic is quite large.

2) A Brief Journey In History

French Science-Fiction was almost killed by the 1st World War and started only its resurrection as a movement in the late fifties. A few Anticipation books were published in the meantime but without any SF label on it — take for example 'Monkey Planet' (aka 'Planet Of The Apes') by Pierre Boulle or 'The Imprudent Traveller' by René Barjavel.

During the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, many important authors from the USA or Great Britain were published regularly in France. Many different imprints – from deluxe hardcovers to paperbacks – were almost entirely devoted to foreign SF. In parallel, a popular imprint entitled Fleuve Noir Anticipation specialized in short novels – French equivalent of pulps – from local authors. At that time, the public considered that French authors were only pale copies of their Anglo-American competitors.

This situation evolved a little in the mid-seventies when a few French authors – Michel Jeury, Philippe Curval – where published by famous imprints like 'Ailleurs & Demain' ('Elsewhere & Tomorrow'). These books were not only excellent in the traditional Anglo-Saxon SF sense, they were *different.* Inspired by literary experiments like the 'Nouveau Roman', they could be considered as the French equivalent of the British 'New Wave'.

In the meantime, a younger generation of angry young men was using Science-Fiction as a means to question the French society as it was. They wished to use SF as a political medium. One of the imprints

created at that time was called 'Ici & Maintenant' ('Here & Now'), in answer to the well established 'Ailleurs & Demain'. It is interesting to note that good authors like Jeury or Curval were published by both imprints.

Unfortunately, even though the messages expressed by this 'French political SF' were interesting, too many books – or short stories – from that period were considered by the public as poorly written. In reaction, a brief but intense neo-formalist movement called 'Limite' emerged in the beginning of the eighties, featuring new authors like Emmanuel Jouanne, Francis Berthelot and Antoine Volodine. They considered Science-Fiction as a medium for literary experimentation and adopted a post-modern attitude toward writing. Several novels and short stories were published independently by the authors but their first common anthology was also the last…

It has to be noted that French Science-Fiction was not really interested in space even if a few 'westerns in space' were published regularly. The 'space opera' genre was mostly something associated with Anglo-Saxon SF.

At that time – the mid-eighties – many new authors had appeared and French SF boasted more than forty professional[1] writers. A monthly magazine – '*Fiction'* – published one or more short stories by French authors in every issue, with eight to ten 'new authors' every year. Regular anthologies were open to French stories and a special one-shot anthology entitled 'Futurs au Présent' was entirely devoted to new, not-yet-professional, authors. 'Futurs au Présent' revealed Serge Brussolo and Jean-Marc Ligny – two major French SF authors – and was followed by 'Superfuturs', a few years later. In the meantime, the Editions Fleuve Noir was publishing nearly sixty French books each year. The young authors were slowly replacing their elders.

But, unhappily, the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties were characterized by a major editorial crisis.

At that time, '*Fiction'* disappeared, along with the annual anthology 'Univers'. Many SF publishers reduced their activities and most of them stopped publishing new French authors. The only major exception was Fleuve Noir Anticipation – but they only putting out thirty French SF books a year while making several unsuccessful attempts at publishing 'Star Trek' novels or lite fantasy series. Fleuve Noir revealed almost all the new authors of the early nineties like Ayerdhal and Serge Lehman – not to mention the Belgian Alain le Bussy, the Swiss Wildy Petoud and the Canadian Jean-Louis Trudel. The only exception was Pierre Bordage, a brilliant novelist who was discovered by a regional press and climbed his way to fame in a year or so!

The situation remained more or less the same until 1995, when three SF magazines were launched almost simultaneously. The first one was 'CyberDreams', which wanted to be the French equivalent of 'Interzone'. It played a major role in revealing the new generation of British authors and in publishing several French stories.

CyberDreams was soon followed by 'Bifrost' and 'Galaxies' (http://www.galaxies-sf.com), which came out the same month and contributed to open some space to new authors. Each magazine published 30 issues or so so far.

In the meantime, two French short story anthologies edited by famous French authors were released: 'Genèses', in 1996, edited by Ayerdhal, with the major French Publisher J'ai lu, and 'Escales sur l'horizon' edited by Serge Lehman in 1998 (it was followed by 'Escales 2000' last summer, which I was in charge of, and 'Escales 2001' has been released last year).

'Escales sur l'Horizon' was a huge book with 16 short stories and novellas from sixteen French and Canadian authors. It also contained a very important preface by Serge Lehman, which might be considered as the 'French SF Manifesto' of the end of the century. These two collections were well received by the public – both won prizes – and the press referred to us as the new 'French SF wonderboys'. Don't laugh!

In fact, even if the situation is growing better – each major French publisher is creating or revamping its own Science-Fiction/Fantasy/Gothic line and the public seems to be interested in what the future will look like[2] – the only way for French SF to survive is to cross the borders and to find readers outside Europe.

And then, we went back to space — where it all started.

A good example of authors in that trend is Laurent Genefort. He is one of our wunderkind (he is thirty with almost as many books behind him) and he is famous for his creation of alien environments and strange planets. He wrote a series of independent novels that take place in the galaxy, but a galaxy that has been once populated by a very ancient race called the 'Vangk'. The Vangk disappeared but left behind a fantastic collection of artefacts — from doors that allows to travel between distant stars to an entire planet shaped like a Dyson sphere where humans as well as other creatures have been transferred en masse for some kind of experiment (the third book in this serie is in print). This is

[1] *Professional means of course that they were published professionally but very few of them were earning enough money to make a living. The French market was just too small and French books were rarely translated for publication elsewhere.*

[2] Probably an effect of the millenium change

something that you can find also in books from other Europeans — Alaister Reynolds with Revelation space come to mind or Juan Miguel Aguilera.

But, even if many French authors are well aware of the cultural icons and trends of Anglo-American Science Fiction, our books have a distinct flavour. You should try our wine, too…

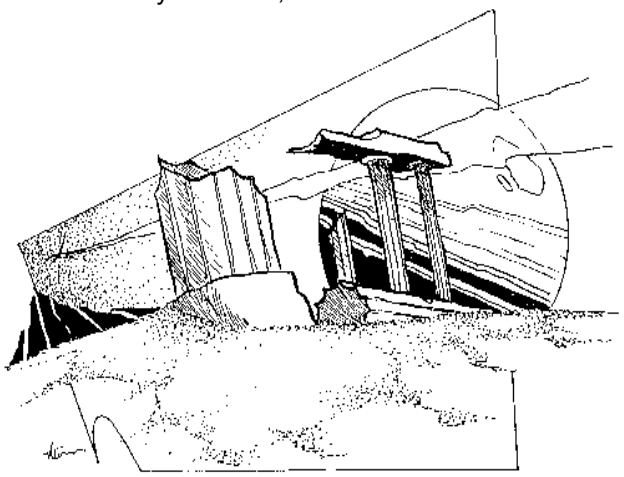


Illustration: ATom 1927-1990

3) Typical French Themes: Art, Flesh And Irony.

It is somewhat difficult to point out the specificity of French SF – assuming that it *is* specific, which I believe. Surrealism was probably a major influence in the eighties, as well as the 'Nouveau Roman' and other literary experiments, but this concerns mainly the way we write our stories, not their subjects. And, here in Europe, Surrealism is so 'air du temps' — part of the background — that it is hard not to be influenced by it.

I think that the two main specific themes in French SF since the end of the seventies are artists and museums of the future – the latest collection of young French authors, published this month, also explores that theme – and the relationship with the body – flesh considered as an experimental territory.

Art in the future was a central theme in the eighties and it is making a serious comeback. It is interesting to note that the so-called art defined in the future is either a terrorist way to change society – art as a means to move the masses and to control them – or the ultimate expression of freedom versus totalitarian states. In the just released line 'Musées, Des Mondes Énigmatiques" ('Museums, Enigmatic Worlds'), most stories describe fugitives from the outside world seeking refuge in a museum. Some of them are trapped and destroyed, some find help from other refugees. Almost no character is interested in art for art's sake. As a possible metaphor of actual French SF, this is quite frightening.

As for the 'experimental territory of the flesh', the theme is probably linked to Surrealism – Dali, for one, is famous for his statue of the Venus de Milo with drawers. Since Science-Fiction is often considered as a literature of metamorphosis, toying with the idea of artistically rebuilding your body is a natural trend! One must notice that this body-rebuilding is quite often done for artistic reasons and without the use of biotechnologies or scientific gizmos.

I must add that most French SF writers are usually neither scientists – I'm one of the few exceptions – nor particularly interested by science (at least hard science).

4) A few personal trajectories

With the exception of the well-identified literary movements mentioned above, whose impact was limited, French SF is composed mainly of individualists whose trajectories are quite different.

Serge Brussolo appeared in the early eighties and started producing four to five novels every year in a very surrealistic style. He became quite popular and diversified to historical novels and thrillers, using various pseudonyms. In his books, you find albinos cats sold with a set of washable colors so you can paint them the way you want, oceans replaced by hundred of millions of dwarves that live in the mud, hands up and carry boats in exchange for food. Of course, every now and then, they reproduce and you get a tidal wave of dwarves who want to conquer new territories. But the coast guards have machine guns…

As for the nineties, let's mention:

Ayerdhal – a pseudonym – is most famous for his political space operas with complex intrigues and interesting feminine characters. Serge Lehman, a stylist with a good sense of wonder, started his epic 'History Of The Future' in the early nineties. Pierre Bordage is our sweeping sagas specialist and a best-seller since his first trilogy. Richard Canal, who lives in Africa, is trying to merge mainstream and SF in a future dominated by African-like societies. Roland C. Wagner, who appeared early in the eighties, find his inspiration in rock'n roll and humorous descriptions of extra-terrestrial societies – he won most of the French SF Prizes in 1999 and again in 2011. His latest huge book – an uchrony settled during an alternate Algerian independence war, in the sixties, is a masterpiece. He died unexpectedly in car accident in 2012 and was deeply regretted by all.

And a new generation of authors merging SF, Fantasy, Steampunk is now firmly installed: David Calvo – whose books are somewhere between Peter Pan and the lunatic fringe –, Fabrice Colin, Laurent Kloetzer, Xavier Mauméjean, Catherine

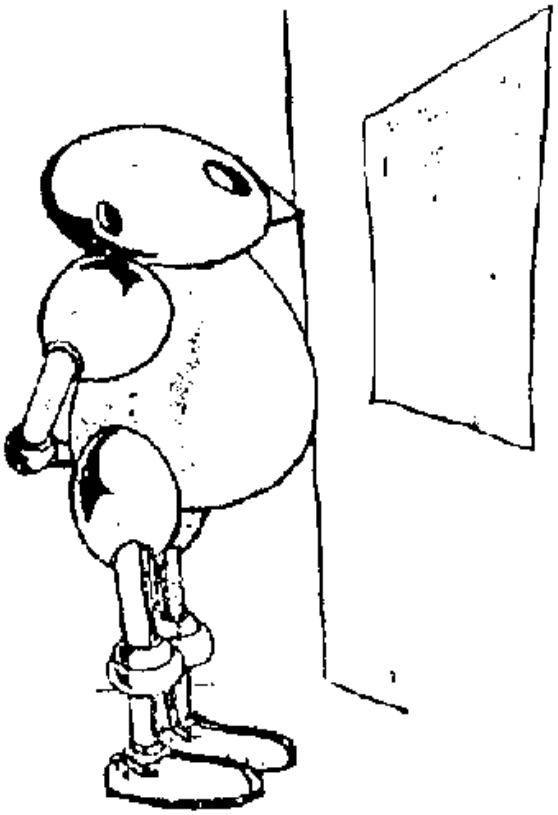
Dufour (who won in 2006 all the major French SF Prizes for her novel “Le goût de l’immortalité” – “The immortality’s taste”) and many, many others. And a couple of years ago, a serious novelist, Norbert Merjagnan, just came out of nowhere with a first novel widely acclaimed. This year, the editions l’Atalante will publish a very large novel in 3 sections (“Le Melkine”, from Olivier Paquet) that is one of the most remarkable space opera that I’ve read in years. There’s hope for the future, I would say.

5) Newcomers From Mainstream: Osmosis And Mimicry

A final trend: it seems that Science-Fiction is slowly becoming socially acceptable, at least for some members of the mainstream fiction community. During the last five years, a handful of SF-related novels have been released by major publishers and some of them ranked highly on the best-seller list! One of the latest one – ‘Les Particules Elémentaires’ (‘Elementary Particles’) a novel from Michel Houellebecq – was a huge success and an equally huge scandal, partly due to explicit sexual scenes. But most of the journalists who interviewed him were unable to understand that its book was Science-Fiction and he had to explain SF to them. In detail.

I’m glad he wasn’t forced to do the same for the sexual scenes!

(c) 2004, 2013 Jean-Claude Dunyach





Hein Bingenheimer, Greg Benford, Jan Jansen and Anne Steul (left) Wolf-Detlef Rohr, Ernst Richter, Walter Ernsting, Guntram Ohmacht and Margret Richter (in the background, far right) at the cinema in Wetzlar 1956.

Remembrance

A slightly different Con-report
by **Guntram Ohmacht**

Early December of 1999 a letter from Horst Schwagenscheidt dropped into my mailbox, disclosing plans of an encounter for old time fans. I was still a bit skeptical if such a gathering would come to pass. For decades I have had no other contact with sf-fans than Tom Schlück, Wolfi (Wolfgang) Thadewald and Horst Evermann, which I on the other hand met once a year, when Tom and I celebrated our birthdays together.

When I entered on a working career in 1963 my fannish activities rapidly receded. The job and my family demanded all of my attention. I can still recall our first vacation with my wife in Unterwössen. Together with Franz Ettl we visited the castle of Marquartstein and considered its potential as a convention location. I didn't make it to the convention itself (ED: EUROPA-CON, CASTLE-CON 31.07.- 03.08.1964), since I simply couldn't find the time. That was my last fannish activity.

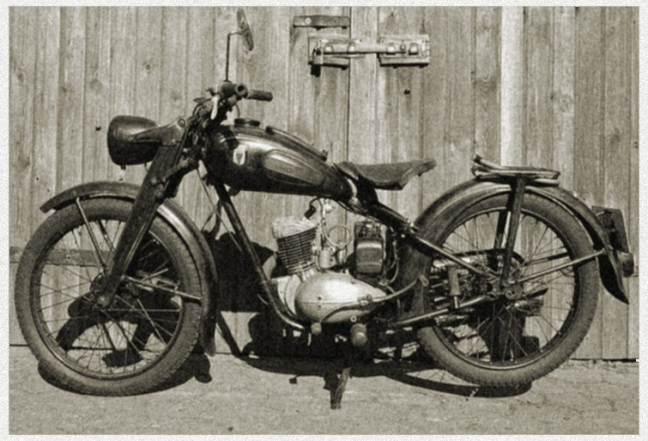
The years went by, filled with work and family life. At our annual birthday parties I heard about the others, who remained more or less active in fandom. I heard about the further fate of the SFCD, what went on in Hannover and where about in the world WE was. I was still reading sf, since Tom and the others kept me well stashed with it. In 1998 I retired from my working career, but it wasn't exactly replaced by boredom.

As early in March another letter dropped into my mailbox, in which a good number of people where mentioned whom I all had the pleasure of being acquainted to, a long time ago. My curiosity was roused after all. The same day I submitted my attendance. On April 7th in the year 2000 I went with Wolfgang Thadewald and Ernst-August Pösse to the first "Oldie-Con" in Müllheim.

There I met many of the old acquaintances from my past. With some I had difficulties to connect the names to the faces, others looked just the same as I had them in memory 35 years ago. I was able to talk with almost everyone and exchange memories. Only Gerd Zech appeared briefly and disappeared as quickly without giving me the chance to have a short conversation with him. Time passed swiftly and as Saturday evening was coming to an end, we, the Hannover delegation headed for home.

Back at home, my wife of course pinned me down. She wanted to hear all about everyone I had met again. She could still recall a few names from the only convention she ever had attended, the one in Vlotho at Thomas R.P.Mielke's. But as far as I can recall, none of them attended Müllheim, or did anyone?

In the following days photo's of my first convention were brought back into daylight. In Müllheim Wolfi and I had announced an invitation for the following Oldie-Con in Wetzlar. And that's where I went to my very first convention on the 14th and 15th of January in 1956. In those days I still didn't have a camera, but Ernst H Richter was kind enough to send me two shots from the very first German sf-convention. I am unable to say who all was there, other than who can be spotted in the pictures. It was my first encounter with Walter Ernsting, Wolf-Detlef Rohr, Ernst Richter, Hein Bingenheimer and Julian Parr.



DKW RT125, built 1955.

I read about this first convention somewhere. If it was in a pulp-magazine or elsewhere, I really can't say. I was a student at the Technical Institute in Hannover and borrowed a motorcycle, a 125 DKW, from the academic Society AKAKRAFT. Motorcycle suits were in those days unimaginable. I was only wearing a trench coat and had my PJ and toothbrush in a briefcase attached to the pillion by rubber bands. And so, unpretentiously I left Hannover, heading for Wetzlar. It was a drizzly day on the road to Northeim (in those days, one couldn't get on the Autobahn towards Frankfurt any sooner). Fortunately the weather improved at first. But as the hills of Kassel came into view, it started snowing and the Autobahn turned slippery. At some point the old chopper started coughing and gave in. I had to push the motorcycle. Fortunately I found a diner, gas and service station, where I could relax while the motorcycle was fixed. The cold had frozen the carburetor. After a rest I mounted the bike again to continue my journey. To my good fortune the cold receded further south and I reached Wetzlar without any further complications or incidents.

As I arrived after sundown, Walter Ernsting among others greeted me enthusiastically. I had come without any prior announcement to everyones great surprise. I was provided a room at the tavern and after a brief evening meal we sat together and talked about science fiction, films and many other things. It was extraordinary to be able to talk with the authors of the magazines and books I had been reading. I recall having a long conversation with Ernst H Richter, who was the oldest among the present authors and who reminded me a lot of my own father.

Slightly detached from the others sat Anne Steul, Greg and Jim Benford and Jan Jansen, a Belgian. They only spoke English, while the rest of us were debating in German. The division of the four from the rest of us remained for the entire duration of the gathering. I tried to understand what they were talking about, but it all seemed like Bohemian Villages to me.

[Ed: The German idiom "Bohemian Villages, stems from the time when Bohemia and Moravia were parts of the Austria-Hungarian Empire, today the Czech Republic. In Prague, they may have spoken German, but in the villages the czech language was spoken. Bohemian Villages refers to not understanding the language spoken.]

Walter Ernsting told me about other people in Hannover who were interested in science fiction and provided me with their adress. One of them was living in the neighborhood of my student residence.

The next morning, after breakfast, we walked in groups from the tavern to the cinema. In a matinee they were showing War of the Worlds based on the

novel by H G Wells. After dinner I was one of the first to be on my way back home. The weather had improved and I reached Hannover on the old DKW without any inconveniences.

In the following days I contacted the other fans in Hannover (Richard Schulze, Otto Grimm, Edgar Nolte and Dieter Pohlmeier). And shortly thereafter we met at Richard Schulze's place, who lived in my vicinity. The five of us were the foundation of the SFCD-group Hannover. We agreed upon monthly meetings which most of the time were held in the home of Richard Schulze. We talked about the books we just had read, about astronomy, rockets and space travel. If memory serves, we lingered quite a lot at the 4 "Rauch-books", which in those days were regarded as outstanding science fiction.

Well, that was in those days. The beginning of my time in fandom. In the same year I made a road trip and visited Walter Ernsting at home in Irschenberg. And in September I was at the second German convention in Bayrisch Zell.



Margret Richter, Guntram Ohmacht, Greg or Jim Benford, Hein Bingenheimer in Wetzlar 1956. Photo: Ernst H Richter

What's in a Xenomorph??

Scene from Aliens:
Hudson: Is this gonna be a standup fight, sir, or another bughunt?
Gorman: All we know is that there's still no contact with the colony, and that a xenomorph may be involved.
Frost: Excuse me sir, a-a what?
Gorman: A xenomorph.
Hicks: It's a bughunt.

Science fiction-fans ought to know. It is NOT a Xenomorph. The Alien comes in form of a face-hugger from an egg. It jumps another being, takes its environmental (genetical) benefits and eventually emerges from their chest before it grows up (within a day, for simple screenplay reasons) to full size. In its lifecycle it is more of a metamorph, like the butterfly.
The first Xenomorph-film was the 1953 Jack Arnold-flick *IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE.*
The Xenomorph assumes a host-shape, being the one of humans, in this case and making it really easy for the film-industry.
John Carpenter's *THE THING* and the pilot episode of *SOMETHING IS OUT THERE* show some really nice Xenomorphs.
The character Odo in DEEP SPACE NINE is something completely else. He is a polymorph, who can assume *any* shape. The opposite of a polymorph would be an amorph creature as in *THE BLOB*. It can't assume any particular shape at all.
Polymorphs can be with or without restrictions, it depends on what the screenwriter decides. Should it be able to assume only objects of the same size?
Then there are creatures which only give the impression of shifting appearance, such as the pleasure-guelph in *RED DWARF* or the friendly Aliens in *GALAXY QUEST*. They're not morphing at all. They cheat the optic nerve instead.

Now try to keep these apart... metamorph xenomorph and polymorph. A) The alien pod people who rain down to Earth in *INVASION OF THE BODY-SNATCHERS*. They are what?
B) The liquid metal robot in TERMINATOR 2 is?
C) *The INCREDIBLE HULK* is what?



Illustration: ATom 1927-1990

If you answered A) xenomorph, B) polymorph and C) No nice, when angry, or metamorph. Then you have 3 correct answers and passed the test.

Swedish and (West-) German fandom both emerged in the mid 50's. Through the years, there have been many parallels between them. And Sverifandom is by no means a quarrel and feud-free zone, but it is not what has dominated its history. Tomas Cronholm has been along for the ride since the late 50's and has published his own fanzine, BEM (in Swedish), for several years.



The Swedish delegation in Zagreb 2012

Tomas Cronholm reports on:
Swedish fandom today

The Eurocon in Stockholm 2011 had 730 members, which is more than any previous con in Sweden. This was the start of a new wave of activity in Swedish fandom. We have seen the rise of fannish activities in the third city of Sweden, Malmö, where the third bookshop in the SF book shop chain started in 2007. There are monthly sf pubs in Malmö, Uppsala, Linköping, Göteborg and Stockholm, meetings in the regional clubs in the same cities, book clubs in at least three of them, and of course conventions. The last con, in Uppsala in October 2012, Kontrast, had about 450 participants and GoHs from Canada, USA, UK and Denmark, and a lot of Swedish authors were also present. The next national con will be Fantastika 2013, in Sickla very close to central Stockholm on October 18-20. National cons are named Swecon, and this title is voted upon at the preceding Swecon. At the Swecon the prestigious fan award, the “Alvar Award” is given to a fan by the Alvar Appeltofft Memorial Foundation (SAAM) to commemorate the legendary science fiction fan who died in 1976. This organisation also gives grants to convention committees, and it thus functions as a uniting force for Swedish fandom.

Like in the rest of fandom, Swedish fanzines have become quite rare, and if they are published they are distributed as pdf files on the Internet, as is the case with CounterClock. An exception is SF-Forum, the club fanzine for Scandinavian Science Fiction Association (Skandinavisk Förening för Science Fiction, SFSF), which has been published fairly regularly since 1960. Nowadays two issues are sent out to the members each year, one containing reviews of Nebula-nominated stories and the other having convention reports and various articles and stories.

Communication between fans is instead carried out using the Internet. There are several mailing lists, the most important one being the Fanac List, where subjects of interest to fans are discussed. There is also a Forum for discussions in a more organized fashion. Many fans and clubs have web sites with current information on meetings and other events, personal comments, con reports and book reviews.
Since the very beginning of Swedish fandom in the 50’s, Swedish fans have had a lot of contact with fans in other countries, perhaps most with fandom in UK and USA. The Eastercons in UK regularly have a Swedish delegation of some 10-20 fans, and there is a group of about a dozen fans who visit almost every Worldcon. Since the Eurocon in Denmark in 2007, Swedish fans have attended Eurocons, and have made international contacts. Thus, the chairperson of the Scandinavian Science Fiction Association, mentioned above, Carolina Gómez Lagerlöf, was elected chair of European Science Fiction Society at the Eurocon in Kiev in April, 2013.

Groups of Swedish fans also regularly visit cons in Finland, Denmark and Norway. An informal relax-con takes place in Mariehamn in Åland every Ascension Weekend. This is usually organised by Swedish and Finnish fans in collaboration and is said to be a cosy con in a friendly atmosphere. The national con in Finland, Finncon, took place in Helsinki this year, and at least a dozen Swedes were present in addition to the Swedish Guest of Honour Stefan Ekman and the fantasy authors Sara B. Elfgren and Mats Strandberg (The Circle).

In May there was an academic sf conference in Uppsala, Time and Space in Speculative Fiction. A couple of fans were attending this conference and listened to papers about alternate histories, monuments of a ruined age in sf films and time-travel stories.

Another recent fan event in Sweden was the Summer meeting of the Scandinavian Science Fiction Association in Stockholm in June, where a few fans talked about authors who were born a 100 years ago (Cordwainer Smith, Alfred Bester and Ross Rocklynne) and authors who will be at the con Fantastika 2013 in October. We could also watch a collection of film clips showing space ships, and pictures taken at recent conventions. At the end there was a grill party, that came to an abrupt end when the fans suddenly were drowned by a downfall accompanied by thunder and lightning.

THE WAY OF SF-FANDOM

by Wolf von Witting

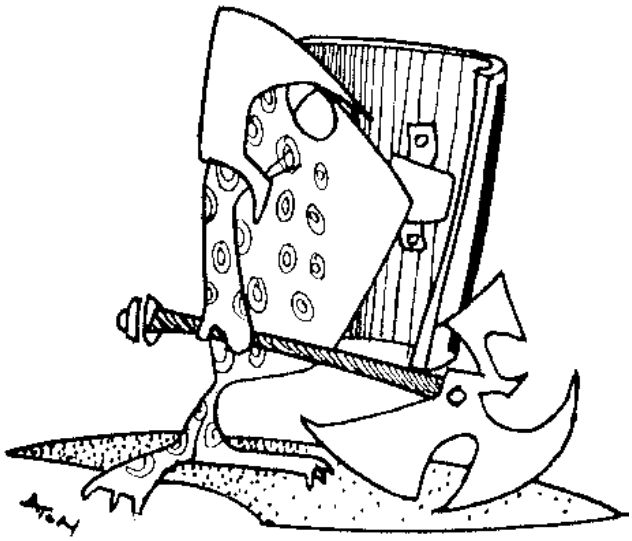
What is fandom about? Wikipedia offers the following explanation: ***Fandom*** *(consisting of fan [fanatic] plus the suffix -dom, as in kingdom, freedom, etc.) is a term used to refer to a subculture composed of fans characterized by a feeling of sympathy and camaraderie with others who share a common interest. Fans typically are interested in even minor details of the object(s) of their fandom and spend a significant portion of their time and energy involved with their interest, often as a part of a social network with particular practices (a fandom); this is what differentiates "fannish" (fandom-affiliated) fans from those with only a casual interest.*

There is even a paragraph about fanac:

Fan activities *Members of a fandom associate with one another, often attending fan conventions and publishing and exchanging fanzines and newsletters. [..snip, snip..]*

Such activities are sometimes known as "fan labor" or "fanac", an abbreviated form of the phrase "fan activity." [..snip, snip..]

Fandom is sometimes caricatured as religious faith, as the interest of fans sometimes grows to dominate their lifestyle, and fans are often very obstinate in professing (and refusing to change) their beliefs about their fandom. However, society at large does not treat fandom with the same weight as organized religion.



Artwork: ATom 1927-1990

I believe we have to accept the mainstream definitions here. Because in some way, it is correct.
What we have to do for ourselves, is perhaps to redefine what we are. I like *Star Trek,* but I am not a Trekkie, nor a Trekker. I like *Doctor Who*, but I am not a Whovian. I like *The Lord of the Rings*, but I am no Ringer, Tolkienist, Tolkiendil, nor a Tolkienite. I am not a fanatic of any kind. And I don't see the point, or necessity to be one. Or one-eyed.

But I am guilty as charged of the following labels: faned, smof, filker, fan-illustrator, fan-writer and fan-historian. But because most of these words mean little to a mundane person, I am sometimes referred to as a amateur-publisher, sci-fi-film-expert, convention-runner, poet, musician and/or dreamer. The latter a label I had to learn to wear with pride.

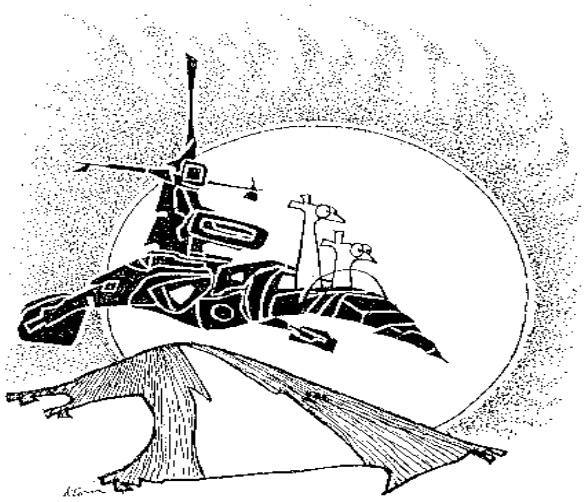
SF-Fandom, to my understanding, was never about worshipping anything or anyone. And It was never about money. But the *feeling of sympathy and camaraderie with others who share* this *interest,* was indeed an important factor, because most people who didn't understand sf as literature, believed I was looking for UFO's. That always made me sigh heavily. There was a time when it wasn't easy to be an sf-fan. We were used to sneers and scoffs.
The paranoia-sf and exploitation B-movies of the 50's didn't improve the impression of sf-fans being weirdos.
I was in my teens in the 70's, excused and expected to be a weirdo. But among sf-fans I was accepted as a *normal* person. And age was not an issue. In sf-fandom I never heard the argument; "Oh, you will understand this when you get older." Sf-fandom was not just a place where fans meet stars.

Yeah, I was struck with awe when I first met people like Walter Ernsting and Willi Voltz, as well as when I first encountered John-Henri Holmberg or Sam J Lundwall. (John-Henri had in 1974 written a small history of SF in Swedish and on its cover was a rather impressive artwork by Chris Foss. I had John-Henri signing this book for me [june 1999], because it was an essential piece of writing in my personal developement away from Perry Rhodan and towards broader scope on sf-literature.) But them, coming out of sf-fandom themselves knew how we felt and didn't make much of any fuzz about it. They were not big stars in any mundane sense of the word. Those were also the days in which every other sf-novel I read happened to be translated into Swedish by Gunnar Gällmo. I was beside myself with joy, when Gunnar became a regular visitor to NasaCon in the 80's. I may never have told him, that he too was among the *heroes* of my youth. Well... he might read this here and now. Because that's how I felt.

Our heroes were not the heroes of the world. The world had Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe and the Beatles. We had Isaac Asimov, Stanislaw Lem and Arthur C Clarke... Okay, so there were some heroes we had in common. That would have been men such as Yuri Gagarin, John Glenn and Neil Armstrong.
...or even Albert Einstein.
I could rarely deal with popular culture.

I was truly amazed to find myself liking the music of ABBA in the 70's. ABBA!? Everyone was listening to them, it was completely out of character for me to like them. I was listening to Genesis and Jethro Tull.
...and one reason why I like Lord of the Rings and the current filming of The Hobbit, is because I read those books in the 70's. One very important observation I made very early on in life, was that if a lot of people are going in one direction, I better head the other way. So, no... I am really not interested in reading any Harry Potter.

TOO OLD TO ROCK'N ROLL, TOO YOUNG TO DIE
Becoming fashionable was an interesting experience when it happened the first time. In choice of music, it wasn't Jethro Tull who first became *popular*. It was Peter Gabriel and Genesis. In the 80's, they decided to make pop music and sell some more records. Which they did.
With Star Wars, Alien, Blade Runner and Terminator, the film-industry was setting up one blockbuster after the other. Fantastic! Slowly, but surely, also sf as literature was moving to the popular side of the fence.
While Swedish sf-conventions remained small, customers at the sf-bookshop in Stockholm proved that interest in sf was increasing. Now sf-fandom in Sweden is booming, so it seems.



Artwork: ATom 1927-1990

But what are we heading for? A fandom where fans meet *the stars*? A place for idolizing and worship? I sincerely hope not.

Also... there is a total over-production in all areas of writing. We are being bombarded with all kind of shit these days. At the magazine stand I can find everything about cars, computers, boats, tits, human beings of royal birth, cinema and their stars, music and their stars, etc None of that appeals to me. What appeals to me I find only in fanzines. Once upon a time, fanzines used to come by the dozen every week. Today, they are more scarce. The ones I get are coming from across the Atlantic.

I have already accepted fanzines as coming in pdf-format and *FANSTUFF* by Arnie Katz beats every magazine at a stand here in contents even remotely interesting to me. So does *any* other sf-fanzine btw.
Because fanzines made today, are mostly made by old fans. Fans who never quit.

Some fanzines even come on paper. Such as CHUNGA, FLAG (which **only** comes on paper), VANAMONDE, TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS and POPULAR EPISTOMANCY. Gosh! It feels like old times, holding a paper-fanzine in your hand. I wish I could afford to print mine. But I can't, sorry!
I hope you can.

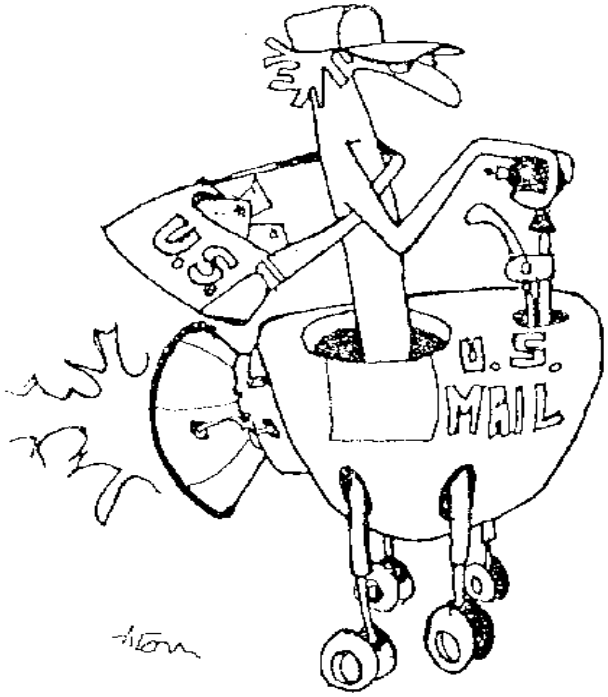
Fandom, as I recall it, used to be outsiders of society coming together and exchange ideas. In this I found not only intellectual, but also spiritual challenge. The former and the latter being equally significant and I don't recall age, gender, religion or sexual orientation ever having been an issue. And while it is nice to have a lot of people attending a convention, I am a little bit worried that we might lose the essence of what fandom was about, as it appears to have been lost in Gerfany. It might appear paradoxical to push for more fannish influence, when most of what fans always wanted, was to become pro.

Bear in mind, that whatever you do, you should be motivated by *the fun of it*. It ought to be mandatory for conventions to include the fun. Games, more social games. Like the peanut-race we had in Sverifandom (similar to the Marzipan-potato-rally they had or still might have at HanseCon in Lübeck, aka the Great Egg Race). Or why not "Kubb"? Simply rename the game *"Neutral Zone"*, make the king DS9 and have teams such as Federation, Dominion, Klingon, Cardassian, Romulan, Jem-Hadar, Bajoran, Breen, etc With the batons you attack each others outposts along the Neutral Zone. As all outposts have been eliminated, you go for DS9. Only Trekkies might object to the fact that DS9 isn't positioned in the middle of the Neutral Zone, but hey... it's just a fannish game!

And fannish awards are important. Having a FGoH is important. Noticing the people who work and never care about getting paid for it.
It is very important. Money is a fleeting commodity, but recognition lasts forever. An honour bestowed, is an honour bestowed. It is a value which can not be bought.
Yes, yes, I know there is such a fan-philosophy as commercialism, I'm just at the opposite end of the scale. And I like it over here. - WwW-

LOC AROUND THE CLOCK

Letters of Comment can also be submitted in German, Swedish or Italian. Short comments also in French, Russian and Romanian. All will be translated into English. You can msg me on FB or send an email to: wolfram1764-at-yahoo-dot-se.



Gregory Benford

Veeery interesting history of the Ur Gerfandom.

I recall the Wetzlar Con, my first--had not known it was the first non-Anglo Saxon con. *("The Swedish convention would have been the first sf-convention not held on Anglo-Saxon soil, had it not been for Anne Steul, Ellis Mills and the Benford twins."* -- wow!)

It seems Jim and I are the sole survivors. Had not known Julian Parr was gone.

Walter Ernsting: *"Some fanzines in English language claim he had been at Stalingrad. This is incorrect."* What's the evidence? I seem to recall Earnsting told me this in person. At the time I was reading auf Deutsch Die Eisenkreuz by Willi Heinrich and was fascinated with the Eastern Front where the war was truly decided.

"Poor Greg was at loss, for his German wasn't up to the task;" I couldn't get through their thick Hessian accents, but yes; we were 14, in Deutschland a year then.

" Then Greg read a carefully prepared account of SF in the USA in halting but curageous German. I thought I could detect a Steulish influence not only in his classic German but also in his statement that the disapproval of the fans had forced American pro-editors to refrain from overstressing the science component in SF."

Exactly as I recall. But we knew little of ASTOUNDING so my comments didn't mean much...& still we were on our way to the position known now as hard sf.

""What, me?" said Greg, shocked. "I don't read science fiction!" - Ernsting had no sense of humor...

As Perry Rhodan-series proved & undermined the views of Deutsch sf in USA; I saw that happen--only Forry Ackerman & wife liked them. (Of course; they represented & translated them.)

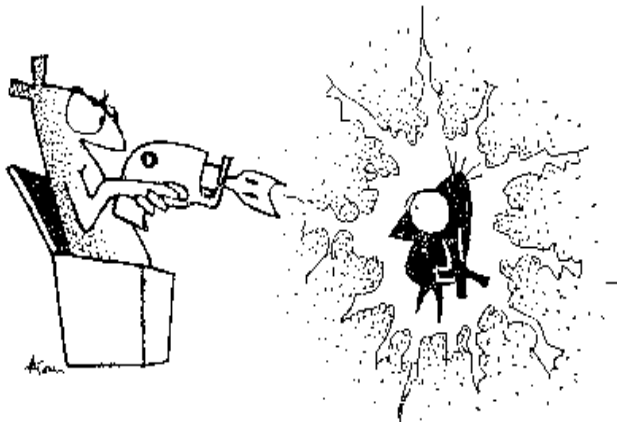
So...reading this history..why IS Gerfandom filled with feuds and quarrels? (I like your term Gerfany better.)

ED: *One can always count on the Brits to come up with a witty term like Gerfany. Why it IS filled with feuds and quarrels remains perhaps a mystery. My theory is that the trauma of WWII and the inability to process the shame and guilt connected with it, has created this deadly seriousness in every other area of German post-war activity. It's just a theory. Does anyone have a better explanation?*

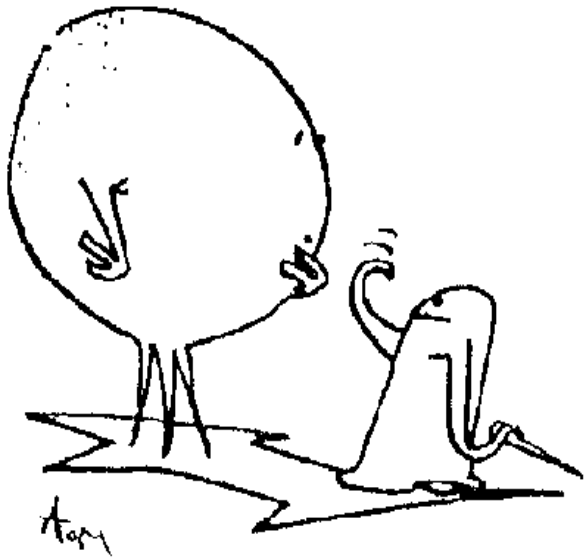
German post-war science fiction doesn't get much better than Perry Rhodan. I have to admit not having read much of Wolfgang Jeschke, who surely was above most of his contemporary. Today it is Andreas Eschbach whose writing is very convincing and might deserve translation. But the main bulk of German sf is stuck in Rhodan, who appears to be the only true immortal alongside the Doctor.

Sure, Ernsting had a sense of humour. You just have a different sense of it. So I talked with Heiko Langhans, the author of his biography and with Walter's son and daughter (see the Garching-Conreport). At least we can assume that he himself is the cause of these false rumours. Let's just account it to his different sense of humour.

I've met a good number of soldiers, who had returned from WWII and what they all had in common, was a really weird sense of humour.



Artwork: ATom 1927-1990



Artwork: ATom 1927-1990

Rainer Eisfeld, Osnabrück, Germany

Re.: CounterClock #14 (May, 2013),
p. 16: Cloak and Dagger Fanac

There are enough conspiracy theories floating around in the world, without any need for supposedly sensible s-f fans to indulge in more "cloak and dagger" stuff, thank you. If Ernsting should, in fact, have attended the 1958 Zurich Eurocon "under cover", sporting "a fake beard" (perhaps even a rodent tooth, similar to the one he later invented for Perry Rhodan's alien Gucky?), I would consider such behavior rather juvenile. Still, from Ernsting's standpoint I suppose it could make a certain sense, because he might throw a spanner in his "enemies'" works.

What conceivable sense could such shenanigans – if they ever happened – have made, again from Ernsting's point of view, a year earlier in London? What in the world makes Witting think that Ernsting might have been flitting, apparition-like, through the corridors of the King's Court Hotel? Merely Mielke rehashing the old chestnut of having been there together with Ernsting?

If Ernsting had indeed travelled to London, why would he have left the field to me in addressing the Worldcon luncheon? Why, again, would he have included me, a week later, in the program of the Bad Homburg BIGGERCON to give a talk about the Worldcon (see attachment)? Why would he have foregone the opportunity to have his photo taken with John W. Campbell, Eric Franc Russell, John Wyndham, Ken Bulmer and any number of sf-luminaries? A mere moment's sober reflection shows that the notion of Ernsting playing hide-and-seek at the Loncon is plainly ridiculous - unless, of course, one is prepared to go all the way and suggest that Ernsting was masquerading as m e !

And now to get to the bottom of the alleged "mystery". A little bit of determined research succeeds in digging up the names of the "missing" Germans from the London Worldcon program booklet. They are listed as Dr. med. and Mrs. H. Disselhoff, Germany, WSFS members (for the Worldcon) No. 478 and 479. A perusal of the 1955/56 SFCD members' list yields the name and address of member No. 463 as Dr. med. Heribert Disselhoff stemming from Ochtrup, a Northrhine-Westphalian town of, at the time, some 13,000 inhabitants. There is no evidence that he ever engaged in any fanac. However, he and his wife seem to have seized the opportunity to see something of London and, at the same time, attend a unique s-f event.

ED: *Ah, yes! You are of course absolutely right and this balloon deserved to be busted. I have often wondered myself how otherwise perfectly sane people come to write such awful crap as I did there. Now I understand why.*
It's the deadline.
I am guilty as charged in producing (in Swedish, we have a lovely word for it - it is called svammel, meaning words of no significant content and with no sound argument) this nonsense idea. As the deadline draws near, I type more and faster, and fall into ranting. I had my doubts about this particular part, but my brain was at a point near meltdown and I just let it be. I have to learn how to avoid these meltdowns.
I am glad you set the issue straight, though I also regret having been a nuisance here. It might prove more difficult in the future, to be taken seriously. At least by you. How on Earth did you manage to dig up the list of members?

Steve Green
33 Scott Road
Olton, Solihull
B92 7LQ UK

I recall with great affection the copies of Munich Round Up I received in the mid-1980s, and the hope many of us had for a more unified European fandom. Whilst - for instance - the UK convention Novacon still attracts a number of Scandinavian visitors, there does appear to be a curious disconnect between ourselves and our neighbours in Germany, France, Belgium, etc. True, many UK fans once attended the events in Ghent, but that is more than twenty years past. How odd we would rather fly over the Atlantic than stretch our hands across the British Channel.

ED: *I know how to set up a more unified European fandom, but I am not the person to run it. There are some Finns, Romanians and Croatians and Swedes, who I believe to be far better suited. A new board of the ESFS is a good start. The stretching must of course go both ways between all parts. Including Gerfany, France and Spain.*

The main problem for European fandom is and will always be, the multitude of languages. I've been thinking a lot about the Finnish WorldCon bid.
Perhaps it would be the greatest wake-up-call of all, if it indeed would become Helsinki in 2015. They CAN DO IT, no doubt about that. The Finns are already running the biggest conventions in Europe.
MRU was one of the most significant German fanzines for several decades. I hope there are still Gerfans who can pick up the fannish banner of Gerfany.

Lloyd Penney
1706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON
CANADA M9C 2B2
May 31, 2013

Thank you for CounterClock 14. It's a good sized zine, and on first examination, I am not sure I can have much to say, but I think here you've done a real service to German fandom by detailing its history. More details as I go through it.

Does German fandom go as far back at 1955? Do you know when SF may have been translated into German, and when was it first published and sold? Great to see that at one point, the SFCD had more than 750 members. So many of the names, both fans and organizations, are familiar because of fan history texts and the fanzine Shards of Babel. This is the kernel of a comprehensive history of German fandom, including the sub-fandoms you detail. Please do continue on with this history, and keep filling in the details.

One book I have tried to get, but cannot find, is Terry Carr's Fandom Harvest. I don't know if it's available as a download, but it is a publication I'd like to read. (There's so many fannish texts I'd like to read, but so many of them disappear into private collections, never to be seen again, especially by newer people who are interested.)

I do not know many German fans outside yourself, but I do know Thomas Recktenwald. There was one Worldcon, it seemed Thomas was assisting with several bids, and we always showed up to pre-support the bids. Thomas seemed to know us very well, and checked his records for our address and other important information. (I also know the German filkers you've worked with in the past, like Katy Dröge-Macdonald.)

My loc…I don't think I will be leaving fandom any time soon. My job hunt continues on, and it's easy to be depressed by what's happening, or not happening. I am glad to know that editors appreciate the letters I write, and I suspect I will do that for as long as fanzines continue to be produced.

Never be disappointed by any fanzine you produce, for it is more than many other produce, and if you are not satisfied with your efforts, do better next time. That sums it up. Many thanks for this issue, and I look forward to the next.

ED: *I've asked the publisher of Fandom Harvest if he still has available copies. I believe he knows you rather well and if there are any left, I think something can be done about it (still waiting for a reply).*
As a letterhack, you have done your 'duty' many times over and if you feel like taking a break, just do it.

Kurd Lasswitz (1848-1910) is hailed as the father of German science fiction. His first sf-story was published in 1871. Lasswitz was followed by Hans Dominik (1872-1945), Otto Willi Gail (1896-1956), Paul Eugen Sieg (1899-1950) and others. Translated sf didn't appear in Germany until after the second World War. But before it, Germany had their own pioneers in the field. Apparently translated sf began with the UTOPIA GROSSBAND Parr discovered in 1954, edited by Walter Ernsting.

A lot of people may wonder what the world would look like, had there been no Hitler. If Einstein, von Braun and other bright German minds could have staid at home.
Then, this fanzine might have been in German language, fulfilling the same purpose.



Artwork: Wolf von Witting 1983/2013

Olaf Brill @FB
Germany

It was a great joy to have met you in Garching in May after those almost thirty years. Hope you made it home well!

This afternoon, I actually did walk up to the attic to look for souvenirs from that time in the 1980s. And I actually found an old programme of the SFCD con in Hannover which we both attended in 1983. I even found a list of participants – and yep, both our names are on it!



Artwork by: Rüdiger W. Wick

I seem to remember parts of that convention very well. Anyhow, I have fond memories of my time in German SF fandom at the beginning of the 1980s. We were a small group of SF fans, meeting regularly in a pub in Bremen. Dieter Schmidt (of "Fandom Mirror" fame) was a regular attendant. He was living in Delmenhorst, a small town close to Bremen. I think school teacher and legendary SF fan Kurt S. Denkena dropped in from time to time as well, and so did SF author Michael Weisser who was living in Bremen and at that time had some success with his novels "Syn-Code-7" and "Digit". He was the "intellectual type" (which showed when he participated in a panel discussion on German SF in Hannover). But he did hang around with us kids which was quite cool.



H G Franciskowsky at home in Hamburg-Stellingen
Photo: Olaf Brill

On another occasion I remember, he drove us to a convention in Schleswig-Holstein in his Mercedes Benz. Perry Rhodan author H. G. Francis, whom we dearly loved, was also attending, a completely different type of author than Michael. One day, we visited Hans in Hamburg, and if I remember correctly he drove a Mercedes as well. Hm, life must have been good for a SF author back in those days!



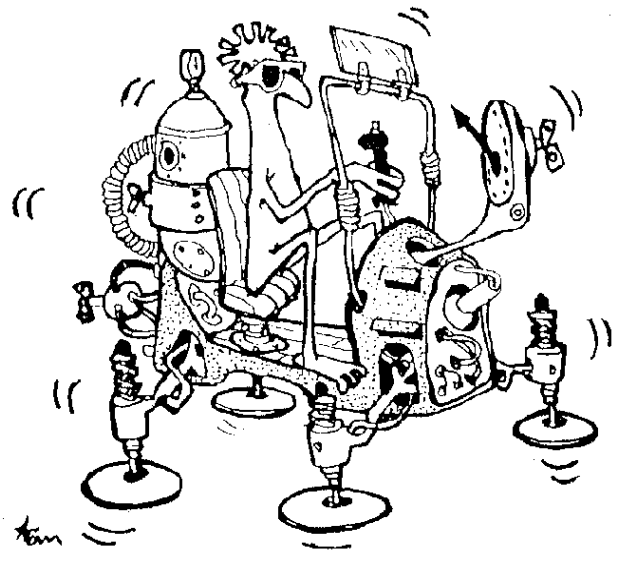
Library showcase of Michael Weisser's books
Photo: Olaf Brill

As leafing through your Counterclock #14 on the history of German SF fandom, I'm remembering Julian Parr who with Walter Ernsting founded the SFCD (Science Fiction Club Deutschland) in 1955, an Englishman who brought SF fandom to Germany! As I told you in Garching, I've met him, not during my time in fandom but later, at the end of the 1980s. We both were members of the high IQ society

Mensa which was founded in England after the war and then slowly became a world-wide community. Julian was a member, and when he came to Germany, he was not only essential to the creation of German SF fandom but also helped establishing a German branch of Mensa (which grew and has more than 10,000 members now). I joined Mensa in 1988 and became quite an active member then. Once, I wrote a press portfolio with a history of German Mensa and therefore corresponded with Julian. I've only met him personally once or twice, at annual gatherings of German Mensa. We also played postal chess. It was in times before e-mail, remember? So we had to write down each move on a postcard, stamp it and send it away each week. I've found some of those chess postcards in the attic today as well, those with personal remarks, one with a postmark from England, others from German locations. Julian wrote about his travels, commented on the game and congratulated me on good moves. He truly was a gentleman. In addition to your data in CC#14, here is a cv he sent me for my press work for Mensa in 1991, in English and German language (pics 4-6). May he be long remembered!

Of course I also enjoyed the Rael Foxboro reprints you gave me in Garching. As you know, I purchased #1 from you back in 1979, and lost it in the course of years. And now, I have it back, and I can even read how the story of the Huup & Tröött GmbH continued in issue #2. Thanks, Wolf! It was a pleasure.

Hope to see you soon on another occasion. We might not be too hale and hearty if it takes another thirty years.



Artwork: ATom 1927-1990

Julian Frederick (Joe) Parr

born 3 August 1923 at Leek, Staffordshire; in September 1951 married Kuni Schumacher (born at Cologne-Rodenkirchen); no children.

After elementary education at Leek and Shelton, Julian Parr won a scholarship to the City School of Commerce, Stoke-on-Trent, leaving late in 1938 with the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Junior Certificate.

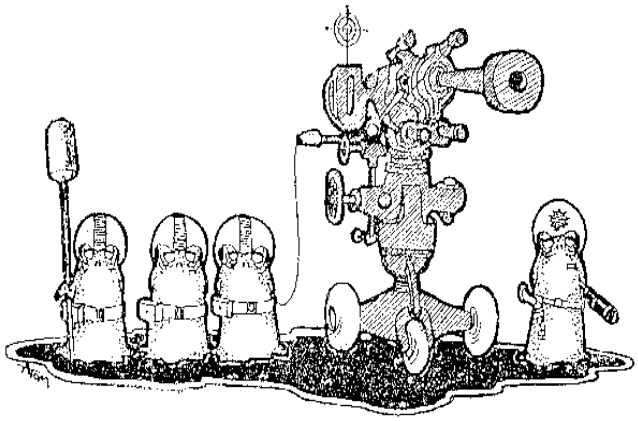
Following employment with a local firm of solicitors, and war service in the Royal Air Force and Combined Operations, he joined the Control Commission for Germany (later UK High Commission). serving from 1946 to 1953 in various centres in North-Rhine Westphalia and Lower Saxony. For the last three years he was a Youth Officer in the Cultural Relations Division (forerunner of the British Council).

After working for 18 months in London with manufacturing and import-export firms, Julian Parr returned to Germany late in 1954 to become the first locally-engaged Commercial Officer at the British Consulate-General in Düsseldorf. In 1958 he joined the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) as Deputy to its Representative in Germany, based in Cologne. He became one of two joint Secretaries of the British Trade Council in Germany (later British-German Trade Council) on its formation in 1960.

In 1963 he left Germany to become head of the CBI West European Department, and in this capacity attended several major promotions mounted by the Export Council for Europe of the British National Export Council (BNEC - the forerunner of the present British Overseas Trade Board), including its first full-scale British Week (Düsseldorf 1964). Early in 1968 he took over as Chief Executive of the BNEC for Europe; its major activities in Germany included the International Marketing Course (Stuttgart, June 1970) and the British Trade Week in Hamburg (October 1971).

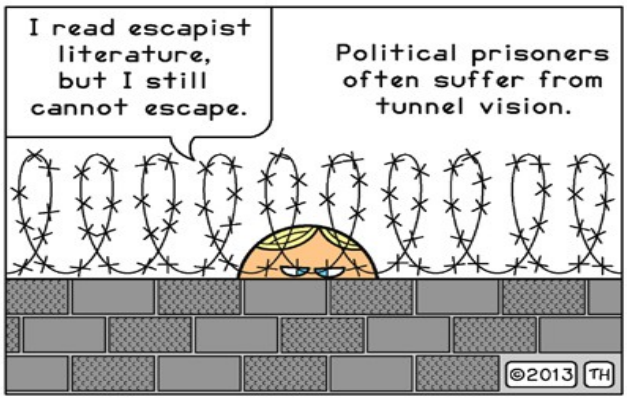
On the dissolution of the BNEC at the end of 1971 he rejoined the CBI to head a newly created department responsible for the coordination of EEC policy work. Within a year this was linked with the European trade promotion department to form the West European division; as its head

Julian Parr became Deputy Overseas Director of the CBI. He was Secretary of the CBI Europe Committee and the CBI's representative on the BOTB European Trade Committee.
He had visited Germany frequently after 1963 on CBI or BNEC business, and had represented one or other of these organisations at almost all annual conferences of British Chambers of Commerce in Europe, which acted as Honorary Representatives of the CBI in their host countries.
In July 1976 he was appointed the first Director of the British-German Trade Council (now British Chamber of Commerce in Germany - BCCG). Initially based within the British Embassy's Commercial Department in Bonn, he set up the BCCG's own office in Cologne January 1978.
On 31 August 1989 he handed over to a new Director, but continues to work for the BCCG on a part-time consultancy basis, with a special responsibility for BCCG publications and information papers. He is also a founder member of the Executive Board of the BCCG Scholarship Foundation, and has been an oral examiner and invigilator for the Commercial English examinations of the London Chamber of Commerce since the BCCG introduced these in Germany 1979. From 1988 he served as an oral examiner for the Düsseldorf Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
Julian Parr was a member of the Board of the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft, Cologne, and a lecturer at the European Business Manager course run by the Seminarzentrum Göttingen.
In 1986 he was awarded the MBE.



Artwork: ATom 1927-1990

ED: *Wow, Olaf. That should leave all questions answered about the further fate(s) of Julian Parr.*
I had to google the MBE, being the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. Gosh wow! He did well, talking around all those tables in conferences. Thank you, for this additional information.
Concerning Hannover 1983, I'm beginning to doubt my memory. Some events I mix up with the convention in Mönchengladbach 1982. I would have to dig out the old fanzines produced in connection with the event.
Btw. Huup & Tröötmaschine GmbH (being the Mars-Ipans, small green men with a big funnel for a nose and antennas), translates into English as Hoot & Toot Ltd. The designer of their spacecraft being Joachim Henke, which you find on the centerfold of RF # 1. Which reminds me, I ought to return to some comedy.
Maybe in the next issue.



Artwork: Teddy Harvia

Rolf Strömgren

Stockholm, Sweden
(LoC translated from Swedish)

Hello again! Nice to see you are back up with CounterClock, even if I discovered it a bit late.

I had a hard time finding a functional email to you and was seriously considering returning to the old biblical way of delivering LOC's on stone tablets, but now I discovered your new email, so the impending crate delivery has been commuted.

CoClock 13: You were concerned with the lack of LoC's. Could it be, because we didn't find you? Did you post on fandom.se, the relax- or fanac-list? It might prove a valuable amendment to twitter and facebook. The same goes for your copies of VÄ, which no one appears to be interested in. Have you asked on fandom.se or fanac?

You contemplate on the problem of inventing new creatures. Have you considered looking at weird deep sea fish or observed delightful images of microscopic mites and ticks? The Acarina make impressive monsters. Or cute as pets.

And your of flight disabled pegases immediately brings me to associate with hazards in traffic. You come in full dash around a bend, encountering a flock or herd of pegases, Do you have enough time to brake. I distimtly doubt it. :-)

CoClock 14: That was a thorough stroll through German fandom! Dare I say German quality? And do I understand it correctly, we swedish fans are more fannish than the Gerfans?
This also Reminds me of the Eurocon/Swecon 2011 in Stockholm, where I met a charming young woman from Germany by the name of Meike. She had been trying to find fandom in Germany but failed. Then she discovered there was a convention running in Sweden and simply decided to go there on her own. I believe she had a good time. Can we hope she will turn up for Fantastika 2013 as well?

WWII: We also have our small trauma, perhaps not as deep and known (or famous) from the Swedish extradition of Baltic soldiers and the German traffic through Sweden. I don't know if we ever brought it up properly and resolved the issues.
<politics>We were well prepared in those days, and if we should believe our governing Moderate Party, then it is so now as well. We simply don't scramble any fighters to intercept Russian simulated attacks against Swedish territories.</politics>

Make-believe Nazi Germans: The question was, are the jokes about Germans or about Nazi's?

Generally one can make jokes about the perpetrator, and followers, but not about the victim.

Take the Monty Python-film *Life of Brian*, for example. IMHO it doesn't make fun of Christ or God, but about their imbecile followers. Everyone together now: *"Yes! We think for ourselves!"*

Or pedofiles - we make jokes about pedofiles, even though most of them appear to be tragic cases, but we don't joke about the victims.

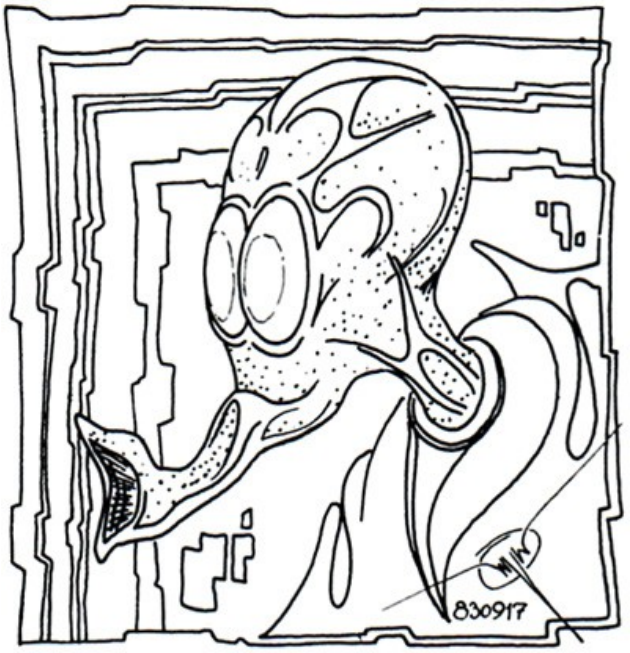
I wonder if the problem really is a question of guilt by association. It's very funny to joke about the nazi's, but they all have this German accent, so it rubs off on all Germans.

Now I am anxiously looking forward to the next issue of CoClock, which ought to appear before Fantastika 2013. And connecting to Lloyds comment, don't worry, you've got **two** readers.

ED: *Ho-ho! Actually, it was a bit of a joke when I said I only have one reader. Sometimes it seemed that way. But it appears actually, there are a lot more.*
My son also reads it, occasionally.
Yes, Sverifans are more fannish than Gerfans.
And you are absolutely right, I should make it more obvious where to, to send comments. You are not the only one, having had trouble finding me. However, since CounterClock has returned to regular publishing, it should be more and more people, who eventually find their way to the LoC-Column.

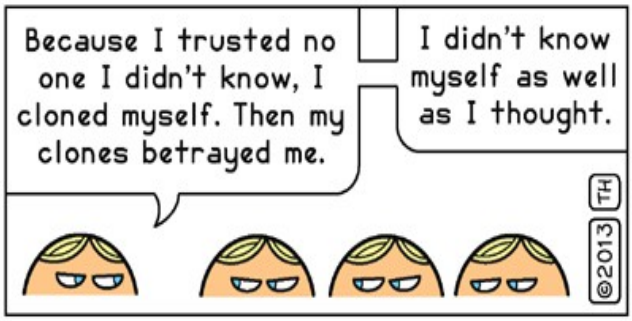
My studies of Swedish History gave me the impression, you had your major trauma 300 years ago. The fierce Swedish warriors lost their balls at Poltava in 1709 and haven't found them again ever since. The entire nation now is fainthearted and ruled by their women. Yes, please, do counter my prejudice argument and prove me wrong. Please!

WAHF: **Klaus Eylmann**



Artwork: Wolf von Witting, 1983

Next issue is scheduled to appear in November 2013. Deadline for contributions which need to be translated is the October 31st. Terminal deadline November 9th. Again, wrestling with deadline, a few drastic changes were made last minute. Temperature in early August were not the least merciful this season. It's neither easy to think, nor work in heat such as this.



Artwork: Teddy Harvia



http://www.helsinkiin2015.org/

Helsinki in 2015 is a bid to bring the 73rd Worldcon to Helsinki, Finland, to be held **Thursday 6 August – Monday 10 August 2015** at the Helsinki Exhibition and Convention Centre. We're an international crew of conrunners, with a Finnish core, and we're hoping to build the most international Worldcon yet.

We believe in Worldcon; we believe in its scope and its format. If those were to change too much or too fast, the world would soon have a Worldcon-shaped hole in it. What we want is to add to Worldcon's membership, and its reach, internationally. We want to give European fans a chance to come to London in 2014, to see and experience what a Worldcon is, and to then be able to bring their friends and family again to Worldcon the following year. Many of them will also help organise Worldcon with us, having the chance of attending more than once.

If we get them to do that, then, well, it's almost as if we're talking about building a **European fandom**, as opposed to our current collection of many national fandoms. We also believe Nordic and Finnish fandom in particular has a lot to show to the rest of the world, and we'd very much like the opportunity to shine.

Want to help bring Worldcon to Helsinki in 2015?

1. Get a supporting membership ($60) for this year's Worldcon (LoneStarCon 3 in San Antonio, 29 August - 2 September 2013)
2. Pay the voting fee ($40)
3. Print out the site selection ballot, fill it and seal it as instructed
4. Contact info@helsinkiin2015.org and we'll make sure your ballot is delivered (either by mail for delivery by 18 August, or hand-carried by someone going to LoneStarCon)!

Support the Bid

If you'd like to give us your support, you may join us as a pre-supporter via our online shop, which has the following to offer:

€20
Pre-supporting membership

€40
Pre-opposing membership

€60
Upgrade to Friend of the Bid

€80
Friend of the Bid

How to vote for a Worldcon in Helsinki

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A longer explanation

Worldcons are voted on two years in advance, so this year we're voting on the location for Worldcon in 2015. Everyone that's a member of this year's Worldcon (LoneStarCon 3, 29 August - 2 September 2013) gets to vote. If you just want to vote

on site selection, you should join as a supporting member, which is $60. If you join before the end of July, you'll also get all the Hugo-nominated literary works as ebooks, and get to vote on the Hugo Awards.

Once you're a member of this year's Worldcon, you need to buy an Advance Supporting Membership for the 2015 Worldcon. That costs $40, and lets you vote on site selection. It'll also give you the same Hugo rights for 2015 as you'll get this year, as well as providing you with the cheapest upgrade cost to a full attending membership of the 2015 Worldcon. Both of these memberships may be paid for online, via PayPal or with a credit card.

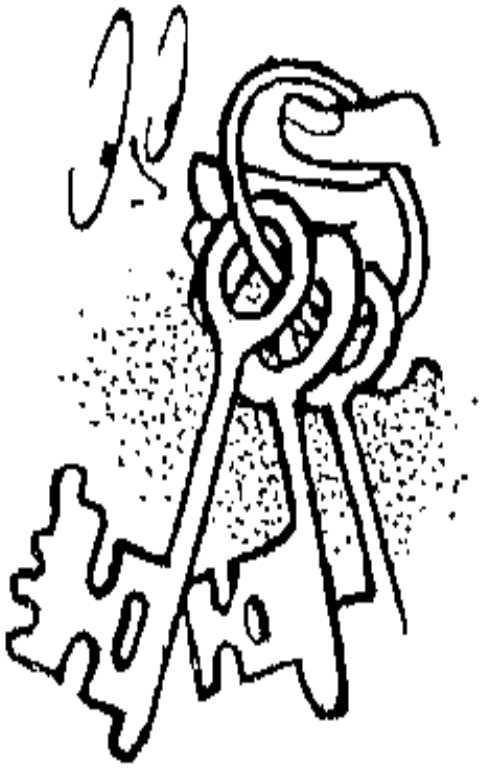
Once you've paid up, you can fill out this ballot and vote! You don't actually need to come to the Worldcon to vote, though. You can mail in the ballot (which must be received by 18 August) or give it to a friend who's going. The ballot itself has rather good instructions for how to fill it, which you should read in addition to this guide.

The vote itself is preferential, so in the lower part you should put numbers next to the choices you like, starting with a "1" for your favorite. This year, there are three announced bids: Helsinki, Orlando, and Spokane. You can also vote for "none of the above", a write-in candidate, or for "no preference". If you put down a number for "no preference", any further numbers don't count. If "none of the above" wins, the WSFS Business Meeting gets to decide what happens.

Unless a single bid gets a majority straight away, the ballots get counted multiple times, at each round taking out the least-voted-on choice and assigning that ballot's vote to its next-numbered choice, until one choice gets a majority. This way, your voice can be heard even if your first choice doesn't win. If your first choice does win, your second choice doesn't impact the end result.

Once you've put down your numbers, you need to fold the ballot where it says "fold here", and then tape it along the indicated line so it stays closed. Then you're done! Just remember to mail it in, or get it carried to the convention!

More information about Helsinki in 2015 on their website:
http://www.helsinkiin2015.org/



Artwork: ATom 1927-1990

COUNTERCL◷CK
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