CounterClock

ISSUE # 16 - NOVEMBER 2013

INTRODUCING THE:

EUR🕘PEAN EVENT CALENDER

WETZCON 1956 - through the eyes of a 15 y.o. GREGORY BENFORD

My BIG BROTHER * L🕘Col

TIME IS AN ILLUSION. LUNCHTIME DOUBLY SO. (D.Adams)



Coverart by Wolf von Witting / Monica Marin (Crematorium, Bucharest)

Take this kiss upon the brow! And, in parting from you now, thus much let me avow- You are not wrong, who deem that my days have been a dream; yet if hope has flown away in a night, or in a day, in a vision, or in none, is it therefore the less gone? All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream. (Edgar Allan Poe)

THE PR◴CESS OF WRITING...

has been foremost on my mind, ever since I first began to publish CounterClock. To improve my diction, to find generally stimulating and amusing things to write about and to investigate if there ever was any thought on my puny little mind worth preserving. I can't possibly be the judge of this myself. And the power of words range beyond their written manifestation. True or false, words cause consequences. It is strange, considering how little we all know, that so many feel their opinion matters enough to go public with it.
Recently I was told that scientists have concluded that the coming generations are going to be more intelligent, since they are being bombarded with information. I doubt this. I wish it were so, but the sheer volume of disinformation everyone in fact is being bombarded with merely serves to confuse.
Some have noticed how their brain starts working as their lips stop moving. Many appear to be afraid of the apparent emptiness of silence. Yet, only in silence, we find peace to process what we have learned.
I seek silence as much as I seek knowledge.

The first great disturbance of peace to go was the TV-set [I still can see films and TV-series using a dvd-player and a digital projector].
Oh, what wonderful peace, not having my time wasted by commercial intermissions. Moving from the city to the countryside was another splendid idea. Precious little advertising is done here.
The distance to airports, railway station, hotels, cinema, shops, etc, is still the same as before. But their are fields of waving corn, tree plantations, brooks and other farmland in between, instead of clusters of condominiums.



Toon by Bill Rotsler 1926-1997

You meet fewer idiots around here. Yes, you meet less academics as well. But absolutely no misfit youngsters who vandalize out of boredom, no drunk supporter hooligans roaring in the night, no drug peddler on the corner, no vomit left behind by disorderly kids, etc And when there is a bad apple in this village, everyone knows who it is.
The latest great disturbance to peace going, was the mobile phone. It could not really do anything my computer can not do for me. And when I am busy with something other than the computer, I do not really need to be interrupted by a call. I am simply not an important enough person. Any message to me can just as well be sent through email or FB. I read those messages every day.

I read A LOT when I was young. Among the books I read was *The End of Eternity* by Isaac Asimov, but I have to admit I can no longer tell you what it was about. I do not have the slightest clue.
I forgot. I had already forgotten it in the 90's.

- -

1984

I recall the actual year very well. At the time, as it came about I was working as a language teacher in a school in the Stockholm suburb of Orminge.
It was the first (and only) year, that I had the task to give students their final grades. A quite uncomfortable task, if you bear in mind their future may depend on your verdict. What is really to say, what a students effort is worth, and how do you value them? Some work really hard, to achieve good results, but you do not necessarily notice them, nor can you tell from how they act in class. The quiet type can make an intelligent impression merely by keeping their mouths shut. Yes, you have test results giving you a decent indication, but as I recall from my own days in college, the feelings of a teacher about the student taint the grade more than what the teacher wants to admit. And I liked all of my students, more or less. This moral dilemma was an unsolvable issue for my conscience. I quit after the end of the semester.

On June 30th to July 1st NASACON V was held in Villa Caprifol / Saltsjöbaden. It was the 4th (of 6) conventions held at this location and gathered more than 60 fans. Our Guest of Honor was Lars-Olov Strandberg, the *grand old fan* of Sverifandom.
Ahrvid Engholm introduced the Great Peanut Race, in which the object of the game was to fabricate a device with which a peanut could be transported a distance of 4 meter (without destroying the peanut).
I happened to win the first edition of this race using a mimeograph.
And early in August I packed my bicycle and went down to Germany. 1,600 km in two weeks (resting a

day in Kalmar / Sweden, one in Cologne and 2 days in Recklinghausen / Germany).
Best average distance was between Travemünde and Recklinghausen, 450 km - which was traversed in 2 days. After this accomplishment, if memory still serves, I momentarily turned into a big a-hole of self-confidence and gratuitous selfishness.

BIG BROTHER



Dieter von Witting 10th Sept 1954 - 30th Sept 2013 and myself at the small mountainside castle of Artegna in north-eastern Italy 2010.

This summer my brother said **we** ought to write a book about our childhood. The astute reader has already deduced that there can be no such book.
A few paragraphs in CounterClock will have to do.

Our parents met on midsummers eve 1953 at a barn dance located in the coastal forest near Borgå in Finland. Dad was a German sailor and the cook aboard his ship, mum was an aspiring art student.

Upon concluding my limited research, I found that he dreamed of becoming an actor, something he may actually have had a natural talent for. Apart from this artistic assertion and both being incurably romantic, their main common interest was music. Mum was playing the piano and dad was singing.
Actually, dad was doing passable impersonations of Zarah Leander (1907-1981), which eventually led him to sing with big band back-up on national radio in Finland. At a rare occasion, when she herself was in the audience, Zarah Leander stepped up to him and thanked him for doing such a great job of it. He was dressed up as she used to be, with make-up and imitated all of her characteristic gestures while singing. He did sound a lot like her. He was after all her biggest fan. And she considered it an awesome compliment.
He just was no good at holding a job for long.

My brother was born 1954, my sister in 1956 and I came just before the end of the decade. We were all born in Borgå, roughly 40 km east of Helsinki, which gives the impression they lived there throughout the 50's. Not so. Between every birth, they fled the family enterprise at the Borgå Steam Sawmill and lived in Helsinki where dad occasionally earned a living in the warehouse at Stockmann's.

Yuri Gagarin's orbit around the Earth on 12th April in 1961 was great news on my mother's side and she recaptured the space program since Sputnik for us.
While dad was passionate for the stars of the silver screen, the stars of the sky were her domain.

But frictions with mother-in-law and dads attachment to his own mum prompted us to relocate to Germany in the early 60's. To the town of Recklinghausen in the Ruhr-area. Again, frictions with mother-in-law (the other one), made life sometimes a little difficult for all of us. But I learned something very important in these years. I learned to turn over the 45 rpm single we had of Smetana's *Die Moldau*, so I could listen to the second half of the musical masterpiece.

I distinctly remember the 23rd of November in 1963. My parents were very upset, because this Kennedy person had been shot. I figured it must have been a close friend of my parents.

Out of the blue I got my first kiss in Recklinghausen. It was during the carneval, when a I observed a long legged majorette gracefully dancing out of line and towards me and my mum. Suddenly the world went dark and I felt a wet smack right in the middle of my face. Before I had time to wave my arms in defence, she was already back into the parade. I don't know if this has anything to do with it, but since then I have always been a sucker for legs.



Recklinghausen majorette, photo, copyright: Henning Kaiser

Quiet family life ended abruptly with a big bang early in 1965, the outer door slammed shut, my brother

and sister were taken to foster parents and dad went back to sea, cooking for sailors. It followed almost a year, when I was alone with mum until she failed to commit suicide on Christmas eve in 1965.
After this mishap she decided to gather her family.
Not until this writing day I reflected over the fact that I saw steam powered locomotives, still used in traffic down there in the Ruhr-area, while humankind was already reaching for the moon. It was the end of an era and the beginning of another.

Our family was re-assembled in Gothenburg 1966. Dad was expected to arrive by boat. But he had to use some trickery to be allowed to sign off. He stuck crochet needles up his nose until it started bleeding, spectacular effect, but fairly harmless, so he assured us. Our first beds were standing on red bricks.
We experienced the moon landing in Gothenburg, but by the time school started, we had already moved to Lund (1969-1971) in the south of Sweden. And two years later we relocated back to Germany.

This moving around a lot as a child was becoming more and more of a nuisance. Having to make new friends again and again. When speaking Swedish, I kept my Finnish accent until the mid seventies, when I became aware of it. The only friends I retained from one place to another were my brother and sister. And so, naturally, we became closely knitted.



Toon by Bill Rotsler 1926-1997

As I may have mentioned in CoClock # 14, our father was 13 years of age at the end of WW II and his job was to dig out the corpses from underneath the ruins. It's not an excuse for how he turned out, but it is well an explanation.

I was 4 when I first got thrashed. He came home from one of his performances as Zarah Leander and I was just happy to see him. I wet my trousers. And that was the reason for the first round of spanking.

I didn't understand this. Neither did I understand that my subconscious reverted back to the safe time as a baby, when I could eat, shit and pee without having to think about where and when I was.
I started wetting the bed at night and generally found it difficult to find my way to the loo in time. This resulted in more and regular beating. I was taken to several doctors who all concluded there was nothing physically wrong with me and I had to be doing it to spite them. More beating. Sometimes with a belt and sometimes with other suitable devices. This must have scared mum a bit, because she gave me a few regular rounds to have it done with by the time he came home.
At some point between the age of 9 and 12, he once had the nerve to complain about his hand hurting after beating me. At that point I decided to become stronger than him. I stopped crying and endured the beating silently. Occasionally I did things to deserve the beating I was going to get anyway.
We were forced to eat whatever there was on the plate and I really happened to dislike some things like boiled carrots, cabbages and sauerkraut.
I solved the problem by accidentally dropping the plate on the floor. Next stop, the bed. With no food.

The 2nd time in Germany, we lived in a small village near Cologne and Bonn (Oberauel, Hennef - Sieg).
These years (July 1971 - December 1974) we lived in a big house and for a while I didn't have to share the room with my brother (or vice versa). It did not take long before I experimented with burning petrol indoors and managed to create a thick layer of soot, even though I had only used a rather small quantity. I recall feeling content when I got my thrashing that day, because it could not possibly outweigh the damage I had caused.

By the time we moved to Stockholm (January 1975) dad got weary of punishing me every morning and the wetting of my bed at night receded. He only kept up the beating as a method of maintaining the usual discipline around the house. When he handed out his final roundhouse, I had turned 18. I raised both fists and looked him in the eyes, ready to punch back with all the anger I had accumulated against him in 14 years of violent rule.
My opposition encountered outrage and disbelief. He yelled at me, scorned and scolded me, but he did not strike me again. After all, inside he must have been more of a coward. Besides, if you look into my eyes, you will *know* I am going to pay back. It was the end of violence in our home. I did not have to hit him. He came to his senses. The year was 1978.

* * *

Dieter, my brother, was always the cool guy in my vicinity. For obvious reasons neither him or me

wanted to become like our father. I did my outmost to impress on him, on my big brother. He taught me how to play chess and I had to learn it so well until I was able to beat him at it. I picked up most of my musical taste by listening to the same music he listened to. It ranged from Jethro Tull's *Aqualung,* Simon & Garfunkel's *Bridge Over Troubled Water* and Black Sabbath's *Master of Reality* in the early 70's to Pink Floyd and the Dubliners in the late 70's (My sister's favourites, Led Zeppelin, sank in much, much later... in the 80's, which I now find a bit odd, considering how much I love their music).
We watched Raumpatrouille, The Prisoner, Star Trek and Time Tunnel together. He read science fiction, so I had to read science fiction (ah, yes... mum had been an influence there as well). And he was never angry with me for wanting to read his books. Quite the opposite. He gave me all of his Perry Rhodan-magazines after he had read them. And then I had to start buying them myself, when he quit reading them. He introduced me to the wonders and mysteries of archaeology, mythology and astronomy. And I absorbed it all and made it my own interests.

In 1970 he built a radio, an alarm system and other neat electronic gadgets using a circuit board, diodes, transistors, switches, tin and a soldering iron. He was 15 years old. This was an act I felt quite unable to follow and even though dad tried to dissuade us both from getting an education, Dieter never faltered from his path to become a civil engineer.
On 16th of December in 1977 my brother insisted we had to go to the cinema together. I had no idea what it was about. But it was the Swedish premiere of Star Wars and he somehow already knew it was going to be a treat for both of us.

In childhood we shared the room, we shared toys, books and music. In life we shared joy and sorrow, the best of times and the worst of times.
I tried so hard to impress him and what in the end really impressed him, was to find that I had sorted out my life, was happy and had found my place on this Earth. That was in the end all it took. When he was here in Italy and could see for his own eyes, that I had found peace and harmony, **that** impressed him more than anything I ever done before. What more can we possibly hope for, for those we care about?
I am bad at remembering people's birthdays. Even the ones of close relatives. We celebrated Dieter's 50th birthday almost a decade ago and I was going to congratulate him again next year. But barely two weeks after his 59th he was taken to hospital. Cancer on the pancreas. In a far advanced stage.
I immediately booked a flight to Stockholm, but on Monday morning, September 30th he died. I arrived on Wednesday, October 2nd. He was buried on 31st of October. I did not know how much I loved my brother until he died. I did not know grief before he died. It was the most profound loss of my life.



Dieter left behind his wife, Maria, three sons (27, 25 and 19) and a daughter (17).

Unlike me, who prepared for the end of days, he believed in the future. He actively did so by joining the Swedish green party (Miljöpartiet) and he was convinced politics could still change the world for the better. He did mostly good and clever things, so his impact on history remains limited. As the *Arrogant Worms* already have established in their song with the same title:"History is Made by Stupid People"

This summer, when I visited Sweden, I decided to spend some more time than usual with my brother. Fortunately. The thought, he suddenly would be no more did not occur to me. Akin thoughts never would come into my mind. He was supposed to outlive me, see his grandchildren and enjoy a long and pleasant retirement. I took my farewell at the funeral with a song by Roger Waters and Dave Gilmour - *Wish You Were Here*. It was a challenging singing act.
"So you think you can tell heaven from hell?"



Artwork by Bo Stenfors, Future Fan # 15

When eyes fail, read with the ears...

Reading became less of a habit as my eyesight began to deteriorate. I was not immediately aware of the change. I just laid down the book I tried to read, blamed the strain on insufficient light and decided that daytime is the appropriate time of day for reading books with small print. When daytime came around I did not find the time to read. It was not until quite a while later, in fact years later, that I finally accepted the bottom line of it. I was in need of reading-glasses. It was not vanity, which had me procrastinating the issue. I guess it was a form of simple stupidity. I have come to accept that even stupidity is part of my existence. It is not something I only see in others, but as well something I occasionally find in my own actions or inability.

Recently the nifty commodity of Audio Books have come to my attention. We all have a computer with speakers and there are loads of free Audio Books for listening out there on the internet. This is an excellent daytime alternative when things need to be done at home, but one does not need to keep ones mind on the task at hand. One can clean the house, make the beds, do the dishes or paint while listening.

The most recent book absorbed in this fashion was the 12 hours long *Flowers for Algernon.*

I was already familiar with the story, since the 1968 film Charly (based on the novel) was part of my vhs and later dvd collection. But I had not come around yet to actually read the book.

I have completed several tests in my life, resulting in IQ-grades ranging from the embarrassing (109) to the flattering (145), and several results I did not even care to inspect. It appears that the main motivator for doing well on a test is the consequence of doing so. Thus, when being tested for adequacy as train traffic controller, I did so well that I was given the hint I could have applied as an air traffic controller.

Immediately I did something really stupid. I did not take the hint.

The pay, at the time (1989) was the same at the railway and how was I to know their (air traffic) salaries would eventually soar towards the sky like the planes did? I might not have gotten the job anyhow. I have always been prone to make stupid mistakes. Sometimes I feel a lot like Charlie Gordon of the book, *Flowers for Algernon.* From my point of view, clever people are clever people *all of the time*. I can't imagine Albert Einstein ever having struggled with math. I can't imagine Ambrose Bierce ever having been anything but a master of cynicism.

* * *

An important detail of George Orwell's vision 1984, was the distortion of history.

- That can't happen as easily today, my son said.

- Oh, yes it can. And it does.

It is uncanny how our reality today has surpassed Orwell. Not only are people voluntarily carrying the instrument of their own surveillance, they even get addicted to having it.

- The truth may be out there, my son then said. It's just that there are so many *truths*, that people have no idea where to look and rather accept what suits their own inclination best.

- Exactly! I could not agree any more with this assessment.

The Huffington Post announced this summer in an article, that Romania was our world's first dystopia.

Things may not be all hunky dory in Romania, but the rest of the world seems blissfully unaware that we all live in a dystopia.

London has more than 4,000 surveillance cameras. Allegedly, a guy was caught littering, got followed all the way home by these cameras and got fined.

Americans believe they have democracy, while all they have is a choice between getting hanged or getting shot. There is no socialist party, no party for the environmentalists. It's either republican (which I interpret as conservative) and democrats (liberals).

Even Sweden, which compared to most countries is a marvel of democracy, has not succeeded. It is always the majority pissing on their minorities. If not on ethnic or religious minorities, then let us at least piss on the people who dare to have an opinion of their own. For their own good, of course!

More than 1,000 Exoplanets discovered

BBC news reports in the 2nd half of October 2013 the 1000-mark of discovered planets outside our own solar system was passed. Thousands more "candidates" await confirmation. Wikipedia is kept up to date on the issue: "*1039 planets in 787 planetary systems including 173 multiple planetary systems as of 6 November 2013.*"



Artwork: "WASP 12B" by Wolf von Witting, 2010

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COUNTERCL◴CK & CL◴CKWISE

The next issue can be expected already in January 2014. After having spent considerable time with German fandom, I will turn my attention to an even older European fandom, namely the Swedish one.

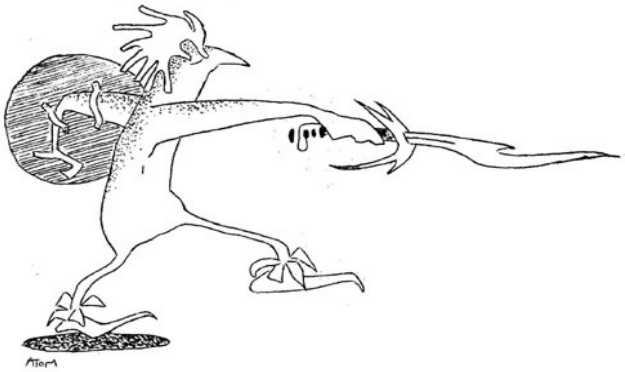


Illustration: ATom 1927-1990

It has also occurred to me, that some of my works are better suited for an independent release. I will therefore introduce a Clockwise complement next year. The first issue to contain all of my *boring* poetry and lyrics, which probably no one is going to read anyway. The 2nd and third, following in 2015 and 2016 containing my genealogical research and an attempt at contriving something similar to a book in volume, if not in shape. The order of which these things are to appear, is as of yet not decided. But *we will* be flipping casually through the pages of Swedish fandom history.

English pr◴ficiency in Europe

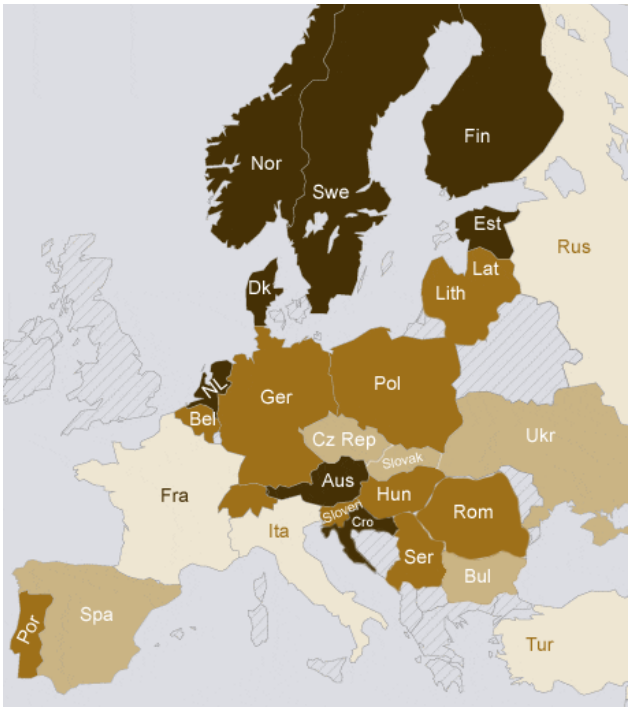
EF EPI - Education First - English Proficiency Index

appears to be an institution measuring the proficiency in the English language in many countries around the world. But their figures are not entirely clear. What does 68.69 for Sweden (Very High Proficiency)mean, compared to 50.97 for Italy?

*In Sweden, I would hazard a guess, more than 90% of the population speak a passable English. And you won't have very much trouble when visiting places like Rome, Venice, Pisa or Florence, but if you want to see the **real** Italy, you have to be prepared for only one out of twenty, being able to communicate anything at all in English language. That's 5 %. So, I assume the above figures reflect how well the people tested did on their tests. And I assume 100 % of them felt able to 'speak English'.*

This has no bearing on how many of the total population are being able to speak English.

I have taken the liberty of filling in the result EF EPI can expect to find (my best guesses) in Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania, Romania and Serbia.



The four countries of Europe in which people are being deliberately deprived of learning English (through having their English/American TV-programs dubbed over by voice actors) are France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

So it is quite surprising to find high proficiency in Germany and very high proficiency in Austria. Must be, that it lies in the German character to keep a sharp mind and learn.

Didn't fill in Greece, but I would expect them to have high a very high proficiency as well.

Only one country is going in "the wrong" direction when it comes to learning English.

The winner is... FRANCE. Their English proficiency is the only one measured which is in decline.

So, if you wish to go there - bring a "Parleur Francais".

Wooff, the Waffle - A Faneds Tale

I have already disclosed some rather embarrassing details about my past, such as having been a bed wetter in childhood and an utter a-hole as a young man. I might as well finish the job and tell you all the rest about me.

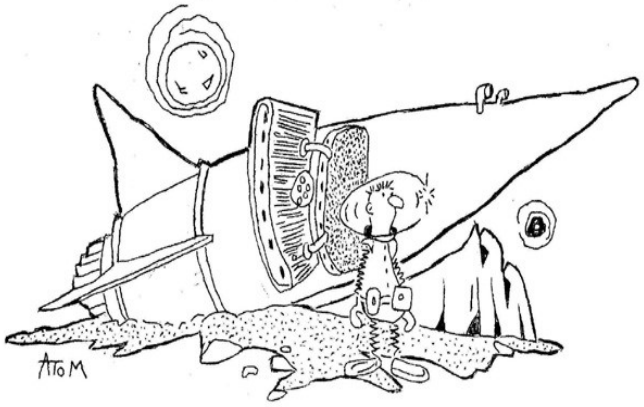


Illustration: Arthur Thomson 1927-1990

It was in 1970 Lund, in the south of Sweden, that I started reading science fiction. I had a friend, which I retained for a while after moving to Germany. It was Joakim Roos, who resembled a younger version of Paul McCartney and who moved to the Bonn area almost at the same time as we ended up in Hennef, not far from Bonn. Joakim had been my best friend in Lund and it is a sad fact of life, that we eventually drifted apart. He was a fun and imaginative person.
He was also the first to call me "Voffla".
Spelled with an "Å" (that's an A with a circle above) it would be pronounced very much the same, but meaning "Waffle" in Swedish. But "Voff" is also the sound a dog makes, when he is barking (in Swedish, of course). So... that would make me "the Woffle" in English. Joakim and I lost touch when I got totally engulfed in the adventures of Perry Rhodan.
Years later, back in Sweden, I guess it was Staffan Mossige-Norheim who discovered an envelope in my room, where Joakim had written to "Vofflan von Witting" and the post office had, of course, dutifully delivered it to me. He laughed out loud and did not hesitate to later spread the word at school.
For a while I was worried, I'd be "the Woffle" for the rest of my life. Bereaved of any respect and dignity.
Returning to Sweden in 1975 was a social nightmare and cultural shock. From Germany to Sweden AND from village life to the big city. I hated it.
I wanted to stay in touch with my friends in Germany, but they were not writing a whole lot, so it happened that I got more and more involved in sf-fandom.
I started another club at the end of 1976, which eventually evolved into Sigma Terra Corps and I attended my first sf-convention in Kleve 1977 (see ConterClock # 4, page 9). Contact with Swedish fandom was not made until January 1979. [Wolf]

I started publishing my first fanzine in 1978 and after getting involved into Swedish fandom as well poured out a flood of mostly crudzines.
By December 1981 I had already typed over 1,000 fanzine-pages and was well on my way to produce my first million words of crap.

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

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During the 80's, my reputation as a fan-illustrator exceeded my reputation as a faned. I guess, this was because the average quality of my drawings was better than the average quality of my writing.
In Germany I was "the Swedish fan" and in Sweden I was the Perry Rhodan (German) fan. But I have been able to speak both languages for as far back as I can remember.
And then there was the smoffing bit. I ran my first convention in 1980 (see previous issue, page 16).
Through EURAPA I began to establish the first contacts in international fandom in the mid 80's. It forced me to produce a number of pages in English language as well.
My first era of fanac was slowly extinguished in the heat of the multiple painful feuds of Swedish fandom in the late 80's and early 90's. Sigma TC was put on ice and we (the former members of the club) met only as friends, but had left Nasacon and all fanzine-publishing behind with a 'grand closure' in 1990.

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The years of GAFIA were not completely void of fannish interaction. Further domestic excavations have revealed that neither contacts nor interest was completely severed. And the young generation of sf and computer-nerds which joined Sigma TC in the late 80's, turned out to be sufficient fuel for a reboot of activities in the late 90's.

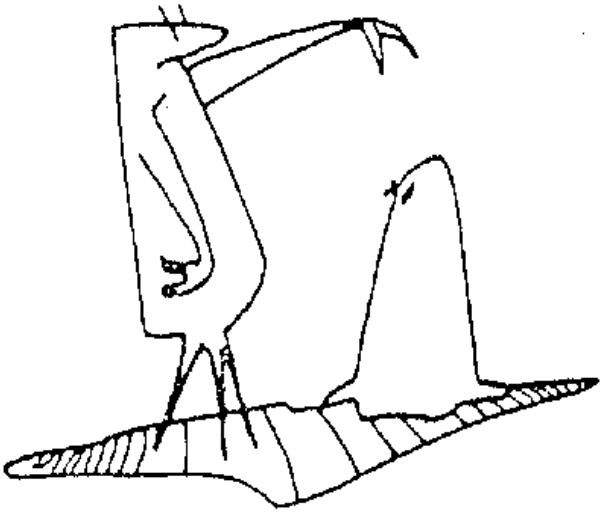


Illustration: Arthur Thomson 1927-1990

In the autumn of 1996, I was virtually forced 'at fun-point' onto the internet. Jan Johansson and Jonas Holmberg provided me with a modem and hooked me up to an ISP. These were the kind of guys, who would not take no for an answer.
"Surf or die!"
"Okay, I'll surf then..."
Most of my adventures in fandom since then have been highlighted in previous issues of CoClock (# 1-9) and perhaps the most significant activity between 1997 and 2003 was filking (playing the folk music of fandom). I got a guitar in 2001 and have learned to play a few chords since then. It's never too late!

The Alvar Award-diploma on my living-room wall for ubiquitous work and achievements in Swedish stf-fandom is a treasure and a reminder of my personal triumph over a turbulent youth in which I was led to believe that I was the black sheep of the family. With being thrashed always comes also the message (even if the words are not spoken) that I am a bad person. I acted the role for long enough.

My first doubts came in 1989, when I had decided to meet my grandfather. Never met him before. My dad was not at all happy, that I had made the decision to go to Bremen and see him. But I went anyway.
And I am glad I did. We talked for a long while and I told him about our lives, about my brother and sister. But I did not feel it necessary to tell him anything about my hobby. An old man would not understand these urges, so I gathered. But after two hours he said to me; "If I could live my life over, I would not have become a ship-engineer and gone to sea. I would have become an Astronomer. But I guess I got that from my father, the sea captain, because he was also immensely fascinated by the stars."
I was totally astounded.
Everyone in our family was fascinated by the stars, except my father. My grandfather also denied his son being his son, but meanwhile acknowledged his grandchildren as such. I guess it was on his behalf more of an intellectual distancing from his son.

With the recent departure of my brother from worldly affairs, more facts about dad have surfaced and it turns out that my father was a lying and conniving scoundrel for most of his life. The black sheep of the family wasn't me, as I always were convinced of, it was he. I don't know if it is a relief or despondency.

But I made friends for life, in Germany as well as in Sweden. The ones you meet at conventions, year after year. It is always a great pleasure to see them again. Now, since CounterClock # 11 I have entered the third era of fanac, in which I consider myself a mere faned, and nothing else. And there is still much to look forward to. There are so many fans I know by name only, which I would like to meet in real life.

Fancyclopedia 3,

http://fancyclopedia.org/
is a collective enterprise of all of fandom. Based on the previous works by Jack Speer (Fancyclopedia 1), Dick Eney (Fancyclopedia 2), and Rich Brown, it is written by fans who want to contribute.

Like Wikipedia, Fancyclopedia is edited by its users. Your editors do their best to maintain a common style and presentation. All fans are free to contribute and edit topics, suggest authors, and argue with the editors on matters of content, style or presentation (And we're going to be less anal than Wikipedia, so hopefully it will be less frustrating to contribute!).

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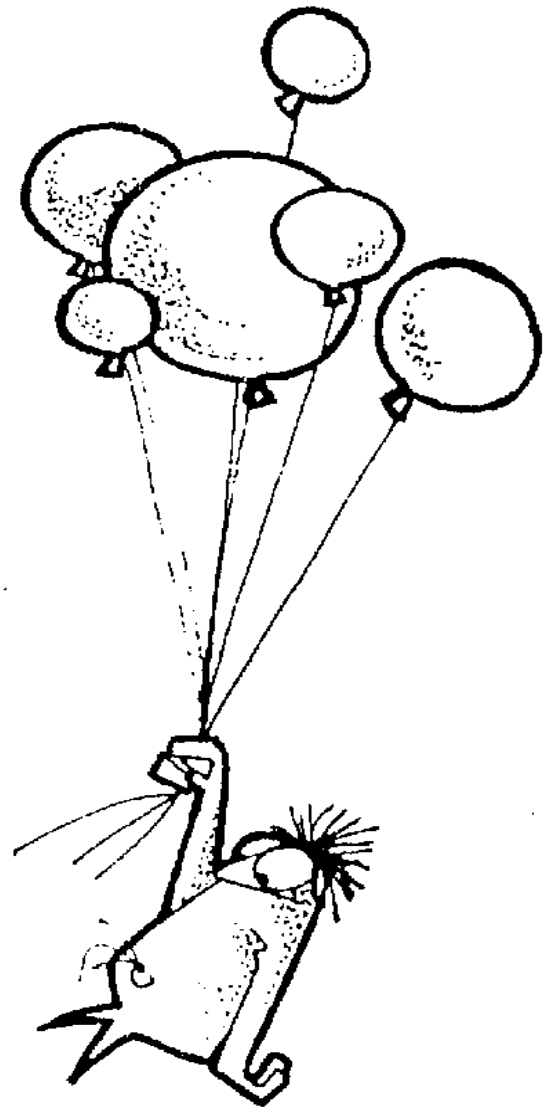


Illustration: Arthur Thomson 1927-1990

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"Sometimes I doubt my sanity. It's usually between 07:00 o'clock in the morning and 22:00 in the evening"
"Blessed are the dead, for they do not have to get up at 05:00 o'clock in the morning!" (WvW)

Now, let's complete the WETZLAR 1956 CONVENTION trilogy with a report from the event written by the then 14 year old (to become famous sf-author) Gregory Benford, kindly provided to us by Jim Benford and previously published in VOID # 5 (1956). It is fascinating how much one can learn from such a young faned. We learn, among other things, that the WetzCon apparently was preceded by a TwerpCon in Antwerp, that Anne Steul had translated the Willy Ley-lecture all night before, but forgot to bring the translation to the con and we also learn that Racey Higgs never cuts a letter.

WETZCON '56, January 14-15th

by Gregory Benford (15 y.o. on Jan 30th, 1956)

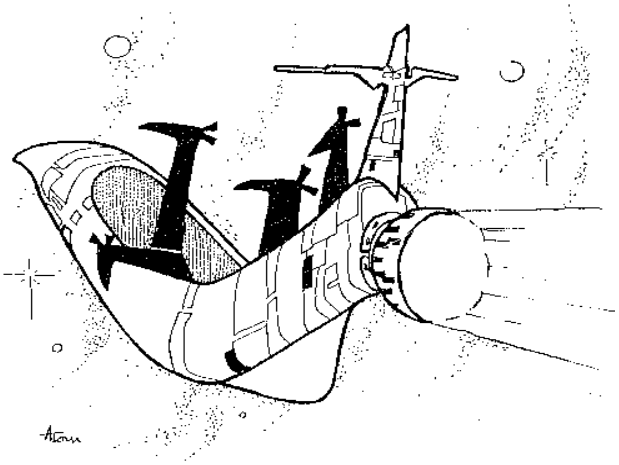


Illustration: Arthur Thomson 1927-1990

Today was the day. And a feverish one, at that. My semester geography assignment had to be finished, some letters written, the place put into some kind of order, and then there was a little job of packing to do. The geography passed the way of all homework (no, I *finished* it this time), Jim took to throwing clothes in a suitcase, John Hitchcock got part of a reply and I stuffed junk into a closet. No work a'tall.

A week before we had managed to run off a batch of quote cards on the school mimeo, of course using a school stencil, paper and ink. We might have made a *few* more than we needed, since we had a large box half full of the things. About 60 copies of each. I stuck some of these, along with an interlineation book which was to become the carrier of the first correspondence between ISFCC members at a con, into my vest pocket and hoped they wouldn't fall out. Jim insisted on bringing along ten copies of VOID to sell (ha-ha) and some food in the form of two candy bars and a box of pretzels.

After a quick lunch we piled into the car and drove over to Wetzlar, a scant 13 miles away. Usually we can find Ann's place easily, but for some reason we managed to loose the way amd wander around for an extra ten minutes. At last, tho, Jim noticed the (in)famous Falkenstrasse hiding behind a building and we had arrived. The directions as to where everyone would be weren't too clear, and for that reason I jumped out and followed the path to the front door. No noise could be heard from within, so I rang the doorbell and hoped. Jim followed me up with the luggage as Ann answered the door, and I walked in. After the customary greeting with Ann, we entered the study (her workshop) and there, sitting in the couch, were Jan Jansen and Ellis Mills, The New Gerfan. Ann introduced Ellis (I'd already met JJ; see VOID 3) and I found myself liking him almost at once. He's what I would call the "typical Amerifan", though it's doubtful that there is such a thing, stands about 5'9", wears glasses, says he's 25 years old, and cracks puns every now and then. Ellis impressed me as a quiet sort of person who occasionally raised his voice to either laugh or shout across a smoke-filled conroom.

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"Did you ever play Russian roulette with a knife?" - E. Mills

- -

People were sitting around talking in groups, getting generally acquainted and tossing insults back and forth. Ann hauled out her new fanmag, FANTUM (German for "fandom"), and I paged through it, noted the egoboo, and set it aside until later. Ellis had come up from Frankfurt Friday afternoon so they would have time to translate the tapes he was going to play, something on fuels by Willy Ley. It took several hours for Ann to translate the thing and type up some copies with Ellis standing standing by and stopping the tape every five seconds. Jan had arrived that morning after riding all the way from Antwerp on a night train. JJ was quite tired from the ride, and I, knowing trains, don't blame him.

Being all Trufen we made for the prozine collection on the wall and soon Ann was yelling at us about "Tearing down the house". But the only thing that came close to tearing down the place was a collection of jazz by Ellis. He insisted on playing the tapes while Jan stood around and listened. Personally, I thought the rhythm was a bit hack-eyed, and the whole set of tunes didn't sound right.

But I'm more of the "smooth" class, and wouldn't appreciate any of the off-on-the-wrong-foot stuff. Ellis told me all about the ISFCC, which I later joined, and all about the EXPLORER and the fact that Racey Higgs never cuts a letter. Shortly afterward we picked out Ann's collection of "Captain Marvel" comics. Among other things, she collects "Donald Duck", "Superboy", "Super Rat" (don't look at me) and a bunch of others I've forgotten. Anyway, we were sitting around looking at fanzines, promags and the forementioned comics and every now and then Ellis would pop up with a quote such as: "Whew! I'm bushed! said the world." or "Holy holey, my spaceship is out of whack!" These amused me to

no end, since I love verbal satires. Especially such nonsense as this.

Ellis entertained us a bit further with a story about Ellison and the test tube, a tale which has probably been repeated many times before. However, none of us had heard it, and got a good chuckle out of it. Also he imitated the "Tucker Public house" speech at (I think) the '52 world con. Really good, if you hadn't heard it.
Around six o'clock we ate supper and collected a few more quotes. JJ and Ellis had an argument about what Germans and Flemish call berries, and Ann laughed through the meal.
Soon it became time to leave; Julian Parr called and informed us that everyone was down at the hotel, and hadn't come over to her place because they didn't know the way. So we packed up and Ann went looking for the person who was to drive us over to the hotel. She had a huge suitcase that would have passed for a midget tank in the dark, and the rest of us had about seven bags altogether. After a short time she and the car, an Opel, came along the road together. This zine goes to many fans who have never seen an Opel. It's one of the smallest cars made in Germany for the family, and judging from the size of it, Germans are either very small or have few children. We debated the possibility of taking the baggage over in the car with one of us (to unload it) and the rest walking. Without even trying to fit into it, Jim and I flipped a coin (we were the smallest) to decide who would walk and who would ride.

- -

"If you ever published a personality-zine, it would be filled with blank pages."

- -

I wanted to walk, mostly because of a fear of Ann's huge bag. But luck was nil, and I had to ride. After loading the luggage I climbed into the back seat, and then noticed that there was some room left. Misery loves company, so I called for someone to come along with me. To this day I still believe there was room for just one more in that car. And I'm probably right.
Ellis piled in, called to Jan, he came, and Ann got in front beside the chap who was to drive us over. But this didn't work too well, because Jim was left standing outside. No problem at all. He simply crawled over JJ, Ellis, and stretched out over the three of us. There were a few efforts to strangle him as he lay there, but Ellis soon gave up when he found his arm pinned beneath someones leg. No one suffered much, tho, or at least there were no broken ribs.
The car jerked to a halt and JJ started moving, so I came to the natural conclusion that we were there.
We were. Only I couldn't tell because there was a solid wall of arms, legs and what appear to be a head next to me and the suitcase blocking the window on the other side. But I managed to get out after everybody else and found JJ brushing off his pants (which received a good brush with a mud-coated shoe, and the rest of them looking around. For some reason which wasn't explained I was chosen to haul out the bags. With Ann's "tank" full of prozines out of the way it was fairly easy - but what a stack of mags! Everyone sorted out their bags and we looked at the hotel. It was one of the chain "Altes Deutsches Haus" type, a good chain, too. And looked very respectable. My heart went out for it, thinking of the things it had unknowingly committed itself to.....

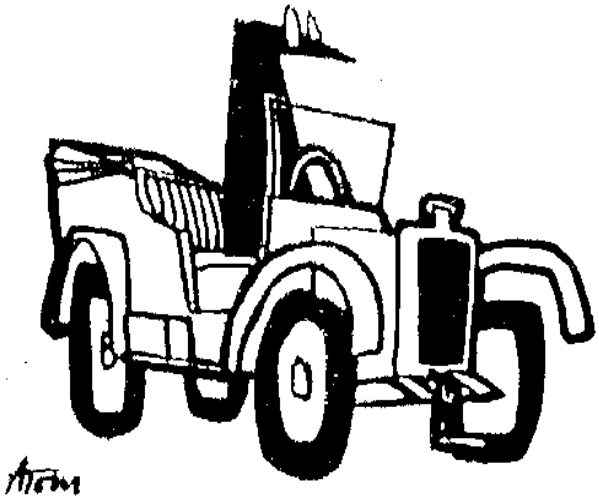


Illustration: Arthur Thomson 1927-1990

As a body we shuffled in. The desk was a bar for some reason, and lucky for us, 'cause *we* had *Jansen*. By agreement we checked in first and got our room numbers. Or should I say Jim and I did, for Ellis and Jan were staying at Ann's house. We all felt it would be better to get squared away with the conroom and our suitcases inside before we met any fen. It seems everyone but I heard a low buzzing of conversation coming from the dining room, and everyone knew it was Julian and crew.
Everyone but I. We got the key to our reserved room and Jim and I went up to put our bags away. For some reason we had room 6, on the *third* floor. It was a good room. I think - there wasn't much chance to see it - but it held our bags, anyway.

Jim and I walked back to the second floor, where the bookstall stood deserted (no books) and then found the conroom. It was located halfway up the stairs from the first floor, and only about ten steps (stair steps of course) from the bookstall. Jan, Ellis and Ann had their coats off and were getting out the prozines while waiting for us, and then we joined forces to hunt out any fen in the area. In the dining room, sitting around a large circular table, were

Julian Parr, Walt Ernsting, E.Richter (a pro author), their wives and a few others I can't remember. The usual handshaking all around and we settled down at another table. Julian came over and talked for a short while until his supper arrived. JP is exact the type of person I thought Walt Ernsting would be, and when I mentioned this later he wanted to know if it was a compliment. I wonder. Like many British fen he wears a moustache along with glasses and a conservative suit. An interesting and humorous personality comes along with it, making quite a bargain. Walt Ernsting is quite a nice guy all around, tho I didn't get much of a chance to talk to him about his plans and soon we were finished with supper.

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"Don't get bheer all over my manuscript." - JP

- -

We talked and drank chola. Julian, Walt and the others came over and sat around the table we were at, as it was the largest one there. Julian, who was sitting next to me, handed over a manuscript which proved to be the review of ANDRO. I read it a little and gave it to Jim to look over. For some reason he passed it around the front end of the table and the thing drew such comments as: "He should pay for the advertising." and "The end paragraph is good." After glancing at it for the second time I noticed a few things that should have been cut out, and mentioned them to him.

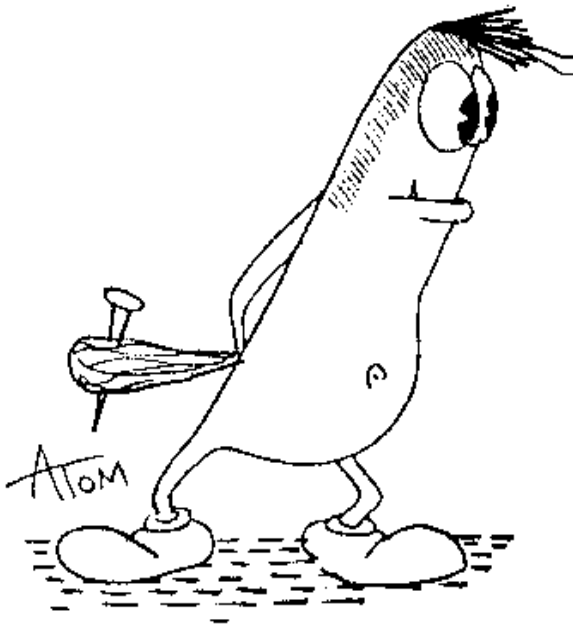


Illustration: Arthur Thomson 1927-1990

He noted them and asked me to mark out what I didn't want and give it to him later. Never a minute wasted on this fanzine.

Talking went on for a while on various subjects until Walt Spiegl and another fan (whom I didn't know) arrived. Ellis pointed out Walt as soon as he was inside the door and was the first... no...second person to shake his hand. Julian is quick on the draw. The Frankfurt fan is around 21 years old, about the same height as Ellis - 5'9", and has a constantly working sense of humor. If you want a sly remark, Walt's your man.

Shooting the bull was the main pastime for another half hour or so until two obviously neofannish German boys walked in and sat down at a nearby table. One could tell at a glance they were for the convention, and Ann was too engrossed in her conversation to get up and greet them. Being a member of the committee I got Julian to come with me to start introducing them. JP got them started off into a conversation and they fitted in perfectly.

Ann motioned to Jim and I and we noticed it was about time for the official program to start. I remained downstairs in a conversation for about five more minutes while Jim went up to the room for our case of promags and books. After dragging Jan away from the table we walked upstairs and met Jim coming down with the mags. Setting them up didn't take long, and a good thing too, for the rest of the fen were at our backs as soon as they were up. A bookseller from Wetzlar had a display ready and I'll bet he cleaned up, 'cause everyone there had a sizeable stack of books. Jim, who keeps track of our collection, found a few items we didn't have and had them paid for before anyone else could get their paws on them.

Jim helped me gather up the zines I had to use in my speech on stf in America and Julian came staggering in under the load of his own. After lumping them on the table for the concommittee all of us went back to the piano near the door and watched Ellis get his tape recorder ready.

- -

"Help me burn these quote cards." - Ann

- -

The -t had been previously arranged to have the con committee sit in front along with Ellis and Julian - since each was on the program - Ann, Jim and Ellis preferred to sit off with the others. n other words, chicken out. About this time everyone was settling down and ordering drinks. JP got another bheer and I asked for chola. My drink never arrived, tho I did see Jim sipping on a coke which I know he *hadn't* ordered. Julian's collection of British pro and fan mags for his speech was resting on the table by mine, and throughout the speech he kept holding up the Amazing. I'd like to know why he had to display that so much, and even more what he said, but it was in the Deutsche Sprache and consequently Greek to me.

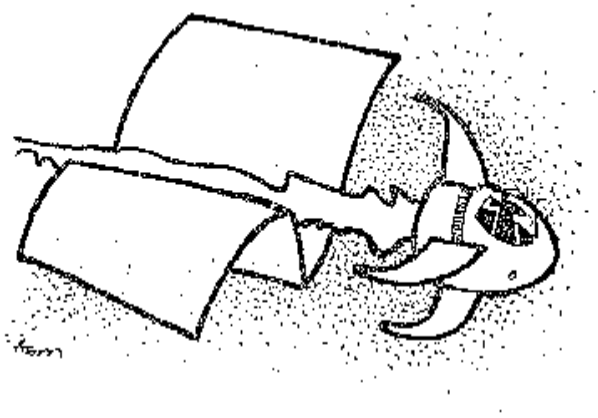
Time came for me to give my speech, and as Ann

made the introduction unscrambled the prozines I was to use. Julian had left the table covered with rubble in the form of mags, books, cards and all sorts of stuff and it's a minor miracle I even found my speech. But then the introduction ended, and I rose to pronounce the pear-shaped tones. Not exactly pear-shaped, as any student of the German language will tell you, but tones nevertheless. One paragraph into the thing I had to stop and ask Ann to stipulate that the TIME TRAVELER wasn't the first fanzine, but the first *true* fanzine. Three pharas found me floundering around in foreign tones and disconnected sentences. Walt Spiegl had agreed beforehand to take over at this point, so I let him, and Walt finished it without a single hitch. Three cheers for my friend.

The speech ended, I thanked Walt, and passed out the zines to be looked over. The main interest after the speech for a short while was a bunch of movie stills WE had brought along with him, so the pros efforts remained untouched for a while. Ellis and his tape were all set, and Willy Ley started his speech on fuels. I caught the first ten words of it and gave up, not because of a bad tape, but it was far more interesting to talk to each other. Ann, in the rush to get to the hotel, had forgotten to bring the translations of the speech, and since most of the people there couldn't understand English started conversations. Ellis apparently thought the same way, as he soon was sitting around our group too. I remember speaking with Jan, Ellis, Julian, Jim and someone who is a little hazy - can't remember his name - about FANTUM, Ann's new fanzine. Ellis and Jan decided to rewrite the ISFCC constituition by putting up a platform from the continent. JJ is supposed to be running for secretary, the point of power in the organization, Ellis for vice-president, and I the club organ, the EXPLORER, and Racey Higgs, who never cuts a letter.

After about two hours I got tired of this and started walking around and talking to anyone I happened to run into. Walt Spiegl was wandering around the same as I and we both walked out to the bookstand, since neither of us had bought the items we wanted. While standing around looking at mags Walt told me a few things about UTOPIA and the plans for a new German promag sometime this year, possibly this summer. I picked up a few copies of TWS I didn't have and decided to leave them there while I checked downstairs to see if any otherfen had shown. We were expecting the Eberts, but unfortunately they couldn't come at the last minute. To me it was a great loss, for Rose was one of the people I wanted to meet and speak to. No one who looked like a fan was sitting downstairs, so I returned once more to the stand. Walt found some pbs he wanted but they belonged to Ann, so he tried to borrow them. I waited while he arranged it and found Ann long enough to discover that the THRILLINGs were hers. Walt and I talked for a while longer and then I returned to the group around the committee table.

By this time it was late and Julian was trying to get somebody to sample his cognac he had hidden in his room. Since Jan and Ellis had to leave soon for Ann's haus, they both decided to take a sip (?). Jim went on to see what would turn up (something was bound to) and I stayed behind to speak with Walter Ernsting. But Ernsting was engaged in displaying prozines, so there was nothing to do but find Julian's room. This is where I got mixed up. It seems I remembered Julian's room number and not my own. And besides that, I thought his was mine. In other words, I was under the impression that Julian's room, 2, was mine and the problem was to find his. So I walked out into the hall and stood in front of what I thought was my room. Faint voices were to be heard.



Artwork: Arthur Thomson 1927-1990

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"Twilight of Reason - the story of Ellis Mills." - jnb

- -

Faint voices were to be heard saying things like “Hmmmm. Very good.” and "How much is there left?" The voices came from *my* room. Well, I thought, something is up, and opened the door.

When I saw Ellis, JJ, Jim and Julian standing there it dawned on me that 2 might not be mine after all. Mine was 6. Having thus thought it out in two seconds - plenty of time - I walked in and acted like nothing was wrong at all. They never suspected a thing. Jan wanted a smoke with his drink but I didn't have any matches, and no one else did either. Julian had no filler available. After a few moments of meditation Ellis came up with the idea of lighting it with cognac. Entirely innocent of the fact that cognac isn't alcohol, Julian attempted it several times and got nothing but a burnt smell for his efforts.

Jan went looking for a match, finally, and we

followed him down to the program room.

Ellis asked me to keep his tape recorder in his room for the night to which I consented. A few minutes later he told me that Walt Spiegl would do it, since we were going to have to carry in the movie, and Walt didn't have any bags, as we would. Jan, Ellis and Ann had to pack up and leave at twelve, so Julian and I started collecting the prozines we had handed around earlier. Having found them, we mapped plans for the following day and got everything arranged. Ann, Ellis and JJ left, we said good night, spoke for a while with Julian, and went to the room.



Arthur Thomson 1927-1990

I tried reading for a while and managed to finish Julian's review before paging through FANTUM and a few other things. At about 01:30 we quit and went to sleep. Around six in the morning someone falling down a flight of stairs woke me up. Probably a non-fan, I thought, and went back to sleep.

* * *

My eyes opened. The light was strong. I closed them. Presently Jim elbowed me in the side and I opened up again. "Time to get up," he said.

Jim would give me no rest, so there was nothing else to do but get up and get dressed. This was accomplished in short order and the bags were packed except for some prozines I wanted to glance at before leaving. All squared away, I went out in search of fannish activity. This turned out to be no more than twenty feet away in the form of Walt Spiegl, who informed me that Julian Parr was about ready to have breakfast. About that time JP himself came up the stairs and confirmed the information. We made plans as to when to meet and I went back to pack the remaining promags.

About five minutes later Walt met us in the hall and we walked down to Julian's room. He was packing, too, so we had a fine time making comments on his stf material. The poor chap invited us to look for anything of interest in his briefcase, so we all started sorting out stuff. For some reason he was carrying a translation of a novel with him which ran to about 100 pages, a file full of correspondence and old fanzines, promags, and a few old manuscripts. Julian told Walt about the cognac and the lighter, so he wanted to see all the equipment and the bottle. Strangely, tho, the bottle had only a little left in the bottom, while it had been almost entirely full when we left last night...

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"I hear he was driven out of fandom by your puns."- E.Mills

- -

By this time Julian was through packing, so we went downstairs to have breakfast. Ernsting and some others were already eating, so we took a table nearby. WE told us he poured water on some non-fans who were yelling or something around the early hours of the morning, which of course drew comment in the form of "minor incidents". During breakfast there was an argument on pros which I mostly agreed with, except for the types of pros.

As the room had to be signed out by twelve, we decided to take our luggage to the movie and from there to Ann's house. Jim ran up and got the bags while I checked out and we all set out for the movie. A few pictures were taken in front of the hotel and Julian asked someone for directions. Walking through Wetzlar reminded me of a British convention because of the narrow streets and the general atmosphere. JP said it looked a lot like his home, but Wetzlar couldn't compare because they let monsters walk the street."

- -

"Chola and crottled greeps, please," - Ann

- -

Soon we crossed the Lahn river and got lost. But Jim found the way again because he had been over this territory before, and as we neared the center of town I spotted the familiar trench coat of Ann Steul and recognized the others beside her. Both groups were late, so none could blame the other for not getting there on time. There was quite a crowd in the lobby, so we just stood around and tried to get rid of some of the quote cards I had. Ellis thought it would be a daring stunt to give the ticket man a real faaaaaanish quote card instead of the fakefan things sold by the management. His hopes were dampened somewhat when Ann came around collecting money to buy all our tickets at once, but Ellis persisted in giving one to the guy, and Jim, Jan and I decided to do the same. The time approached for us to pass by and one by one we filed by. Ellis hid his under his coat. JJ dropped his. I crumbled mine up in my hand. Jim put his in his pocket. We're all cowards.

- -

"I hate crottled greeps." - Julian

- -

Ann had gotten the movie "War of the Worlds" for

the theatre, so the con group just settled down when the film started, so the usual fannish wisecracks lingered on through the travel film. Most of us had already seen the movie, but came along just for kicks.
When it was over and right had won out, I got up to leave since I didn't remember the discussion to be held later. Ann made the announcement and 31 people stayed behind, most of them teenagers. Walt Ernsting and a few pros whose names I've unfortunately forgotten stood up and put in the plug for good ole UTOPIA and then started a free discussion, which by all appearances was fairly successful. Shortly after it started Jan and Ann started passing notes back and forth about future plans. And they used *my* notebook, too!

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"And he can't understand why I call him fandumb"

- -

The people who stayed, a more than average percentage, kept the discussion going for about thirty minutes until it was decided to break up and leave. Another film was to be shown afterwards, so we had to vacate the movie soon. Outside we paused for a few minutes to use the movie's poster to pose in front of for pictures and then split up. Jim and I returning with Ann's group. A few blocks from the picture house I happened to notice a lamp post that looked exactly like the Martian ray gun, and everybody started to run in mock terror. Ann screamed and Ellis made slobbering noises, while the rest of us just ran. Of course, every corner we rounded had another one, but Ann, with her clever knowledge of the back-alleys of Wetzlar, soon eluded the deadly aliens and we were safe.
I wish it had been a better picture.

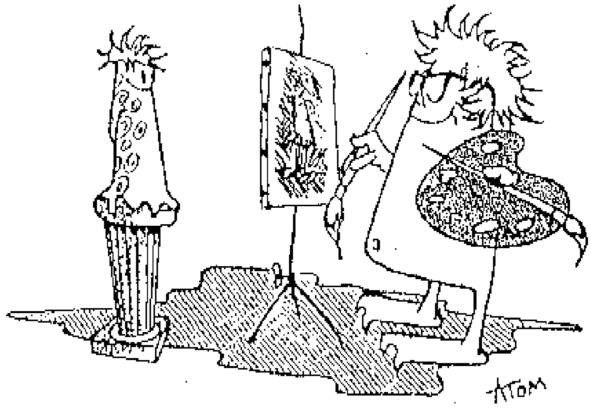
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"Sharks DO bother one, you know."

- -

We probably made a strange picture as we slogged down Falkenstrasse with its mud holes, a car came slowly down from the other end of the street. Ann, knowing full well what would happen, warned us that the auto would probably coat us with water from one of the many pits which dotted the road. Jim, Jan and I went into a dead run for the house, and Ellis started jogging along, too. We reached the safety of the drive just in time, but this time the car was moving so slowly it didn't even splash any water. Ellis hadn't made it, but he didn't get splashed either. Ann came along with a smug look on her face. Huh.

We all enjoyed a heart meal at Ann's and left quickly for the hotel. Ellis had a very heavy suitcase to carry, and I was quite happy to let him lug it all the way, but after a mere block he shoved it into my hands and bade me luck. The bag weighed at least 50 lbs, or seemed so, and I had one heckuva time carrying it a few blocks. We crossed the lahn river again and Jan tossed over a cigarette to see if it would return with the natural backwash. To everyone's amazement it did, and soon the air was filled with scraps of paper, quote cards, bits of handkerchiefs and other material which returned in the current.
Everyone acted like they had discovered a new scientific wonder and talked about it for some time afterward.



Arthur Thomson 1927-1990

Ellis had the suitcase back by the time we reached the hotel, since both Jim, Jan and I were tired from carrying the thing. Everyone was there, plus a few who had come over from the movie, and soon our party was spread to the four winds (or is it five?). A few of us got over at one end of the table and started a bull session concerning mostly gravitation and logic.
There was supposed to be some sort of conducted public discussion that afternoon, but most of us were content to talk among ourselves and not bother with group order. However, Ann thought we ought maintain something that looked like a program, and wanted to start the discussion. She wouldn't do it herself, and since Jim and I don't know German, we asked Walt Ernsting. He started a small one in the middle of the table, while on both ends we formed private groups. Ellis told us a few facts about centers of gravity and from then on the talk went from books to fandom and on down the line. Near the end of it Ellis once again, and for the last time, told me that Racey Higgs never cuts a letter.

- -

Would it be permissible to call the quarters where the overnight guests for the WetzCon stay BedWetz? - Peter Kranold

- -

Around 4:30 everyone started to leave, and Jim and I cornered Walt Spiegl for a short talk before he left. Ellis, Julian, both Walts and the rest got their stuff together and we all walked out to the street. Julian was riding back with, I believe, Walt Ernsting and some other fen, while Ellis was returning to Frankfurt with Walter Spiegl. I shook hands all around, said goodbye, and left them standing on the sidewalk,

waiting for their cars.
Walking back to Ann's house with JJ and Ann, we compared the Twerpcon with the one we were at. As Jan said, as a convention the WetzCon had the Antwerp meeting beaten, and as a party the Twerps had it. Jan was to stay **e more day with Ann to discuss her further publishing ventures, and then on Tuesday leave for home, stopping to see Julian for a while. Our parents were to come by about 6:00 and pick us up, so we had a little time to read fanzines and talk. I had barely started on an old HYPHEN when the car drove up and it was time to leave. It was an abrupt ending, much to my sorrow. We both said goodbye and left. The con was over.

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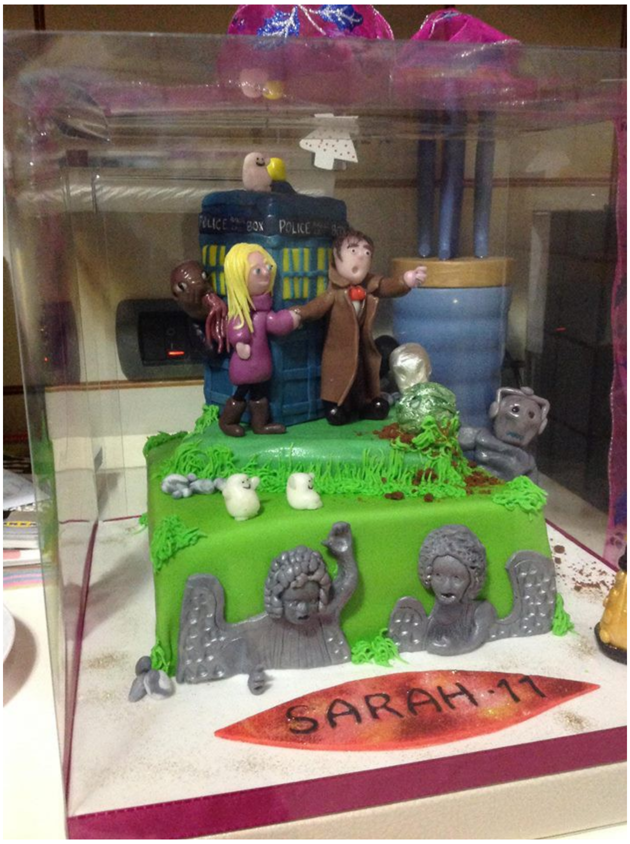
Brief analysis of this WETZCON-report

WolfEd: Apart from the fact that I only had to correct a single typo, while I may have added one of my own, this report is amazingly detailed. Julian Parr was not the only one who interacted with the English speaking contingent at WetzCon. So did Walter Spiegl, as we learn here.
Apparently there had been at least an attempt at making a convention in Antwerp, preceding the Wetzcon, which perhaps places the 1st convention on non-English-speaking soil neither in Sweden, nor in Germany, but in Belgium. "As a convention the WetzCon had the Antwerp meeting beaten, and as a party the Twerps had it."
The scholars of fandom may argue what constitutes a convention. SIGMA TC had a gathering in January of 1979, which we called 1st SIGMA TC-con, but in our ignorance, we were blissfully unaware what a "con" entails, and we later had to admit that it was a fan-gathering, rather than a convention. More about the TwerpCon, ***if*** *more information about the event, most likely run by Jan Jansen (and obviously with the Benford brothers and Anne Steul attending, can be brought into daylight.*

- -

Quote-Cards

For a decade or more, beginning around 1954, many fans followed the practice of passing on in their correspondence 3x5 or smaller cards which contained some humorous quote, a comic picture or both. When you received a quotecard, you were supposed to sign it, with or without making a comment of your own, and then pass it on to someone you exchanged letters with other than the fan who sent it to you. The cards were supposed to get back to the originators when they were full and provide some notion of just who was corresponding with whom. The practice simply ran it course and died out. Terry Carr wrote a piece of faanfiction about it entitled “The Fan Who Hated Quotecards,” but it’s doubtful if anyone really ever felt all that strongly about them. People just stopped doing them; perhaps too many had sent them out without receiving them back and the practice just seemed pointless. In any event, the term is thus archaic.
(Fancyclopedia 3)



THE ULTIMATE DOCTOR WHO CAKE

Alberto Quarino and Serena Miotti are ardent Doctor Who-fans. Recently, their daughter Sarah celebrated her 11th birthday. This unique cake was made for Sarah at Gelateria Garden in Maiano (region Udine, Italy).

- -

Seneca, my computer, is frail and old...

I am attached to this old machine, like I have been attached to every typewriter I ever had. For my first fanzines I used my sisters mechanical typewriter. I was in my teens and could not afford one of my own. Since then, my tools for writing have evolved slightly. Seneca is a lot more than a mere typewriter. For more than 12 years, he has served me well. I dread having to exchange him for a younger, *more capable* model. But my operative system is unsupported since of July 2010 and even Firefox can no longer be updated on this system. So I don't. But then the flash player can't be updated either. It is a bit like losing eyesight. I can't see any videos on youtube.
But it can still play all the music. I can still browse for news, read pdf's and look at dvd's. So, if the pc can do all these things I want to do with it, why the hell should I be forced to *update* the entire system?
It's a lot like throwing ones granddad into the bin, even though he is still at perfectly good health.
I am not willing to do that. [WolfEd]

- -

Many people want to be fooled. (Jan Johansson)

"There are some conflicts you better avoid, not because you are afraid of losing them, but because winning them looks ridiculous." - Gelu Negrea (Romanian critic, writer, journalist and director)

- -



Once upon a time...

All science fiction was sorted in the same bucket. The bucket was labeled "TRASH" and only kids and very few grown-ups admitted they were reading it. But there was a certain charm to the trash. The titles were sometimes, if nothing else, rather imaginative.

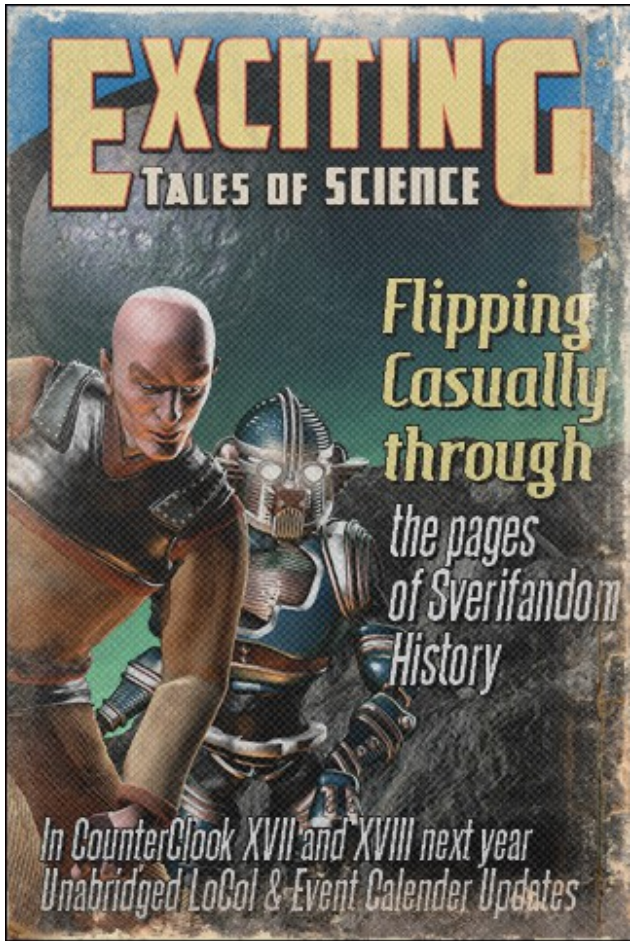
Want to come up with something similar?
Now you can generate your own random titles in the online Pulp-Sci-Fi Title-O-tron at:
http://thrilling-tales.webomator.com/derange-o-lab/title-o-tron.shtml

Here are some examples of what I came up with:

Stalked by the Princess of Sirius
The Toad Wizard of Death
The Electrical Perisphere of History
The Synthetic Illusionist
The Frigate of the Spectral Girl
Gods of the Librarian
Forest of the Aluminum Cat
Time's Flesh Eating Assistant
Vassals of the Labyrinth
The Death Ray of the Dinosaur Prophets

Can't wait to get started on the stories...
Surely they must turn out literary masterpieces!

But that's not all! You can also create your own pulp-magazine covers, with the online **pulp-o-mizer**:
http://thrilling-tales.webomator.com/derange-o-lab/pulp-o-mizer/pulp-o-mizer.html



...or make it a nifty birthday card.

- -

I doubt the TV Series FRINGE (2008-2013) was conceived of merely for the pun it created in sf-fandom, but I haven't met any FRINGE-fan yet, who wasn't a genuine fringefan as well.

- -

Space is cold and black as coal
The void of stars has been our goal
Though gravity can form a hole
And suck up all that matters

W.v.W.

LOC AROUND THE CLOCK

Rob Hansen, UK

Here I am responding to CC#14 when #15 has just appeared on eFanzines. In my defence, I was visiting the US for a convention in May and busy writing a 17,000 word report on my trip immediately after.

Anyway, really nice job and very informative - I was particularly interested in what you'd pieced together about Julian Parr, of course. Nice photo of him, btw. Oh, and I was glad to see you used the photo of Anne Steul I supplied. If she's as forgotten a figure as you implied I can't imagine there are many of her around.

Incidentally, did you know the first EUROCON was held in London in 1951? It ultimately ended up being called FESTIVENTION after that year's Festival of Britain, but the EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION and EUCON were among the names proposed for it early on. You can read all about it here:

http://www.fiawol.org.uk/fanstuff/THEN%20Archive/1951Festivention/Festi01.htm

Unfortunately, there was no published list of attendees so I've had to piece together a list as best as I could, but there are still people in some of the photos I can't identify, presumably fans from continental Europe.

Also, if you haven't checked out the sections on my website devoted to the 1957 and 1965 Worldcons you should. There are attendee registration listings in the Progress Reports and Programme Books for each. Also, here's Forry Ackerman's report on 1958 German convention BIGGERCON:

http://www.fiawol.org.uk/fanstuff/THEN%20Archive/1957Worldcon/4sj03.htm

WolfEd: I guess, I can expect a comment on #15 then to come next.
And I have to admit, I was a bit skeptical about London in 1951 qualifying as a European convention as there was no European fandom yet. Or at least not much of it. But Sigvard Östlund is not a complete unknown in Sweden. While Gerfany beat the Swedes to the first convention, the descendants of the Vikings were ahead in almost every other aspect of fandom.I guess I have to follow up with flipping casually through the pages of Sverifandom.

John Hertz 9 Aug 2013
236 S.Coronado St. No 409
Los Angeles, CA 90057, USA

While I dislike Electronicland, I happened to see CounterClock 15. I was delighted to find both historical drawings by Atom and current drawings by Teddy Harvia, and some of your own. It is good to hear there is fan activity in Greece. Thomas Recktenwald's report on Waldemar Kumming, Master of Sound, was also fine. I became regular contributor to MUNICH ROUND UP. Please be kind with your layout. I had to read twice through the helpful appreciation of Julian Parr before I realized it was part of Olaf Brill's letter of comment.

Thanks for mentioning me. Indeed VANAMONDE appears only on paper. I just published Van # 1052 but the general distribution is behind, alas. Here is an early look at some recent issues [*added to letter*].

This is as good a place as any to remind Lloyd Penney of the sections on fandom off his continent and mine in Harry Warner's history of fandom in the 1950's, A WEALTH OF FABLE (1992). Chapter 17 is even entitled "Parr Value", with a photo of Parr and Ernsting on p.249 and one of the two Benfords on p.250.

Along many roads lie pits and mires. The best reason to be a fan is not to become a pro, nor to stare at pros, nor to identify with characters in stories, nor to sugar-coat one's sermons, but as you say for the fun of it.

WolfEd: Not separating Olaf Brill's contribution from his LoC, but giving a topic of its own another layout was intentional. I'm not sure to what extent people actually read the LoCol, and I wanted to empasize that the readers actually contribute to the contents. Standing alone, it would have been less obvious that this information was passed on by Olaf Brill. Also, in Letters of comment sometimes factual errors are corrected and unknown or omitted facts are added.
The most rewarding part of a LoCol is the dialogue with the reader. To me, it signifies that a fanzine is ***alive****. And it's even more fun and interesting when people start commenting on each others LoCs.*

VANAMONDE will be a hard, if not impossible act to follow. Everyfan who ever published a fanzine on paper recalls the costs involved. Falling behind in the distribution is understandable. Postage and packing was a considerable expense when this zine appeared on paper. Now, printing the pdf-file, the cost for a hard-copy ought to amount to the same as before (considering cost of freight). The advantage of Electronicland is that you can have your copy in color or b/w as you wish AND get an unfolded and

not by the post office mistreated copy.

Rob Hansen was already so kind as to provide me with the relevant pages (Parr Value) from Harry Warner's history. Actually, I ought to have listed it under sources in CC # 14, but somehow forgot.

Should mishap some day sort me into the pro community because of a randomly published book or so, I would still not consider myself pro. Yes, I used to aspire becoming one, but the misadventures of friends who went along that path have deterred me from the pursuit. Writing is no more any golden cow, not even a silver cow.



Toonified cover of Science Fiction-Quarterly # 36

Rainer Eisfeld

Osnabrück, Germany

I have been thinking hard how best to express, briefly and succinctly, my appreciation of the fact that you waxed eloquently on that pre-deadline form of mild madness which periodically overwhelms you. After ruminating for a long time, I finally decided:

(1) The most appropriate form should be a pun.

(2) It should originate from Britain - if not from 1957 Britain, at least from WW II Britain.

Here goes:
"Have you heard about the new utility underpants? One Yank, and they go down."
Cheers, Rainer

WolfEd: As years go by, one discovers and hopefully learns to deal with, and accept ones limitations.
While I am perfectly able to read and comprehend your excellent historical account, I am far from able to replicate anything like it. There are certain skills and disciplines I lack, while perhaps there are other proficiencies in which I excel. This form, the fanzine, is the form in which I best explore what I can do.
And what I can't.

Lloyd Penney

1706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON
CANADA M9C 2B2
September 8, 2013

Many thanks for issue 15 of CounterClock…I think you can safely say that for most trufen, German fandom is someplace they've never gone before. Lots of new names, new activities and new history. I always find these new (to me) frontiers of fandom interesting to explore.

The Knights of St. Fantony puzzle many fans, if they know about the Order at all. We've read some about the Order in various fanhistory books. A more modern version is the Dorsai Irregulars, but I find there are some who consider themselves Dorsai, even though their membership is unknown by the so-called parent group. Is it a part of human nature to want to belong to a secret group to place yourself above others?

Please pass along my greetings to ALEF in Athens…I suspect there are some fans in North America who are of Greek descent, and who can read/speak Greek. Could one of them be prevailed upon to be a liaison to ALEF to show them that they are indeed not alone? Anders, could you do this yourself?

I can comment on German fandom by perhaps making an observation on Canadian fandom. I would say there are several hundred people in Canada who are fanzine fans, literary fans, and aware of original fannish history. We are vastly outnumbered by those who would attend media SF conventions, go for the individual experience and have no real awareness of the history of fandom, but merely live for the moment. There's probably a lot of overlap of the two groups, and I admit to having started my fannish career as a Trek fan, but quickly moved forward to find out all fandom was about. It is difficult to get any recognition as a Canadian fan because

many of them have been pushed to the background while professional writers (with one degree or being published or another) campaign for sales from casual readers. As many fans are these days, we're nostalgic for the past because we don't see a lot of future for fandom, at least for ourselves.

Slovenian fandom is certainly bigger than you think; get in touch with Bojan Ekselenski, a club fan and fanzine fan. Usually, his fanzine, Jasubeg en Jered, is in Slovenian, but he has experimented with two issues in English. I found Bojan and his fanzine through Cheryl Morgan. John Hertz definitely has not given up on publishing; even though I don't have the most recent issues of Vanamonde, I do know he's surpassed the thousand-issue mark, and is still going.

When I first discovered SF conventions in the early 80s, they were usually run by young fans or high school or university students. Their lack of operating funds usually meant they made decisions like if we don't print as many flyers as we need, we'll save money. The fact that fewer flyers at the time usually meant that fewer people would find out about your convention and fewer people would attend didn't seem to occur to them. Unfortunately, that was a fairly common decision then. Today, a fast Facebook page, plus a Twitter account and a handful of flyers on a table or two, and the word gets out fairly well.

(One thing I do see in your photographs…the most important thing is the fact that fans attend these events. I've seen too many con reports with pictures of the actor guests, or even the author guests. The fans pay for memberships, the majority of the revenues for the weekend, and that's why I think fans are the most important people at any convention.)

I like the illustration of Verne's Voyages Extraordinaires…this cover design was duplicated for The Steampunk Bible by Jeff Vandermeer and S.J. Chambers. Good things to read in both books. I would ask Jean-Claude Dunyach if French SF has had much contact with Québec SF. Both may be speaking French, but I wondered if one ever influences the other.

The Way of SF-Fandom…I truly dislike the terms geek, nerd, dork or dweeb to describe those who like SF or any particular aspect or interest within it. True, in many cases, those words have been claimed as our own, but still, they are insulting. Fandom is all about the sharing of the interest, but as always, human beings are competitive, and will try to rise up, be the big frog in the small pond. I find popular culture to be fairly shallow, and much of media SF has made it into popular culture, especially shows like Doctor Who. Should we describe SF fandom as unpopular culture? We do what we can in fandom, and we do what we can afford. I have a very nice stack of paper fanzines on the side of my desk here, and I appreciate the fact that people send them to me, but I do tell that I know it costs a little extra to get that paper fanzines to Canada, and that if that extra cost becomes a burden, let me know, and you can send me a .pdf. For me, the medium isn't necessarily the message; the contents of the zine are the most important thing, not the medium used.

We expect Loncon 3 to be our last Worldcon, if indeed we can get there, but I am sorry that the Helsinki bid for 2015 was unsuccessful. I hope they will bid again, but not against the upcoming Montréal bid for 2017. I'll support any Worldcon bid I can drive to.

Almost to two pages…very good! Any fanzine that gives me the inspiration to write two pages of comments must be a good one. Many thanks for it, and looking forward to the next issue. I believe you're building momentum for the future.
Yours, Lloyd Penney.

WolfEd: It is the way of things, that old experienced people die and young people, who have to learn it all, get added to the population. And adding to the population (procreation) is a "duty" to be performed even ***before*** *we have learned all we need to know about life. Hence, not only in fandom, but in every aspect of life, knowledge and experience is lost.*
In sf-fandom we observe the changes. I think the order of St Fantony was just for fun and I don't think they even exist anymore. I wonder...
I was thinking, that perhaps in CounterClock I can over the years pass on all that I learned in life. But the fun we once had is difficult to wrap in words. And the next generation have their different kind of fun.
Who is to say whose ways were better? And in 100 years, who is going to read any of our fanzines?
I passed on your question to Jean-Claude, but didn't receive any answer. Yet. I interpret it as, either he doesn't know, or there hasn't been much contact between France and Quebec. From Quebec's point of view (where most people also speak perfectly good English, the French must appear slightly provincial.
Slovenian fandom - I look forward to get to know them better. We're geographically close neighbours and making it to a convention there should be easy.

I hope to make it to London next year. I have a stepdaughter in town, which means a place to stay.
It would be wonderful to finally meet you IRL.

- -

God created man in his own image. This has lead a lot of people to misinterpret their position on the evolutionary ladder.

Rolf Strömgren
rolf-str@privat.utfors.se

At last! Says one who ought to have written his LoC long ago, before everything else came between. ;-) Thank you for another abundantly filled issue of CC. To begin with a somewhat more serious question:

You wrote: "Meanwhile, Joachim Henke discovered his personal preference..[snip].."

At this point I have to think a bit. I may be wrong, but I get the impression you are trying to be discrete about it and not telling us straight forwardly what kind of preference it is about. This creates the risk that the reader makes their own interpretation. So did I. But whether my guess was right or wrong, with hindsight I feel it might have been better if you had said what it was about, or not would have mentioned it at all.

WolfEd: You're absolutely right, Rolf. Yes, I tried to address the issue discretely and yes, I ought to be generally more clear about what I say and mean. Joachim at some point discovered... or accepted the fact that he was gay. Perhaps not something easy to accept in a widely catholic and prudish small German village environment. But I had several gay colleagues at work (at the Railway) and the only to me relevant issue was that they were doing a good job, like everyone else.

You wrote: "So, no credit card it is. Cash only."

The point with cash is that they are valid as currency, without one having to pay for being able to pay. There are plans in progress to eliminate the use of cash completely in Sweden. Then we all need to have a credit card when we wish to buy a piece of candy and hopefully we don't have a brown-out when we wish to buy food and the powers that be don't find it suspicious that we choose route A on our way to work instead of route B.

The wind of propaganda is fierce. Lately former ABBA-member Björn Ulvaeus stated that cash may spread diseases [just like railings and handles.../Rolf] and everyone who wants to keep cash are being silly. I'd like to see him campaign against railings and handles *[and public lavatories... /Wolf]* before I believe that.

WolfEd: Indeed. IMHO, the idea to eliminate cash and rely solely on credit cards is simply insane. We must not let this happen. However, many things I disagree with have already been introduced in Sweden (in the interest of the 'common good'). I don't trust Swedish legislation very much anymore. Too much good has been forced upon me and this might just be another one of those.

You wrote: "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!"

Hehe... :-)
You're talking about gutless wimps while Swedish Vattenfall is taking over the German coal mines... tlhIngan maH!!! Deep inside we Swedish are like Klingons, but we take it easier when running into foreigners, because we don't want to scare the crap out of you. You humans are so sensitive.
Greetings /Rolf

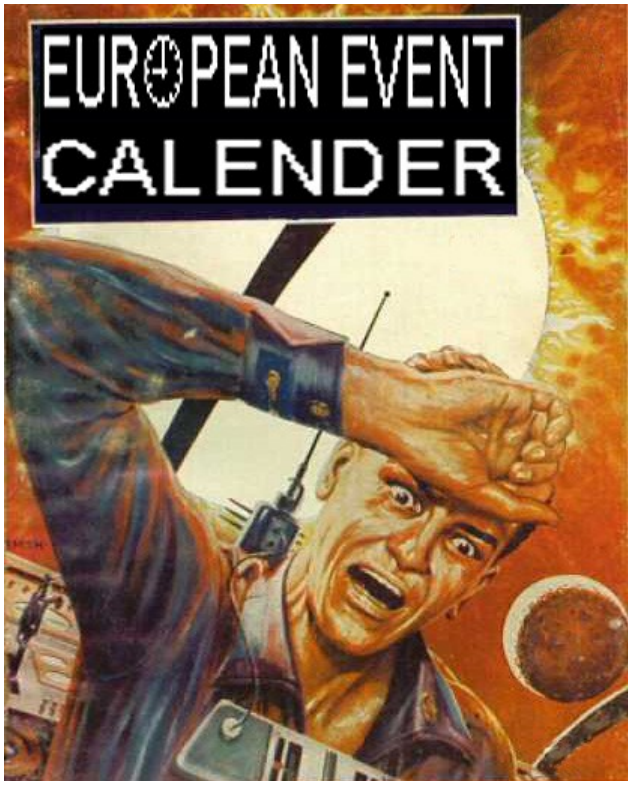
WolfEd: Admittedly, sometimes while watching Ice-Hockey, I can sense the old Viking-warrior spirit in Swedish people. But oh, so rarely.

WAHF: Ahrvid Engholm, Patric Fors - Sweden
Olaf Brill, Werner Koopmann, Germany
Rob Hansen, UK, Bojan Ekselenski, Slovenia
Eemeli Aro, Finland, Alan White, USA
James Benford, Diane Severson Mori, USA



Artwork: Wolf von Witting, 1980

This issue has been compiled and finished on November 22nd, 2013.



"Oh, my God! It's full of conventions!"
(Cover from Science Fiction Quarterly # 28)

From this issue on I will bring you a complete-as-possible European Event Calender in every other issue. Every issue of Coclock with an odd number will instead merely have a European Event Update. Calender & Updates are powered by ***Eurosmof****.*

Already too late for you, is the first convention on our list. But there are still two European cons to attend in December 2013. Here goes:

2013

HUNGAROCON, Hungary
Unfortunately I wasn't able to finish this issue in time. So this convention is already in the past, but rest assured it wasn't the last Hungarian SF-Convention.
17th November 2013 - Budapest
http://www.sfportal.hu/tag/hungarocon-2013

Parcon - FénixCon 2013 - Czech Republic
6-8th December 2013 - Brno
http://www.fenixcon.com/

HISPACÓN 2013
31st National Spanish Convention
14-15th December 2013,
Quart de Poblet, Valencia
GoH: Rafael Marín, Juan Miguel Aguilera
http://www.archerphoto.eu/hispacon/

2014

2emi6reve - 26th UK Filk Convention
7-9th February 2014
The Ramada Hotel, Grantham
GoH: Deborah Crook (Uk), Puzzlebox (USA)
http://www.contabile.org.uk/semibreve/

NORCON 27 - Norway
Oslo, 14-16th March 2014
GoH: Pat Cadigan, Kim Newman, Kristine Totte
info: heidi.lyshol-at-norway.com

Pyrkon - Poland
21-23rd March 2014, Poznan
"Be prepared to be trampled upon and thrown down the stairs. Way too many people for this venue. And too many gamers and too small rooms." (M.Wilk)
Claims exist that Pyrkon has had more than 12.000 attendees in 2013.
http://www.pyrkon.pl/

Imagicon 2014 - Netherlands
29th March
Congrescentrum De ReeHorst (Ede)
http://www.imagicon.nl/

LUXCON - Luxembourg
29-30th March 2014
'Schungfabrik' cultural centre in Tétange
GoH: Paedar Ó Guilin
http://www.luxcon.lu/en/

SATELLITE 4, 65th British National SF-Con
18-21st April 2014
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow, UK
GoH: John Meaney, Juliet E McKenna, Jim Burns, Alice & Steve Lawson, Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell
Special Guest: Sir Terry Pratchett
http://satellite4.org.uk/

SLAVCON 2014 - SLOVAKIA
25-27th April 2014
Annual Slovakian event, which has been running since 2006. Up to 9 simultaneously running program items, stretched over 2 days.
http://slavcon.sk/

Åcon 7 - Finland-Sweden (program in English)
1-4th May 2014, Mariehamn,
Åland Islands, Finland
GoH: Karen Lord
Attending members: 30 Euros

ITALCON 39 - Italy
no information available at present time
http://www.fantascienza.com/italcon/

Oldiecon in Wetzlar 30/5-2/6-2014
Unterwössen and Wetzlar are classical sites for sf-cons in German fandom. This is now where the old farts of Gerfany meet. Odd years in Unterwössen and next year in Wetzlar.
Info: Gustav Gaisbauer, email: gaisbauer-at-edfc.de

THE FINAL COLONIACON - Germany
6-8th June 2014, Cologne
Now, after more than 30 years of running an SF-Con in Cologne, the team behind it has decided this one to become the last (language German).
http://www.coloniacon.eu/

FANTASTICON 2014, Denmark
14-15th June 2014, Copenhagen
GoH: Paul McAuley
http://fantasticon.dk/

SWECON 2014 - STEAMPUNKFESTIVAL
27-29th June 2014, Gävle, Sweden
At the Swedish Railwaymuseum in Gävle
(Most Swedish people speak very good English)
GoH: Cory Doctorow, Mike Perschon,
Miriam Rosenberg Roček, Chris Wooding
http://steampunkfestival.se/

FESTIVAL FANTAZIE - Czech Republic
27th June - 6th July 2014 - Chotěboř
http://festivalfantazie.cz/

FINNCON 2014
Jyväskylä, July 11-13th
GoH: Elizabeth Bear, Hannu Rajaniemi,
Jukka Halme

SFCD-CON 2014 - SCHLOSSCON 2
Annual Convention of the SFCD e.V.
Schwerin, July 11-13th
GoH: Sharon K. Reamer
http://www.schlosscon.de/

SF FESTIVAL - Romania
14th July 2014 - Rasnov / Brasov
Website: tba

LONCON 3 - 72nd World SF-Con
14-18th August 2014
ExCeL. London DockLands
GoH: John Clute, Chris Foss, Malcolm Edwards,
Jeanne Gomolle, Robin Hobb, Bryan Talbot
http://www.loncon3.org/

SHAMROKON - DUBLIN EUROCON
22-24th AUGUST 2014 DoubleTree by Hilton
Dublin - Burlington Road
www.shamrokon.ie
GoH: Jim Fitzpatrick, Seanan McGuire, Andrzej Sapkowski, Ylva Spångberg
Attending members: 30 Euros

Polcon - National Polish Convention
4-7th September 2014, Bielsko-Biala
Language: Polish
Website: tba

ELSTERCON 12 - Leipzig, Germany
19-21th September 2014

FilkContinental, 3-5th October 2014
Musik-Haus Jugendherberge Wernigerode/Harz
http://www.filkcontinental.de/2014/

Buchmesse Convent 2014
Frankfurt, Germany, date tba
the largest Convention for german SciFi & Fantasy-literature. Sometimes with international authors (as seen at BuCon 2013).
Link: www.buchmessecon.info

BRISTOL-CON - Bristol, UK
18th October 2014, Doubletree Hotel
GoH: Jon Courtenay Grimwood & Emma Newman
http://www.bristolcon.org/

HanseCon 30 - Gerfany
23-27th October 2014, Lübeck
small fannish convention (in German language)

UTOPIALES - France
tba November - Nantes
http://www.utopiales.org/

2015

DORTCON 2015 - Germany
tba March - Dortmund
http://dortcon.de/

EUROCON 2015 - Russia
23-26th April 2015, St.Petersburg

* * *

FUTURE BIDS:
CounterClock supports DORTCON / Germany for EUROCON and Helsinki for WORLDCON in 2017

* * *

Yes, of course, I would like to attend ALL of them. And deliver reports from as many as possible. Perhaps YOU go to one of these and find the time to write a few words about the convention? Or you plan to run a convention and like to have it listed in the updates.

Contact: wolfram1764-at-yahoo-dot-se



Columnist, Germany: Thomas Recktenwald
Columnist, Sweden: Tomas Cronholm



Science Fiction Quarterly # 31 - February 1956

- -

"Time is what we want most,but what we use worst."
(William Penn)

LAST WORDS:

Ok, so this issue turned out a lot more personal than usual. It's an exception and an experiment. I don't like to say much about myself. Most of the time. But some people want to know.
I do not define myself by my past anyway, but by the present. I am not what I have been, but what I have become. Change is inevitable, so instead of trying to fight it, we should embrace it. Embrace age, strive for improvements, in oneself and in the environment. "We live to better ourselves!" is something I believe in. Time is relentless and unsympathetic.
The day will come and the day will go. Now is all there really is for certain. Tomorrow I can be gone.
I got my palm read. It said I had a long lifeline. It said I will live beyond 85. Ok, so I don't believe in palm reading at all. But time will tell. I always expected to make an early exit from life. Maybe I will, maybe not. It is impossible to say. I am in no hurry. And I would say that my lifestyle has become *a lot* healthier.

MANY THANKS TO:

Jim Benford, for providing the scans of relevant pages from VOID # 5.
Steve Fahnestalk, for a nice review in AMAZING STORIES. It was the motivational kick-in-the-butt I direly needed after a downbeat september-october: http://amazingstoriesmag.com/2013/08/a-fans-history-part-the-next/
I hope some questions about my past and present have been answered with this ish.
Eurosmof, for helping out with the Event Calender, for encouragements and advice.
To every letterhack, to my friends in Sverifandom and in Gerfany for support.
And to **YOU** for bearing with me and reading this.

* * *

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand-
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep- while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is all that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

Edgar Allan Poe (19 Jan 1809 - 7 Oct 1849)