

INTERMISSION #139

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and followers of Roscoe! Read @SFJournalen newstweets before Twitter is a quitter! What's your favourite typo? Mine is *cducm3r* for "cucumber". Enjoy this's special History Bloch! Late Nov '23

Editorially: Bloch, Poetry, Falk

Since last your editor has been to the best poetry party in town (incl wiggling virus in verse), missed a funeral (400 miles was a bit far, but thanx to others you'll get a peek!), judged a Space Opera contest and dug into the life and crimes of that superb psycho Robert Bloch. We all know about his many fannish writings and accomplishments, and some may have heard that he wrote that book one Alfred H made into a mildly successful film. Anyway, I stumbled upon his foot tracks and got stuck.

One of the first things I saw was his fannish sf story "A Way Of Life" available on-line here https://archive.org/details/Fantastic_Universe_v06n03_1956-10_AT/mode/2up so one must assume that copyright has lapsed. This story about fandom being the main survivor after the Atomic War is a bit too long for a regular *Intermission*. So I did a special

Intermission #137.5 with it, but outside EAPA and N'APA distribution will be very restricted. My idea is to lure you to do a fanzine and join either (or both!) APA. If you do you help fandom - which needs more fanzines! - and I'm sure the OE will send you the mailing with Bloch's superb fandom-in-sf story! In this I have more on Bloch, a major fandom figure up to two decades ago, and shorter pieces of his incomparable and witty writing. I've tried to check it's pieces *not* in his fan-writing collection *The Eighth Stage of Fandom*. I also found a stash of funny photos of him to present. Bloch is superb.

The distance to were the incredible, just deceased Bertil Falk lived and was buried is some 600 km (ca 400 miles) away in Malmö, a bit to far for for popping over for a couple of hours, but I received pictures and reports so you'll get a peek. It's been a terrible year but a good, year for fandom's graveyard: Maths Claesson, Hans Sidén, Ralph Lundsten, and now Bertil Falk gone, gone, gone. At the same time we

the Jury finished Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize wich will be presented below. I spent some time creating a prize diploma, with a "Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize" logotype making a variant borrowed from the 1940s *Jules Verne Magasinet* pulp, which Bertil relaunched in 1969 (Sam J Lundwall took over in 1972) . it may interest some that that logo was borrowed from the 1940s US pulp *Super Science Stories*, with a very young Fred Pohl edited. Och s shoetrong budget, so he filled it with fellow-Futurians. See above!

I of course follow what happens with Putin's super stupid war. Despite a bit of a stand-still the Russians lose ca 1000 soldiers and scores of vehicles *every day!* Their pushes go nowhere, Ukraine's missiles hit in the rear and Russian navy ships are either sunk or has retreated, Experts say half of Putin's original military capability is obliterated. As noted earlier, I think the Ukrainians mainly concentrate on striking the Russian will to fight by tsargeting resources, and that may eventually oust Putin. Good news is that their forces have crossed the Dniepr, where Russians are weak and its closer to Crimea. Now is the time to reaffirm support for Ukraine's struggle for independence, freedom, democracy and human values! *Intermission's* fanzine blockade against the



Logo evolution from US pulp, over JVM to space opera contest.



In a bookstore I heard Anna-Lena Lodenus (R, expert on Xmas music, 60s Swedish porn and Nazis) who just published *Spy Hunt* in the Folk Home., on the big 70s Information Bureau scandal about gov spies hunting communists. It was kept secret for the parliament. Two reporters, Guillou and Bratt, were convicted as spies for 1 year writing about the "IB affaire", which was un-faire....

Kremlin is steadfast! (Do a fanzine, so you too has something to blockade with!)

A couple of weeks ago I also attended what I think is the *best poetry party in town!* It's the *Poetry in a Day* anthology release party organised by "Authors Book Machine", a DIY self-publisher which has been around for 50 years. Once a year - except cancelled during the blasted pandemic - they invite anyone to send them a poem, which they collect in a book which you get for free as contributor. It's released with a big party. Over 100 participated, they have a stage where you can read your poem and a bar (bheer half prize compared to others!) and it's all quite fun. Interesting people, interesting poetry.

Some guys I know turns up, like Bengt Björklund of the Swedish SF Writers' Society (covered here earlier). Sf author Börje Crona was a long time regular at these parties - which I unfortunately

missed since he gafiated from the universe before I discovered *Poetry in a Day*. We'll shortly have *Stockholm's International Poetry Festival*, in some libraries and theatres. I have sometimes happened to bump into that, and it's quote pretentious and stiff compared to *Poetry in a Day!* The Book Machine's act is wilder, more anarchistic, unpretentious, fun, creative...

Farewell to the Master



The coffin. Candles. Flowers. Note the beautiful mosaic windows! Pic: Tora G.

It wasn't perhaps The Day the Earth Stood Still, but it was a bit of a Wake, Bertil Falk's not Finnegans', and a day of sadness when mourners Nov 13 gathered at the Chapel of Faith in Limhamn, south of Malmö. For me, unfortunately, 600 km was a bit to far to attend but I had reports and pictures – thanks to Cecilia Falk and Tora Greve! - we'll get a peek anyway!"

Tora Greve reports tha chapel was almost full and "the flower set from Tira Tiger Publishing House /Tora's venture/ was the biggest and had a place of honour...it was a science fiction funeral with recitation of bertil's first story /"Trip to Space", 1946/ and fitting music. We also

filled Café Vega on Malmö Museum". (And thanks Tora for help judging the space opera-prize!) Cecilia reports that "it became a very fine and personal funeral, when most of all the grandchildren contributed to the program with singing., reciting dad's first short story and baking his absolute favourite buns and Latvian pies for the memorial gathering afterwards. There were around 4 persons on the funeral. Several had to decline due to illness."



Cover of the funeral booklet.

It was interesting that Bertil's juvenile "sin" was read, "Trip to Space". It clearly pointed to what we would see from him in the future! You had it in last issue, but it's also at <https://file770.com/bertil-falk-from-a-space-hobo-to-finnegans-wake/> Bertil discovered the *Jules Verne Magasinet* (JVM) pulp as a little kid and was especially fond of Ed Hamklton's space hero Captain Future. In the 1970s he met the Hamkltons - Edmond and wife Leigh Brackett, also sf author.

I have a complete JVM collection, beginning as a decent one lacking perhaps 20 issues. What Bertil did was to *give me the missing issues!* What a guy! When I visited him in Västra Alstad I noted he had a whole shelf full of doubles of various issues of the magazine. (I would later in return donate to him most of my digest US sf mags - just keeping some with material of very special interest to me.) I understand Bertil's extensive magazine collection has gone to Umeå University library. Beside this he has donated material to the Archive For the Unexplained, covered in Intermission #129, stock and left overs from his publishing to Tora Greve, some leftovers from his JVM -. incl a Stieg Larsson manuscript! – to the Royal Library via me and *Faktasin* book research to me personally.



Mourners at Café Vega filled two tables. I think it's Tora G closest to the camera. Pic: Cecilia F.

The Space Opera Prize

Bertil Falk translated and published Cap Future. This Wizard of Science was immensely popular here, not so much in the schools. Bertil Falk told me that the teachers would confiscate copies of JVM if they saw it, and the teachers union magazine warned that this publication would twist the



Local Tranströmer Library Nov 22 held a panel on the hunt for alien life. Martian micro fossils? Chemicals, water, perhaps ammonia? Life under Jupiter moon ice? Humongous alien constructions shading stars? With reporters from national radio and university scientists, eg from <https://vascoproject.org/> Sf examples from Any Weir, Stan Lem & Co was read. See also <https://sverigesradio.se/rymdliv>

minds of kids with abrupt fantasies, make them analphabets - and probably make hair grow on the palm of their hands. Our pioneer fanzine *Vår Rymd* 1952 had Cap F fanfiction, indicating that the high school publishers in astro club Andromeda had read JVM in the 1940s. There was a Swedish Captain Future fan club even, lead by Bengt-Olov Ringberg (1923-2012), publishing the fanzine *Future Fan*. Trivia proving he world is small is the fact that Ringberg was part-time extra librarian in my high school Nya Elementar.

I attended Ringberg's 85th birthday and can report his love for Hamilton's hero was unbroken. The pulps with him didn't collect dust in the shelves, a couple was laying around recently read.

Captain Future is still popular in Japan,

where he has been made into an animated TV series. I've seen an episode, but I thought was very far from the character I remember, as I'm probably one of very few who in modern times have read all the 332 issues of old JVM (though I must admit I skipped the westerns and crime stories they add towards the end).



Space Opera winner Eva Holmqvist.

When Bertil turned 90 years in May I inaugurated the Bertil Falk Space Opera Prize, inspired by his early interest in pulp adventures in space. And I must admit Bertil has inspired me to read more of it, rather than more “modern” social or apocalyptic skiffy, which tend to be a bit too negative! Older skiffy from typewriters are tighter written and computers have made fiction of later decades boring and wordily. Unfortunately Bertil went to other worlds before the result for the space opera prize was at hand. And the winner is...

EVA HOLMQVIST won with the story "Konferens på Baldu" ("Conference on Baldu") a story of encounters between humans and aliens on planet Baldu. Exciting adventures take place in its extensive tunnel system.

The prize result has been announced in the form of a short semi-fictional space story ("Adventure in Literary Space"), and the jury was me and Tora Greve. Excerpt from my citation: "Good descriptions of the milieu and the aliens. The paragraph 'There was a sharp smell...' a fine example of Poul Anderson's advice to use all the five senses. Great feeling of presence and note how the swift dialogue carries the rather rather thrilling episodes in the tunnels".



The prize diploma, Cpt Future inspired...

Eva Holmqvist is well-known in the new wave of a myriad of small publishers pumping out a lot of sf, fantasy and horror in Sweden, is author of a long row of novels and stories and runs Ordspira publishing venture. See <https://www.evaholmqvist.se/> A number of her stories are there available in English and there are pictures of her on the site.

There were two "honourable mentions": Katarina Nyman with "Strandsatt" ("Beached") and Leif Wallsby with "Främmande land" ("Alien Land"). Holmqvist's and Wallsby's stories are available in the E-zine Brev från Cosmos #13 <https://clubcosmos.net/brev.php>

Preliminary it's decided that the Bertil Falk Space Opera Prize shall be biannual, as the production of space skiffy makes for thin competition if it'd be annual. So hopefully it'll be back in 2025 for stories published 2024-25. Clear ether!

Poetry about a virus

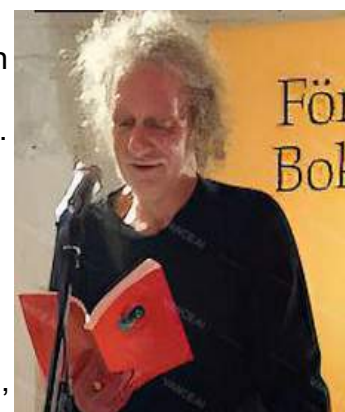
Below my contribution to *Poetry in a Day 2023*, or rather it's by one Comet-John Benzene Jr, a self-confident poet that first appeared in my fanzine *Nonsense* #1 in 1978. Since then I haven't been able to free myself from this strange, incomprehensible guy who is convinced he's in a for a Nobel Prize any year now...

As you know the Swedish corona measures were criticised all over the world, where they shut down everything and put people in house arrest - which didn't happen here. Some actions were taken, but most was given to voluntary caution. In fact we kept the pandemic plans most governments had prepared but threw in



the bin as some crazy statisticians presented totally worthless “models”. I covered this in eg #134. Now when the virus panic has calmed down, statistics shows that Sweden - despite all the commotion had the *lowest excess deaths in Europe!* We did right. Calculations show that for 2020-21 excess deaths here were ca 2500, a fraction of what was officially assumed,

counting official population statistics from the Statistic Central Agency. There have been a strong tendency of - and motivation for - over-reporting, eg Is virus victims include *any* contact with the virus. Excess deaths strips such a away and shows the factual real virus effects free of interpretation, as there's no room for that: either someone is alive or dead. If someone dies and it doesn't show as a population anomaly it's not the virus. Excess deaths tend to be rather



Me reading my poem.



Authors' Bookmachine's main book machine for B/W print.



Poetry bar, bearded poet Bengt Björklund. Middle Book Machine staffer wassisname? Bheer at decent orice. Bengt reading his poetry, including some haikus. I learned he had just been on a poetry festival in Kenya!

even, so any changes are from an outside factor, which here showed to be quite small.

The Swedes followed the plan and did OK. Others did wrong, victims of panic and populism.

But the nearly 150 poets in the anthology didn't bother much about that, except the Gripenberg/Fredriksson couple who used the virus as pretext to meet and write poems. They and many others read from the stage. We heard sonnets, rap by Ric Wasserman, associations rich verse (by CJ Rahm I remember), the Gripenberg/Fredriksson corona codewords, apocalyptic poems, love, haikus... Great evening!

Below my virus verse, original in Swedish, and to the right a loose English interpretation:

VÄRLDEN VIRAL VORDEN

En fladdermus flög fel i Kina
Och startade en massiv pina
Eller kom det från kinesiskt labb?
Buggens spridning den blev snabb

I Alperna bland folk på ferie
Det liknade en skräckfilmsserie
Med fusk från värdelös modell
spreds vild panik irrationell

"Vi förbjuder allt och stänger in
Medborgarrätt må tåla svinn!"
Men norrut uti Svea Rike
En modig doktor utan like:

"Vilka populister!", sa Tegnell
"Er plan riskabelt experimentell!
Att tvätta händer och jobba hemma
räcker för att virus spridning dämna!"

"Men 100 000 dukar under!
Sverige gör nu världens blunder!"
Tyckte media internationellt
På hela taget inte snällt

Sverige blev längs fotknöl sågat
Och världens folk blev dubbelt plågat
Huxflux så togs fram vaccin
Det blev slut på epidemin

Så blev dags att analysera
De hårda handskarna, med mera
Och landet som excesser slopa'
fick lägst dödlighet i Europa!



The 2023 poetry anthology.

WORLD WENT VIRAL

In China a bat flew wildly astray
The virus it gave came here to stay
Or did it escape from a laboratory?
Forcing victims to the lavatory!

In the Alps Swedes are on vacation
And brought the bugger back to that nation
Statistics models being totally bonkers
Still all attention managed to conquer

"We ban everything and lock people in
Civil rights are not what they've been!"
But going north we saw a brave Doc
He called them crazy, steadfast as a rock

"A bunch of populists," dr Tegell stated
"Totally useless, stupidity inflated
Just washing hands and working at home
is all we need to stop virus to roam"

"But 100 000 will surely go under
In Sweden they commit a royal blunder!"
So shouted media all over the world
On Tegnell and his folks shuffling turd

Swedes were idiots in their convictions
So over the world came more restrictions
Suddenly came vaccine against epidemic
And strength of the virus became anaemic

Finally it was time to it all analyse
Had the tough measures really been wise?
In Europe only one country stood tall:
The Swedes had the lowest death rates of all!

History Corner

This time we start silent and end superbly...

I have earlier told about that my granddad had a travelling cinema in silent era of the 1920s. My Uncle Martin actually wrote about it, while not exactly fandom (though some fringe fans dress up, trying to be movie characters, mistaking it for fandom). Anyway, his "When movies came to the village -The Engholm Brothers in Järbo Were Pioneers", Gästriklands Tidning, Jan 17 2003, is rather interesting

KUNGSBERG. The introduction of movies in our country has travelled different roads, some of them winding. In the cities it was natural to build cinema halls suited to the purpose. In the countryside, in smaller towns and rural areas this was impossible for economic reasons. Here you had tent cinemas in the summer and indoors in suitable halls in the winter, intended for much more than movies. It was club halls and the like.

We wrote around 1920. It is remarkable that movies were shown this early even in smaller locations in our country, if you consider that the first showing in Europe of "moving pictures" was in Paris as late as 1895. The development after that was fast in Denmark and Sweden.

"Nordic Film Company" was established in Copenhagen in 1906. In Sweden "Swedish Film Industry" in 1919, preceded by "Swedish Bio" / "cinema" is "bio" or "biograf" in Swedish / in Kristianstad 1907. Soon we got Sandrew's "Europe Film".

The brothers Arvid and Henning founded a company they somewhat ambitiously, despite its modest size, called the "Swedish Biograph Company" in Kungsberg, Järbo. The founders worked in it and hired temporary staff on the location where they operated at the moment. They went around to show movies, you see.

Henning moved to Södertälje and concentrated on the southern part of the country while Arvid crossed it from Bergslagen in his south to Västerbotten in the north, from what you can see in leftover papers.

In handwritten correspondence with heads of different venues you get an interesting picture of how the new media - movies - was received. In most cases the cinema and its owners were very welcome to rent a venue, but in some cases they were denied. Sometimes it was stated that they didn't let the venue for such purposes, in other cases it was rejected without motivation. Even in those cases you may assume or at least suspect that there were moral issues. It was something new, perhaps damaging for the morals of the youth.

Often there were religious reasons behind the reluctance, though it was rarely said so directly. According to some people of the church cinematography was an "invention by the devil". Fritiof Nilsson Piraten / famous author / has told about this. Never on a Sunday they said from Erikslund in Medelpad. But they were most enthusiastic in Köjaviken in Jämtland, where they beside welcoming the cinema owner also said it was salary day. A lot of people could be expected, in other words.

From the correspondence we learn that

När filmen kom till byn

Bröderna Engholm i Järbo var pionjärer

KUNGSBERG. Filmens intåg i vårt land har gått i två olika vägar. Ibland något krokliga. I städerna var det självklart att man bygde biosalonger, lämpliga för sitt ändamål.

I landsorten, i mindre samhällen och på rena landsbygden var detta inte möjligt av ekonomiska skäl. Här var det ofta tältbio på sommaren och inomhus i lämpliga lokaler lokaler på vintern, avsedda även för mycket annat än filmföreläsning. Det var i föreningshus och liknande.

Vi skriver nu omkring 1920. Det är förvånansvärt att filmföreläsning förekom så tidigt i vårt land även på mindre platser, om man betänker att den första filmföreläsningen i Europa av "triloga bilder" skedde i Paris så pass sent som 1895. Utvecklingen efter det gick fort även i Danmark och Sverige.

Nordisk Films Kompani etablerades i Köpenhamn 1906. I Sverige startade SF (Svensk Filmindustri) 1919, föregånget av Svenska Bio i Kristianstad 1907. Så smärningom kom också Sandrews Europafilmer.

Resande biograf
I Kungsberg i Järbo bildade bröderna Arvid och Henning Engholm ett företag som något storvulet kallades Svenska biografkompaniet trots sin ringa storlek. Företaget sysselsatte grundarna och tillfällig personal som anlätades på den ort där bion för tillfället befann sig. Med biografkompaniet reste de nämligen runt och visade film.

Henning flyttade till Södertälje

och koncentrerade sig till södra delen av landet medan Arvid genomkorsade landet från Bergslagen i söder till Västerbotten i norr så långt det gån tillräckligt av efterlämnade handlingar.

Lånade lokaler
I sparad korrespondens med förestandare för olika lokaler får man en intressant bild av hur det nya mediet - bio - mottogs. I de flesta fall var biografen och biografägaren välkommen att hyra lokal men i en del fall blev det avslag. Ibland angav man klart att lokalen inte uthyrdes för sådana ändamål, i andra fall utgav man ingen orsak utan utgav endast att lokalen inte fick hyras. Även då kan man förmoda eller åtminstone ana att det fanns moraliska betänkligheter bakom. Detta var något nytt, kanske förödande för ungdomens moral.

Ofta låg religiösa skäl bakom oviljan att hyra ut lokaler. Här var att det sällan skrevs ut i klarspråk. Enligt en del av kyrkans folk var

kinematografen "djävulens påfund". Därom har bland andra Fritiof Nilsson Piraten berättat.

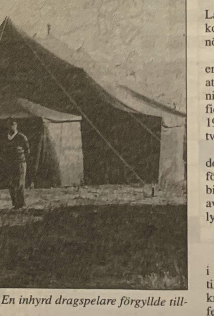
Allt mer välkommen
Aldrig på en söndag motiverades avslaget från Erikslund i Medelpad. Mest entusiastisk var man i Köjaviken i Jämtland, där man förutom att hälsa biografägaren välkommen även angav att det var avlöning samma dag. Mycket folk att vänta med andra ord. Ett klart nej kom däremot från Långhed i Alfta som kort och gott kommenterade avslaget med "ej nöjdestillståndningar".

Av föred korrespondens kan emellertid utläsas att oviligheten att upplåta lokal för biografvisning avtog med åren. Sälunda fick man 1918; 24 ja och 9 nej, 1921: 21 ja och 6 nej men redan två år senare 13 ja och bara 1 nej. Ett tillstånd var något avvikande från de andra och gavs under förutsättning att det var en bra biograf (läs film). I vissa fall var avslagsmotivet att man saknade lyse - alltså elström.

Måttlig lokalhyra.
Lokalhyran har i bland angivits i samband med att man lämnat tillstånd till filmföreläsning. Tio kronor var en vanlig avgift, ibland fem kronor och någon gång tiogulden procent av bruttol.



Tre exempel på biografkompaniets filmpertor.



Tältbio från 1920-talet. Flakblen användes för resor runt om i landet. En inhyrd dragspelare förkyllde tillställningen när filmen visades i tältet eller möjligen i någon hyrd lokal.

Synnerligen facila priser i dag, men inträdesbiljetten låg på samma nivå.

Stuttiofem öre, någon gång en krona plus nöjeskatt "där sådan tillämpas". Sommardid var det fråga om tältbiograf. Här gällde att hitta lämpliga platser för tältet. Storleken på tältet är nu obekant, men att döma av fotot här intill kan man kanske bedöma att tältet rymde 40 - 60 personer.

Det var mest utländska filmer som visades, kanske enbart sådana. Vad språket beträffar spelade det ingen roll om det var utländsk eller svensk film.

Det var ju på den tiden utslutande stumfilm, så den måste ju under alla förhållanden textas. De filmer jag lyckats spåra har genomgående varit amerikanska. Jag har i varje fall inte lyckats hitta affischer från någon svensk film.

Av affischerna framgår att repertoaren bestod av såväl kärleks- och äventyrsfilmer men även av något mera allvarig karaktär, till exempel "Arbetets barn".

Biograf för landsorten
Man inriktade sig sällan på städerna. Där fanns det förmodligen biografier rätt allmänt redan på den tiden. Inte heller på rena landsbygden sökte man sin publik utan det var till mindre opeh medelstora samhällen man sökte sig.

Ett axplock från tiden omkring 1920 som Arvid Engholm besökte med sin biograf är Delsbo, Fällinge, Holmsund, Duved, Alby, Vännäs, Lesjöfors, Målingsbo, Mehecheby, Oviken, Hammedal, Nyland, Fagervik, Erikslund och Ytterhogdal.

Det innebar således en koncentration till södra och mellersta Norrland samt till Bergslagen. Troheten var ett biobesök i landsorten för åtta år sedan en mera omfattad och anmärkningsvärd händelse än när TV gjorde sitt intåg i landet på 1950-talet. Förmodligen var det första biobesöket i trakten ett allmänt samtalsämne.

Martin Engholm

Three examples of the program of the Swedish Cinema Company. Tent cinema from the 1920s. The lorry was used for trips around the country. An accordion player was hired, to give sound to the film, when it was shown in the tent or possibly a rented venue.

the reluctance to let venues be used for movie shows shrank through the years. In 1918: 24 yes, 9 no. 1919: 21 yes, 6 no, but already two years later: 13 yes, only 1 no. One permission was a bit different from the others and was given provided it was a good cinema (ie: movie). In some cases denial was motivated with that light was missing - that is, no electricity.

The rent has sometimes been stated with the permission to show movies. 10 crowns /ie ca \$2 from 1920s /, sometimes 5 crowns, sometimes 25% of the revenue. Modest prices today, but the tickets were on the same

level: 0.75 crowns, 1 crown sometimes, plus "entertainment tax were such exists".

In the summer there was a tent cinema. You had to find suitable fields. The size of the tent is unknown, but from the photo here you could estimate it would fit 40-60 people. It was mostly foreign films shown, perhaps only those. Concerning language it didn't matter if it was a Swedish or foreign film. It was exclusively silent films so it must have texts anyway. The films I have managed to trace have all been American. I haven't been able to find posters of a Swedish film.

From the posters you can conclude the program was love stories and adventure films, but also some a little bit more serious, like "Children of Labour".

They seldom went to the cities. They already had cinemas at this time. And they didn't go to the most rural areas, but sought the audience in smaller and medium sized municipalities. Examples of towns Arvid Engholm and his cinema visited in 1920 is Delsbo, Föllinge, Holmsund, Duved, Alby, Vännäs, Lesjöfors, Malingsbo, Mehedeby, Oviken, Hammertal, Nyland, Fagervik, Erikslund and ytterhogdal.

That was in in south and middle Norrland plus Bergslagen. A visit by a cinema 80 years ago was probably bigger than when TV came to the country in the 1950s.



The Blochs getting married

The first visit to a cinema was likely the talk of the town.

Three examples of the program of the Swedish Cinema Company.

Tent cinema from the 1920s. The lorry was used for trips around the country. An accordion player was hired, to give sound to the film, when it was shown in the tent or possibly a rented venue.

I have mentioned granddad's travelling before. He he died already in 1927 apparently falling through weak ice and drowning in a lake - ice can be treacherous – so I never met him. One of the stories in my recent collection *Spacetime* connects to his Swedish Cinema Company anyway. In granddad's cottage, which later was taken over by uncle'n'aunt there were some left-over film material, like movie posters, a rusty projector, old films on the way to disintegrate (one title I remember was "Chaplin in the South Seas") I've seen it all and even have an old movie poster. In my story "The Horrible Fright in the Deserted Chamber" I pretend to have found an unknown HP Lovecraft story! It was published in an obscure Swedish-American newspaper, which had been used to wrap up and protect film projector parts that my grand dad ordered from America, or so my story goes.

You have been promised Robert Bloch, a friend of Lovecraft who became his literary mentor. Bloch was born in Chicago but the family moved to Milwaukee when he was twelve. He was then already a fan of HP Lovecraft, from finding him in the magazine *Weird Tales* at a young age. In the Mundane world Bloch is known for writing the book that Hitchcock made a film from, concerning certain events around a shower curtain. We sf fans know Bloch as One Of Us, mingling on the cons - you could bid for an hour of his time in the Auction Bloch - and appearing in countless fanzines.

But in the beginning, in the spring of 1933 at the age of 16 he dared to write to the horror master, and to his surprise Lovecraft replied, HPL was a letter maniac, said to have written 100 000+ letters in his life! He asked if Bloch wrote weird fiction, so when the young one sent stories, HP replied (from ST Joshi's *I Am Providence*) :

It was with the keenest interest & pleasure that I read your two brief horror-sketches; whose rhythm & atmospheric colouring convey a very genuine air of unholy immanence & nameless menace, & which strike me as promising in the very highest degree. I think you have managed to create a dark tension & apprehension of a sort all too seldom encountered in weird fiction, & believe that your gift for this atmosphere-weaving will serve you in good stead when you attempt longer & more intricately plotted pieces Of course... these productions are not free from the earmarks of youth. A critic might complain that the colouring is laid on too thickly - too much overt inculcation of horror as opposed to the subtle, gradual suggestion of concealed horror which actually raises fear to its highest pitch. In later work you will probably be less disposed to pile on great numbers of horrific words (an early & scarcely-conquered habit of my own), but will seek rather to select a few words - whose precise position in the text, & whose deep associative power, will make them in effect more terrible than any barrage of monstrous adjectives, malign nouns, & unhallowed verbs.



First Mrs Bloch and baby

He became a member in the informal Lovecraft Circle, a side fandom with many leading names. Though master and student never met, Bloch and HP corresponded for four years until the latter passed away (from overeating baked beans or something), often discussing writing. Bloch gave Lovecraft a lot of credit for his development as a writer.

Bloch became involved in the Milwaukee Fictioneers https://fancyclopedia.org/Milwaukee_Fictioneers a writers' group including Ralph Milne Farley (Pen name of Wisconsin senator Roger Sherman Hoar), Ray Palmer (later editing *Amazing Stories*, to which Bloch made his first sale in 1938), Arthur Tofte, Lawrence Keating, and Stanley G. Weinbaum. Both skiffy and mundane writers, both fiction and non-fic were represented. The psycho behind the typewriter was on his way to literary stardom!

But Bloch's best friend at the time was one Harold Gauer, later editor of *The Quill* magazine, who was an amateur photographer with a studio in his attic, in which he made strange pictures to sell to humour magazines. The couple would dress up and stage scenes for the camera. The Wisconsin Historical Society has a lot of pictures from Gauer's archive. I had some in #138.5, and here you'll get more. Bloch is almost as funny as a model as a writer”!

Photos here are all from Gauer and you should check out <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records?&terms=robert%2cbloch&start=0> yourself.

The couple Bloch and Gauer also published some sort of school paper, or fanzine if you like, named *Brutal*. So Bloch felt a kindred when he discovered the fanzine world, and he became a popular and frequent contributor to them, writing LoCs, articles and humour pieces, and also, together with Bob Tucker, the ambitious *SF Fifty Yearly* - a nod towards the *SF Five Yearly* published every five years - in 1957. Unfortunately we didn't see a #2 in 2007... A collection of fannish articles came in 1962, *The Eighth Stage of Fandom*. But *Intermission* here presents pieces not in that book, AFAWCFO (As Far As We Could Find Out) .

One of Bloch's friends and correspondents was the legendary Northern Irish fan Walt Willis, by the time considered as *the #1 fan*, due to his with, activity (zines like the famous *Hyphen*, the letterpress hand-set *Slant*, the classic *The Enchanted Duplicator* with Bob Shaw) and his personality. Here Bloch writes about the only “professional” book Willis published (from *Warhoon* #26, 1969 - and I'll have a treat for you after it!) :

Once there were two Irishmen

Up until twenty years ago, my knowledge of Ireland and the Irish was somewhat limited. Like the average citizen, I was aware of the difference between a shamrock and a real rock; I was aware that Ireland boasted of its twin cities, Sodom and Begorrah; I realized its chief exports were snakes and policemen, and I knew that the best place to find an Irish stew was not in a restaurant but in the corner tavern.

I think that dismembered fragments of this small body of knowledge were shared by most of my fellow science fiction fans. We had seen Erin go braggadocio in the films of John Ford, we anticipated such samples of Irish artwork as could be found in a Kelly frieze, we knew the names of traditional Irish heroes such as Barry Fitzgerald, Mayor Daley, Laurence O'Livier and Ari O'Nassis. Such were the components of our comprehension; put them all together, they spelled Mother Machree.

Then, amidst the twanging of the Harp, a phenomenon known as Walter A. Willis burst upon the fannish scene. From some remote Belfastness in the northern wilderness, an Irish fan gave us a new Slant and dissolved us in Gaels of laughter. Within a few years, fandom had formed a Celt cult and everyone realized that Ireland must be Hyphen if Willis came from there.

Following in his wake (a singularly inappropriate expression in this context, for Willis was very much alive) came others who wrote in a similar Irish tenor - such bards of a feather as James White, Bob Shaw and John Berry. As time passed, fandom came to know far more about Oblique House than it had ever learned of Random House, which had published the works of a much more obscure Irishman, Jimmy Joyce.

And yet, much as we learned of Irish fandom, we were still largely in ignorance of the land which gave it birth. To the average science fiction fan, IRA still stood for Internal Revenue Agent, and a broth of a boy was some kind of soup favoured by a child murderer.

But now, at long last, these errors are corrected, and our eyes are opened - happily - to feast upon the pages of Ace Book 36990, "The Improbable Irish" Abandoning the rather unhappy but science-fiction-ally acceptable concept of feasting eyes, let me hasten to point out two important facts. "The Improbable Irish" is funnier than anything Walt Willis ever wrote. And its author, Walter Bryan, just happens to be - Walt Willis!



For twenty years we science fiction fans have been impatiently awaiting the day when, like his Belfast and more furious contemporaries, Willis would make the move from fandom to prodom. Now our impatience is richly rewarded in *"The Improbable Irish"*. Two decades of fanfare usher in a proentry which amply illustrates how a lengthy apprenticeship serves to create a master craftsman. And Willis is a master indeed; here is wit and wisdom and warmth and all the other alliterative adjuncts of literacy - which is merely a roundabout way of saying that he's written one hell of a good book.

By this time those of you who had the pleasure of reading Willis the fan all these years have already abandoned this review and are already hotfooting down to your friendly neighbourhood news stand and pornography to search out a copy of *"The Improbable Irish."* As for the rest of you, I can only urge - go thou and do likewise, and let he who is without Sinn Fain among ye cast the first stone.

Although *"The Improbable Irish"* is not science fiction by any stretch of the imagination - nor would it be, even if published in *Galaxy* - it is well worth reading for its own merits as an introduction to a fabulous land and a fabulous people. If your knowledge of Erin is as limited as mine was before the publication of this book, if you were under the misapprehension that *"the Quid Sod"* was merely an obscure reference to the late Oscar Wilde, then you have a rare treat in store.

As Willis writes, *"the Irish are more than wild creatures who have had a hard time and sing prettily, and have never done anyone any harm. For all the number of them, they are their tiny island have made a great stir in the world, and it is well worth anyone's time to find out more about them and the country which made them."*

I shall deliberately refrain from quoting the contents here, difficult as it may be to do so, for this is a book which cries out for quotation. Sufficient to say that there's not a page which lacks inspiration and information. Willis begins by demolishing the Irish stereotype. He yanks the Hibernian from hibernation and reveals the nature of the beast. Do you regard *"the typical Irishman"* as a red-headed, pugnacious, priest-fearing, sentimental and impractical drunkard? Willis demolishes the concept straight away in a few well-chosen words, then proceeds to introduce you to the far more fascinating reality. He writes with what is obviously great affection and understanding, and his examination of Irish history, legend, geography, economy, customs, folkways and mores is unexcelled. Analysis is intermingled with anecdote, and edification goes hand in hand with entertainment. Here again it's a temptation to give examples, but sure and I'll not be spoiling the reading of it for yez. Except to tell you that Willis does not write anything like that last sentence - his style is purely his own, and I can make no higher possible recommendation. And if you need further urging to take an interest in the Irish, Willis, early on, quotes the late John Kennedy as follows:

"This has never been a rich or powerful country, and yet, since earliest times, its influence on the world has been rich and powerful... No larger nation did more to spark the cause of independence in America, indeed round the world. And no other nation has ever provided the world with more literary and artistic genius. This is an extraordinary country..."

To which I can only add that this an extraordinary book. *"The Improbable Irish"* is a highly probable delight to any reader, and a must for science fiction fans. To them I can only say - if you like Walt Willis, you'll love Walter Bryan!

I met Walt Willis on the 1987 worldcon - the same to which misters Humbug and Belly stole the Scandinavian fan fund money - and here's some good news. I've never found *The Improbable Irish* at the huckster tables, and while archive.org has this rather rare book, it's not for download. You can "borrow" it for 1 hour at a time...which I did. I made a screenshot of every page, and "printed" them to a PDF, which I then trimmed a bit at the edges and used a PDF compressor to shrink 400 MB to get a 20 MB file - which you can ask me for as a regular, enthusiastic *Intermission* reader. Just send a few lines to ahrvid@hotmail.com and say *"The Improbable Irish"*. Any comments to my publication of wisdom are also welcome.

Back to Bloch, who in the late 1950s conducted *Fandoras's Box*, the fandom column of the fine little prozine *Imagination*. Aug 1956 Bloch wrote how sf benefits from fandom, and vice versa:

The year is still young as these lines are being written, and I haven't seen the article yet. But it will come, never fear.

It always comes, every year, with the infallibility of a swallow returning to Capistrano or disappearing down an editor's throat.

Those of you who have inhabited the merry microcosm of science fiction fandom for a while will know what article I mean. But you neo-fans will be surprised - and perhaps shocked - when you read it. And that's precisely the reason why I'd like to anticipate the article in advance this year.

The article I refer to will appear in one of the fanzines, and it will be couched in strong and scathing language. It will be written by a fan seething with sarcastic indignation, and will take the form of an



announcement that this fan is leaving fandom because he has "grown up".

Now this matter of dropping out of fandom is neither unusual nor reprehensible. Tastes and habits do change, and personal circumstances frequently arise which make active participation in a hobby unfeasible. Every year, certain fans quietly take their leave, while new fans arrive and pitch their tents on the sites vacated by the silently departing Arabs.

But the person who will write the article I have in mind is neither silent nor Arabian. He is bound and determined that his passing marks the world's end, and he intends to make sure that the ending comes with a big bang and a loud whimper.

He isn't content to go his way in peace. He must first compose a personal manifesto, to the effect that he has seen the Error of his Ways and is Repenting. With a truly religious fervor, he will infer that fandom is made up of Miserable Sinners: that its interests and occupations are callow, shallow, juvenile, imbecile. He will cite chapter and verse in an effort to bolster up his case; he will piously lament that "presumably intelligent people" still "waste their time" editing or contributing to 'fanzines, reading science-fiction, attending meetings or conventions. He will urge them to awake to Reality and the Big World Outside, and generously offer them a glimpse of his mature outlook in contrast to the petty preoccupations of fandom.

Often he will "confess" his errors in precisely the same manner as an ex-Communist will upon embracing Democracy - or, for that matter, like a practicing Communist who recants a now outmoded "party line" of ideology.

Big deal.

Now I'm in no position to state just how many people have been influenced in the past by such dramatic denunciations and departures. I suspect very few fans have actually abandoned their hobby because of the urgings of the disaffected.

But since it's obvious enough that we don't live in a world of utter black-and-white values, sometimes the remarks of a departing fan do call our attention to a bit of tattle-tale gray in the field. And it's possible that many of us, in our more sober and reflective moments, allow a few doubts to creep in concerning the values and benefits of fandom as a hobby.

We listen to the criticism and reflect that some of it seems to have a basis in truth. There are some offbeat characters in fandom (present company not necessarily excepted). There have been some regrettable incidents and irregularities. Petty feuds are not unknown. Some fans are fanatic and seemingly harbor delusions of grandeur concerning the importance of the field and/or their position in it - - witness a fan over in Northern Ireland who actually thinks he is Walt Willis himself!

And certainly, as a self-constituted minority group, fans are constantly subject to external pressure and ridicule from the self-constituted majority groups who insist their hobbies are more important because more people share them. This "mathematical proof" reasoning may or may not echo in our psyches when doubt creeps in.

But before we bow to the dictates of the majority, and of the article-writer who has made this Great Discovery that fandom is only a trivial hobby, perhaps we ought to consider a few of the benefits accruing to fan-activity.

Elsewhere I have had occasion to dwell at length (and rent-free, too!) on the notion that science fiction fandom is a valuable source of contact in making friends. No need to sharpen the point; most of us who have spent time in the field continue to do so because we have made friends. We enjoy sharing our hobby, our interests, and even our social life with people of similar congenial tastes. The delight of communication, on an international basis, is available to the fan editor, contributor or correspondent.

But such an argument, of course won't satisfy the disenchanting critic. He will continue to insist, in effect, that fandom is merely a glorified waste of time. He won't listen to sentimental opinions. He wants facts and figures.

So be it.

Exactly what material benefit can a fan derive from his participation in fandom?

Let's look at the record.

If you harbor any ambition to become a writer, illustrator, editor or publisher, there is no easier avenue of approach to your goal than the field of science-fiction fandom.

Since the day when teen-age fan Charles D. Hornig was plucked directly from fannish ranks and plunked into the editorial seat of a professional science-fiction magazine, these "success stories" abound.

Without any pretense of being comprehensive or all-inclusive in my listing, allow me to offer a few examples that come readily to mind.

Amongst writers, we find the names of James E. Blish, who hectographed (in a manner to bring howls of horror from today's conscientious editors) a crude little fanzine when in his early teens. We can list young Foul Anderson, juvenile Henry Kuttner - - who used to write letters to WEIRD TALES - - and a kid named Damon Knight. Let's not forget little Freddie Pohl, or a gal named Judy Zissman, who now writes under the name of Judith Merril. And then there's Fritz Leiber, Joe Gibson, and Cyril Kombluth, and a brash young punk, who used to hang around the LASF, whose



Bloch as a monster



Bloch being framed reading crap

name was Bradbury. Artists like Hannes Bok and Virgil Finlay were fans long before they began their professional careers. Forrest Ackerman, Julius Schwartz, Oscar J. Friend are remembered as fans in the days when they couldn't possibly hope to become agents, since they were unable to figure out 10 % of any given amount.

A writer like Wilson Tucker, with a dozen books to his credit, is still better-known today as Bob Tucker in fannish circles. And there are a host of transitional figures - fans who are currently establishing themselves as professional writers with mounting sales. A few easily brought to awareness in this connection: Jim Harmon, Bob Silverberg, Vernon L. McCain, Dean A. Grennell, Dave Mason, Marion Zimmer Bradley, the immortal Lou Tabakow, and Harlan Ellison - who has also written under a pen name.

Editors? Robert W. Lowndes and Donald Wollheim were prominent early fans. Larry Shaw, Donald A. Wollheim, Raymond A. Palmer, Beatrice Mahaffey, Sam Moskowitz, Jerry Bixby and (let's face it, shall we?) Bill Hamling. All of them cut their eye-teeth on fanactivity.

Fantasy and science-fiction publishers? Lloyd Eshbach, Melvin Korshak, Martin Greenberg - publishing the works of such fans-turned-pro as E. E. Evans, Basil Wells, Frank Robinson. The name of Ted Dikty comes to mind here, as does that of Judy May Dikty. And then there's Oliver Saari, Earl Kemp, Chad Oliver, Les Cole, Lester del Rey; and just about everybody in England seems to turn up sooner or later in their magazines. Willis, Shaw, Harris, Bulmer, Tubb, Campbell, Turner - right on down the line, they go from fanactivity to writing and editing and illustrating and publishing in natural sequence and progression.

And if we extend our concept of fanactivity to include avid and continuous readers in the medium, we'll have to let just about every other "big name" in the field into our category. Almost without exception, they've been readers from 'way back; and if they live, or lived, in metropolitan areas they were regular attendees at fan club meetings and conventions too.



No doubt about it: there are benefits to be found in this hobby of ours, and material benefits at that. Of course, there is no pretense made that one can necessarily make a fortune in the field, but on the other hand, how much cash does the average baseball fan or wrestling devotee ever derive from pursuing his hobby? And where is the Arthur C. Clarke of the bowling world - a field in which one cannot even hope to make pin-money?

It is difficult to name a single established writer, editor or regular contributor to the professional science fiction magazines who has not done his or her share of "fanning" at one time or another - and derived benefits therefrom. Possibly the sole exception is our good friend "Doc" Smith. He was not a fan when he was young, because there were no fanzines in those days - printing hadn't been invented yet. But you probably know he makes up for that lack today, and is a devoted convention attendee.

So much for the record. In itself it offers eloquent rebuttal to the claims that science-fiction fandom offers nothing of material value to the hobbyist. And as for other, more important values, you can answer that question for yourself.

It goes without saying that not every fan is going to establish a career as a professional - - nor, in the majority of instances, is such a goal even contemplated. But the opportunity is there. And so is the pleasure and reward of participation for its own sake.

But if fandom didn't make you an author, artist or editor - I Sweden becoming a translator is the most common - our illustrious circle could rise you even higher: you could become a BNF! Bloch discussed it in his *Imagination* column of #8 1957:

For many years now, I've been mounting my soap-box at meetings, at conventions, in the pages of fanzines and even in prozines, to proclaim one simple statement - "Fans are people." Certainly this isn't a very profound observation, and it shouldn't be too difficult to understand. As a matter of fact, a portion of the general public has gradually come to accept the truth of this observation. Formerly, outsiders usually pointed the finger of scorn at fans with the observation, "Dig that crazy mixed-up kid," or even, "Dig that crazy mixed-up adult".

But the phrase is passe, and so is the thought behind it. Despite the attitude of a die-hard minority, it's easy to observe that most people are becoming increasingly tolerant of fandom as a hobby and are willing to consider fans as individuals.

Surprisingly enough, the greatest resistance to this seems to come from the ranks of sf fans themselves. I reach this conclusion recently, but the evidence is unmistakably apparent in the pages of all too many fanzines these days. It is most marked whenever fans have occasion to refer to BNFs.

Just what is a BNF? According to the learned authority Tucker, in his NEO-FAN'S GUIDE:

"The Big Name Fan, the person who is well-known and who has made a solid reputation for himself. This is usually accomplished by participating in fannish affairs for a long while, or by publishing a superior fanzine, or by consistently writing or illustrating in a manner identified with quality, or by any number of ways which keeps your name before fandom in a responsible manner. The term BNF has to be earned, it can never be appropriated or purchased, nor conferred upon yourself or your friends."

In other words, a BNF attains his or her status through performance.

That is how we judge human beings - by their performance. Actions speak louder than words.

At least, almost everywhere except, apparently, in fandom. All too many fans, when considering this BNF matter, seem to forget the definition cited above. They seem to forget the performance factor. And that's why I hold that they are not judging their fellow-fans as people.

Now it is not my intention to imply that the term BNF is possessed of any signal merit in itself; it is not the equivalent of a knighthood, an honorary Ph.D from a College of Mortuary Science, or a membership in the World's Most Exclusive After-Shaving Club. To be known as a BNF is not quite on a par with becoming a Thirty-Second-Degree Mason, a Grand Imperial Dragon of the KuKluxKlan, or Chairman of the Board in a lumber factory. BNF is a complimentary term in our little sewing circle, yes, but it means nothing except to a few other sew-and-sews.

I don't think it is a Sacred Honor. and I don't believe it should be jealously guarded, reserved for only a Select Few, and awarded on the basis of a three hour examination (written) for males and a three hour examination (physical) for females.

But I do think fandom is inclined to kick around the term until it is in danger of losing even a modicum of meaning; and this simply because fans aren't willing to evaluate other fans as people. And to gauge them, as people, on the basis of their actual performance.

Pick up a fanzine, almost any fanzine, and see how many references are made to BNFs. The woods, apparently, are full of them, and so is the woodwork. A few issues of a fanzine, a half-dozen articles in the fanzines of other editors, and a fair number of letters circulated amongst prozine outlets or private correspondents seems to qualify an individual, in the minds of far too many fans, as a genuine BNF. Even though the individual in question may put out a run-of-the-mill 'zine; his "articles" may consist merely of reviewing other fanzines or gripes against prozines; and his correspondence more distinguished by invective rather than invention. Indeed, quality and quantity alike seem to be minor factors - what seems to matter is just how loudly, and emphatically the fan states his adverse critical opinions.

As a result, we have self-styled and seemingly accepted BNFs who earn their apparent status merely by participating in feuds; we have BNFs whose choice of language and statement of opinion offer no value but shock-value: we have BNFs who have presumably arrived at this distinction merely by using a reverse-switch on the old "guilt-by-association" idea and associating themselves and their activities only with other BNFs.

But the criterion of worth, I respectfully submit, is in the value of services rendered. Value, not volume.

And once we re-appraise the BNFs in terms of value, in terms of actual performance and contributions to the fan-field, the ranks diminish quickly. It's very easy to separate the men from the boys.

Now let me hasten to add one thing: that "men from the boys" phrase is figurative and not literal. Nor does mere seniority mean anything in fandom; it's not necessarily length of time spent in the field that counts.

In my own personal estimate, people like Lee Hoffman, Dean Grennell, Walt Willis and Shelby Vick became BNFs in only a year or so of fanning, because of the tangible contributions they made to the field. Whereas it is possible (if not exactly polite) to name a good many people who have "been around" fandom for a half-dozen years or even longer, and who show no signs of ever being capable of attaining BNF status.

Now just what "tangible contributions" make a BNF? According to the broad terms of the Tucker definition almost all fanactivity will enable an individual to qualify - if this activity is identifiable with "quality" and keeps your name before fandom "in a responsible manner."<

Within the broad confines of the field, almost anyone can write, anyone can illustrate, anyone can publish, anyone can correspond, anyone can form a club or hold a so-called "convention" or start a so-called "movement." But when we consider

the matter of quality and the degree of responsibility we can make a sound judgment.

It's not my purpose here to attempt to make a listing of all those who - in my opinion - are rightfully entitled to the designation of BNF. But I would, perhaps, help to illustrate the basic premise by citing a few examples.

In my own opinion, then, I'd classify as BNFs all those who have made an effort to provide fandom with a written record - historical or definitive; who have attempted to give fandom a frame of reference and a sense of continuity. In this category one brings to mind Sam Moskowitz and his IMMORTAL STORM, Jack Speer and the FANCYCLOPEDIA, the aforementioned Bob Tucker with his NEO-FAN'S GUIDE and



his FAN-SURVEY; also Don Day and his INDEX and (on a slightly more professional eye) Messrs. Dikty and Bleiler with their compendium. If the people mentioned above had done absolutely nothing else within the field, these signal contributions would be enough to stamp them as true BNFs - even if they never once came out in the pages of THE CRUDZINE QUARTERLY with a Fearless Letter pillorying Palmer, hamstringing Hamling, goading Gold or crucifying Campbell.

Similarly, I'd grant BNF status to everyone who has ever been a prime mover in putting on a successful regional or national Convention. It's not necessarily the Chairmen I'm thinking of, either, but the real workers - whether or not they happen to hold titles. Often times they aren't active in the editing-publishing aspect of fandom, but their contribution to the field as a whole is a major one. Dr. C. L. Barrett is, of course, a name that comes instantly to mind. Doc is certainly a BNF, although he has never put out a single copy of a 100-page Annish.

I'd also classify as BNFs those who, through the years, have demonstrated willingness to perform services over and above the call of duty in connection with furthering the growth and development of the various APAs. I am not thinking so much about the people who get their kicks from quibbling over "constitutions" and interpretations of "bylaws" as I am about fans who have held office in such organizations and stimulated real activity on the part of the membership. The same would hold true for the fan clubs throughout the nation.

In the field of actual fan-publication, I defer to Mr Tucker with his reference to a "superior fanzine". Here again, quality and responsibility are the criteria; not quantity and volume. After a dozen years, people still remember (and, if they're fortunate enough to own copies, cherish) Laney's THE ACOLYTE: Lee Hoffman's QUANDRY was and is a distinctive effort: an all-too-infrequent SKYHOOK from Redd Boggs is still worth a hundred issues of {fill in your own choice, who needs trouble!}. That is not to say that it's impossible to make a valid contribution with frequent issues: certainly the award-winning FANTASY-TIMES offers ample demonstration to the contrary.

The same, I think, holds true in the matter of writing for fanzines. Bob Silverberg's famous piece of a few years back which resulted in the still-disputed birth of a still disputed Seventh Fandom is a case in point: there had been nothing to equal its effects since Dr. Frankenstein created his monster. Consistently good writing - serious or facetious, sf-oriented or devoted to other interests - can make a BNF. Take a look at Harry Warner, or Dean Grennell, or the work of many contributors to 'zines such as INSIDE, PSYCHOTIC, or OOPSLA for further evidence.

But in this connection, let me once again emphasize the fact that fanzines, while they are a fairly accurate mirror, lack the scope to reflect the entire aspect of fandom. It is possible (as in the case of Dr. Barrett) to become a BNF without ever editing, publishing, or writing for a fan magazine. I stress this merely because it is in the pages of fanzines that one generally comes across the distorted notions of what constitutes BNF status.

Let me repeat, at the risk of reiterated redundancy (to say nothing of alarming alliteration) you don't get to be a genuine BNF just by spreading your name around and getting people to know you. There's a lot of difference between mere notoriety and real recognition.



If name-noise alone could do the trick, then one of the outstanding BNFs of 1955-56 would be Joan Carr, the distinguished editress of FEMZINE. How quickly Joan Carr became a fake BNF! A fake in every sense of the word, because the distinguished editress is now an extinguished editress, upon revelation that "Joan Carr" was a hoax perpetrated by Sandy Sanderson. Indeed, Sanderson is one of the few who may be rightfully entitled to BNF status by virtue of a hoax alone - since that hoax so deftly demonstrates the difference between actual achievement by an actual person and false claims by a fakeroo.

In a sense, as I tried to say when I started out, all this is very unimportant. Since the term BNF carries with it no tangible reward and no actual prestige save in a very minor field, it can quite easily be dismissed as being of no consequence, no matter to whom it is applied.

But on the other hand, fandom does have a value as a cross-section of human relationships. Many a youngster has grown up (and, let us hope, many more will grow up) in the field. The friendships they cultivate there, the

experiences they undergo, and the judgments about effort, worth and rewards they make as a result of what they find in fandom renders it important that we emphasize the difference between mere labels and actual performance. It is important, too, that we all realize that becoming a BNF is not the end-all or be-all of fanactivity. There are plenty of people around who don't necessarily want to become Big Wheels - they're quite happy merely to go along for a pleasant ride. As such, they're more than welcome, and their company is more appreciated; fandom is the kind of vehicle that moves better with a full load of passengers, and there's no need to expect that everyone must serve as conductor or engineer; sheer interest is ticket enough for the trip. Our only dispute is with those who claim a place in the engineer's cab without really helping 'to stoke the boiler - they blow a loud - whistle, but they don't get us anywhere; and I'd better drop the analogy right now before we end up on the wrong track.

I can see myself in Bloch and his column, because I too was a fandom columnist. Ca 1981-1989 I edited the fandom column of Sam J Lundwall's *Jules Verne Magasinet*, most of the time with Erik Andersson, known for translating Tolkien and Ulysses (and someone who I believe one day may fill a chair in the Swedish Academy, but don't mention JVM or Bamseballen!) Here Bloch tells us how he does his column and how a writer works, from *Imagination* #4, 1957:



Some months ago, while, attending the New York Convention, I was approached by a number of fans. Some of them came up to me hoping that they would be snubbed and could complain about it in their fanzines. Some of them came to offer me criticism (most of which I managed to duck - actually, I only lost two teeth). But by far the greatest number came to inquire just how I review fanzines.

At least I think they asked me how, although the word might have been why.

Really, of course, reviewing fanzines is a simple matter. If it wasn't simple, I couldn't do it.

The general procedure runs something like this. Every morning I hitch up the trailer, drive down to the local post-office, and load up the day's crop of magazines. Upon arriving at my house, the fanzines are placed on the freight-elevator and taken to the second floor. Here a conveyor-belt runs them into my office, and a crew of workers sorts them according to size, shape, and general category of content.

After reading fanzines for a while, you'll notice that many of them easily fall into categories. Some of them easily fall into wastebaskets. (Actually I'm only kidding: I really have just two wastebaskets - one for fanzines containing material by John Berry, and a smaller one for fanzines which don't) .

But this business of categories is interesting. Time and again, I run across the same themes in articles and letters and review columns.

Like, for instance, the critical theory that the trouble with science fiction writing today is that the authors are being overpaid. There is a widespread notion on the part of many fans that the "sense of wonder" has vanished with the '1 cent word rate: a belief that if you put the average individual in a garret to starve he'll start moaning with hunger, but if you put the average writer there, he'll start to turn out a masterpiece.

Now I don't know how it is with the average individual, because I've never met any, but I do know something about the average writer. And what I know tells me that this particular fanzine fancy, which I've read time and time again, is spurious. In the interests of better understanding and harmony between fans and pros. I'd like to discuss the matter. I could bore you with a long essay on the subject. Instead, I'm going to bore you with a long editorial. Which is called: MCGUFFEY'S FIRST SCIENCE FICTION READER OH SEE THE FUNNY MAN! WHAT IS HIS NAME?

His name, dear children, is Roscoe Krochbinder. He is a writer of science fiction.

WHY DOES HE WEAR SUCH SHABBY CLOTHES?

Because he is a full time writer of science fiction. He does not pick up eating-money on the side as a movie projectionist, a television panelist, or a college instructor. He has no other source of income but writing.

CAN'T HE FIND HIMSELF A DECENT JOB?

Well, he tried to become a geek once. But the carnival boss told him he'd have to furnish his own chickens. Besides, he does not want another job. He just wants to write science fiction for a living.

WHAT IS THE FUNNY MAN DOING?

Right now he has come from a four-hour session of research at the Public Library, where he has been checking material for one of his stories. He is hungry, so he is going into that restaurant to eat.

WHY IS THE WAITER GIVING HIM SUCH A DIRTY LOOK?

Because he only left him a quarter tip. The waiter, a Mr Fleegle, generally averages about \$125 a week in tips.

IS HE A GOOD WAITER?

Well, you'll notice it took fifteen minutes for Roscoe Krochbinder to get waited on. And when he asked for rye toast he got whole-wheat and when he asked for black coffee the waiter brought him coffee with cream in it. You might say he was a pretty average sort of waiter. Nobody complains when a waiter makes a few simple mistakes like that.

WHERE IS MR KROCHBINDER GOING NOW?

He is taking a bus back to his room to put in another four or five hours of actual writing.

WILL HIS STORY BE FINISHED THEN?

Probably not. He will write a first draft and then he will have to re-write it.

WHY DOESN'T HE SAVE TIME BY JUST WRITING THE SECOND DRAFT FIRST?

Ha ha, very funny. Just pay attention to the lesson, please.

LOOK AT MR KROCHBINDER TALKING TO THE BUS DRIVER. DOES HE KNOW HIM?



Indeed he does. The bus-driver, a Mr Floogle, lives nearby. In a much nicer house, by the way. He drives the same bus on the same route at the same times every day. He likes to talk to people because most of the time he doesn't have much thinking to do on his job.

WHY DID MR KROCHBINDER BUMP INTO THAT PASSENGER STANDING NEXT TO HIM IN THE BUS?

Because Mr Knochbinder was thinking very hard. You see, he has to think hard about his stories in order to make sure that he can come up with some new ideas or twists in each one. That's part of his job.

SEE HOW MAD THE OTHER PASSENGER IS!

Well, kiddies, you can hardly blame him. His name is Mr Fliggle and he has just come from the factory where he is employed as a sweeper. He earns \$2.10 an hour for sweeping up - and with his time-and-a-half for overtime and his bonus, he makes about \$5200 a year. He likes the way the union protects him on his job, and he likes his two weeks' vacation with pay, and he likes the idea that the company shells out half of his Social Security and also gives him and his family free insurance. Also, if he gets laid off, he knows he will get Unemployment Compensation. But right now he is mad because he will not get another pay raise until the next round of automatic wage-increases after the steel strike.

THAT IS VERY INTERESTING ABOUT THE AUTOMATIC WAGE-INCREASES. WILL MR KROCHBINDER GET AN AUTOMATIC INCREASE TOO?

No, dear pupils. Mr Krochbinder is a free-lance writer. He has no fixed salary or income. He has no union or pressure-group to represent him. He gets no pay when he takes a vacation. He must pony up every cent of his Social Security, and make out the long form on his Income Tax return, and do all of his own withholding. Nobody pays for his insurance, and when he retires no company gives him a pension or a bonus. Moreover, there is no such thing as Unemployment Compensation in his life. And as for automatic wage-increases based on a cost-of-living index - hah! Unless he can sell his next story to one of the very few magazines paying top rates, he will send it to one of the other markets. And they will pay him exactly the same word-rate they were paying writers in 1930, in the depths of the depression! If, of course, he manages to sell his story at all.

WHAT IS MR KROCHBINDER DOING NOW?

Sad to say, youngsters, he is walking into the liquor store. Before going home to his room he wants to purchase a pint of rubbing alcohol to put on his sore tonsils.

WHO IS THAT HANDSOME MAN WAITING ON HIM?

That is Mr Fluggle, the proprietor of the liquor store. He is a neighbourhood Big Wheel and clears about \$20,000 profit a year.

DOES HE MAKE THE LIQUOR HE SELLS IN HIS STORE?

No, he just buys it from a wholesale house and sells it at retail prices.

DOES HE HAVE TO WORK HARD TO SELL IT?

See how Mr Krochbinder grabs at that bottle? No, dear students, his customers rush in and take it away from him.

DID HE HAVE TO STUDY TO LEARN HOW TO RUN A LIQUOR STORE?

No, he just buys it from a wholesale house and sells it at retail prices.

DOES HE HAVE TO WORK HARD TO SELL IT?

See how Mr Krochbinder grabs at that bottle? No, dear students, his customers rush in and take it away from him.

DID HE HAVE TO STUDY TO LEARN HOW TO RUN A LIQUOR STORE?

Certainly not: he never got beyond eighth grade. An accountant handles his books, a stenographer writes his letters, a lawyer handles his business arrangements, the wholesale liquor salesmen provide him with advertising matter and even set up his merchandise for him.

DID MR KROCHBINDER HAVE TO STUDY TO LEARN HOW TO WRITE?

Oh, a little. After he completed his education, he must have ploughed through hundreds of thousands of words before he acquired sufficient skill to sell his stories on a regular basis. He is still learning about writing, and he has to keep up with all sorts of things in order to find material for his yarns. '

AND WHAT DID YOU SAY MR KROCHBINDER EARNS A YEAR?

I didn't say. Nosey. But if you must know, last year his total income - - after expenses for supplies and



Harold Gauer, Robert Bloch, CL Moore, Henry Kuttner



Bloch as King Geek
(a comics character?)

deduction of his agent's commission - . was \$4,361.

NOT TOO GOOD, WAS IT?

Not too bad, either. Did you know that the over-all average income for writers in this country during the same period was only a little over \$3300 for the year, according to an exhaustive survey? And this average includes the earnings of the few big-money men as well as thousands who earned less. OH WELL, MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING, IS IT?

That is so right, kiddies. And that is the lesson I want you all to take away from this little exercise. Mr



Bloch plays murder victim,
Gauer looks on, Alice Bedard with gun

Krochbinder isn't writing just in hopes of getting rich. He is writing because he actually feels that this sort-of work offers him the best outlet for creative satisfaction.

DON'T YOU THINK THESE PEOPLE SORT OP HAVE A SNEAKING ENVY OP MR KROCHBINDER, EVEN IP THEY MAKE MORE MONEY AT THEIR OWN JOBS?

Well, children, that's a peculiar thing. It so happens that every one of these other men has read some of Mr Krochbinder's stories at one time or another. I mean, Mr Fleegle the sloppy waiter - and Mr Ploogle who can drive his bus in his sleep - and Mr Pliggle who just sweeps up all day - and Mr Pluggle who holds out a bottle and takes a profit for wrapping it up. They have read Mr Krochbinder's stories.

DO THEY LIKE MR KROCHBINDER'S WORK?

More or less. But, you know something? Every one of them has the same complaint. They think Mr Krochbinder makes too much money.

TOO MUCH MONEY?

That's right. They figure if he only made less, then every story he turned out would be a masterpiece.

BUT IF THESE OTHER PEOPLE DON'T DO SUCH WONDERFUL WORK EVERY DAY ON THBIR JOBS, HOW CAN THEY EXPECT THAT EVERYTHING MR KROCHBINDER WRITES SHOULD BE EXCEPTIONAL?

Because Mr Krochbinder is a writer, and writers are supposed to be geniuses.

I DON'T THINK MR KROCHBINDER IS A GENIUS. I THINK HE IS A DAMNED FOOL.

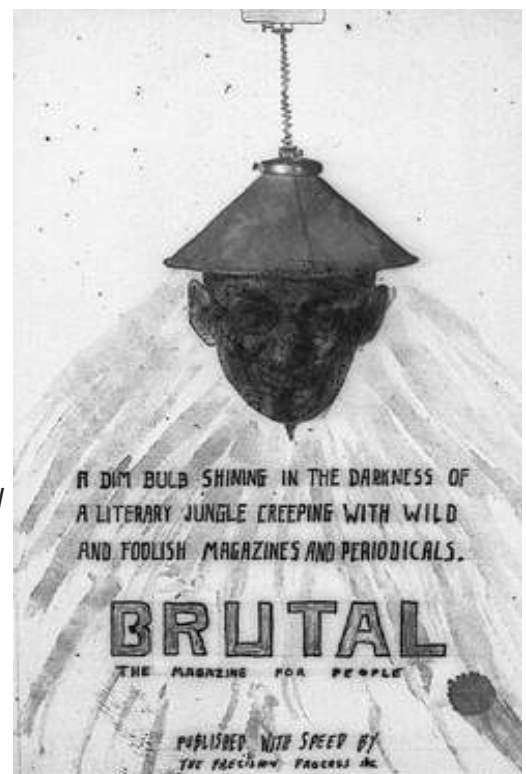
No comment.

S O THERE YOU HAVE IT.

You may think Mr Krochbinder is a damned fool, too, and realize that if he doesn't like his way of earning a living he is always welcome to change. But that is not the point in dispute: the dispute revolves around the twin notions that poverty somehow stimulates the production of superior material and that it is the duty of every writer to turn out a consistent flow of exceptional, original work.

In actual practice, poverty forces writers to resort to frantic hackwork, hastily slapped out to bolster a sagging income. Few writers in any way directly dependant upon literary efforts for an income can afford the time and effort necessary to produce masterpieces. The higher the rates, the better the over-all output. This is a fact which no writers, and few editors, ever dispute. And by what method of critical divination some fans have arrived at their conclusions it is difficult to determine. Perhaps they are thinking of a few exceptions which seem to prove the rule . - Edgar Allan Poe, for example, or H. P. Lovecraft. But even here, it is possible to trace Poe's writing and ascribe the best of it to the periods when he was enjoying comparative prosperity: for example, the times when he was earning |100 a week (a princely salary in the 1840's) as an editc '. And Lovecraft's income from his stories was supplemented by a combination of scant private resources plus years of outright hacking and ghostwriting which undoubtedly prevented him from doing far better in his own fictional efforts.

So here is one of the standard themes running through fanzines which I submit is best abandoned, if fans themselves are really interested in better prozine yarns.



Cover of Bloch/Gauer's mag BRUTAL

Our reader Dave Truesdale provided some interesting blochiana. Here are obituaries on M McComas, L Brackett and EF Russell from the Starlog SF Yearbook 1979, edited by Truesdale and David Gerrold: <https://tangentonline.com/columns/articles/robert-bloch-appreciations-of-mccomas-russell-a-brackett/> And here are rare episodes of the mid-1940s radio show *Stay Tunes for Terror*

that Bloch wrote: <https://tangentonline.com/oldtimeradio/stay-tuned-for-terror-lizzie-borden-took-an-axe-the-bogy-man-will-get-you-by-robert-bloch/>

Radio was king of the ether until TV took over in the 1950s. There are a lot of Old Time Radio shows to download. Google OTR and eg "X Minus One", "Dimension X", "Superman" and more. Try Orson Welles "Mercury Theatre on the Air" too, but beware of Martians!

Enough Bloch for today, as if you could get enough Robert Bloch! Try <https://www.robertbloch.net/>. In fanzine repositories like efanzone.com and fanac.org you find old fanzines, many with a Bloch piece, and it's worth checking his superb books!

In today's sad remains of what was once fandom nobody knows what a BNF is and the prozines are near extinction, in favour of movies made by computers from scripts written by 7-year olds, showing silly figures in colourful costumes. The overlong books are full of babbling internal monologues and unnecessary subplots to fill 6-700 pages, not seldom about how "minorities"

are oppressed by awful western market economy. The the resourceful spaceman who boldly went where no man had gone before is forgotten. Technological progress is suspicious and just "toxic masculinity". Humanity can't expand and grow because we'll just destroy Mars' environment - though it's just dust and rocks. (That some seem apologetic towards - or won't mention - murders of 1400 Israeli civilians is telling.) We get poisoned by sneaking con bureaucracy that muffles free speech so all may feel "comfortable" in a cushioned world. Bye-bye to challenging thoughts! No one dares to think independently.

Weren't all our yesterdays better! Where has fandom's humour gone? The letterhacks that managed more than 240 characters? The entertaining, myths, legends and hoaxes? Where are the witty writers, the new Robert Blochs and the ackermanese punsters? Is there a new Willis in waiting giving us *The Enchanted Blog* – oh, I forgot, today's fakefen don't even know *real* blog! Stories today tend to be dragons and daggers quests praising the dark medieval ages – at least, there are swords and castles and princes. Movies are today almost 90% computer generated and about infantile heroes climbing walls like spiders squirting nets or thinking they are bats. It's as interesting as watching chess in slow motion. Movies were better when Hitch and Bloch did them. Today's Kobold squad correctly identify itself as "nerds" (in the original sense) and march in embarrassing public spectacles. On media events they stand in line to get Harry Potter's autograph from a B actor – as if this HP had ever existed – for 20 bucks. It's Gosh Wow Boy-oh-boy all over again. What some today unhistorically call "fandom" is about uncritical worship and copying, imitating and not creating. They copy fiction and call it fanfiction. (Original fanfiction was something else!) They copy clothes of comics figures. And copy USS Entershit in plastic and scale 1:100. Fandom as we knew it is near death. It has difficulty getting fresh air and the pulse is low.

That's why I think it's important to chronicle the glory that was, so it may be remembered, perhaps inspire to do better, tales about more fannish days when the chosen filk knew how to handle their stencils, down their bheer - *Ned Med Øled!* - and staple their fanzines. In the heavens the atomic rocket RS R A Heinlein accelerate on its way to Mars carrying blueprints for a colony designed by Arthur C Clarke, to be built by Asimov's robot. The Good Doctor IA now rules the Ais. Those were the days, my friend...

Mailing Comments

Mailing comments to first N'APA and then EAPA.

N'APA Official Organ: I read that N3F "members who are not paying dues", won't be welcome, apparently a new decision. If so, I'm afraid I have to leave N'APA, which then may begin to shrink



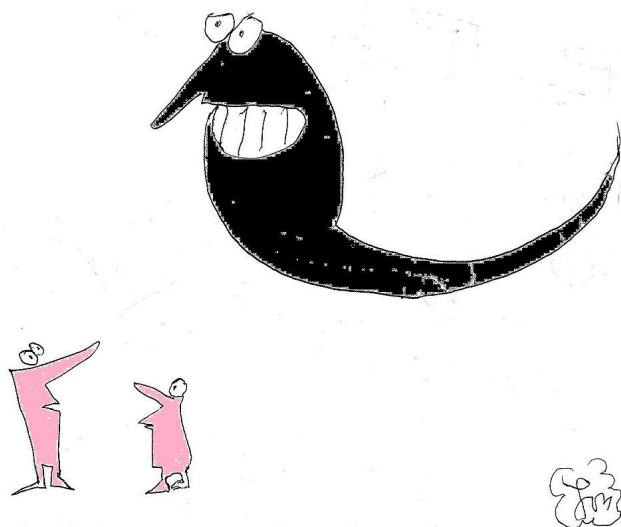
again which may not be what all want. I became what was called an "associate" neffer, excluding any voting rights or printed material - which means it only costs N3F a few quadrillion electrons. I don't even have any payment system for non-domestic transfers of any dues. But if I'm out, at least it was with a splash! Two regular *Intermissions* - since my schedule is monthly, while N'APA is bimonthly - *plus* a special issue, since the Bloch story in #138.5 was too long. Maybe some just thinks its tiring to get way to much to read... (A tip: skim and skip. Just eyetrack over the pages and stop here and there when something looks interesting.)

Jefferson Swycaffer: While animals can't take ordinary IQ tests, of course, others methods can be used to get a rough idea. Labyrinths, showing things to get response, setting up practical problems to reach food, etc. // The Gernsback essay on writing scientific stories was genuine, attributed to him, but we can't rule out that some of his editors wrote and he put his name under it - that happens with a major publisher having many sub-ordinate editors. (Gernsback was a major publisher with scores of magazines and other publications.) // A local con "had to disciple - and eject - a serial groper". But that doesn't require a CoC, just the law of the land. Here's a CoC attacking Free speech: "Dave Truesdale being expelled from Worldcon for expressing non-PC thoughts"

<https://www.battleswarmblog.com/?p=28316>. There are more examples. Particularly silly, in fact a major brain hemorrhage, was how Chicon made a public excuse for having a program item named "The Fannish Inquisition" because, they lectured us, it reminds us of the Spanish Inquisition 500+ years ago, which an untold number of people have nightmares about and feel "uncomfortable" with. It's even more ridiculous than the original Monty Python sketch. Such figures have no humour, and humourless people are dangerous. // We must err on the side of caution regarding free speech: if any doubt don't try to censor or ban! Intellectual development and meaningful communication requires candor and messages with edges. It's when you are moved by what is said, not in a zone of "comfort", you begin to think. Draping things in cotton is for the imbecile who is standing still. It is the legacy of science fiction to provoke and bring thoughts beyond any borders.

George Phillies: I'm against any ban on using other persons' work for training AIs. That's just equivalent to let AIs be inspired by the work by others. But you shouldn't be allowed to let finished AI work come too close to the work by others, using the same characters, backgrounds etc. // Some VHS tapes are now high-priced on Ebay, trashy B-movies you once ranted at the local gas station. They are getting very rare and have a cult following!

Mark Nelson: AFAIK that the Swedish constitution to be changed needs two parliament votes with an election in between has been in force since the previous 1809 constitution. There is almost always a small "pending" change in every election, usually a minor adjustment. // I have a problems with some "h..., r..., s...language is not acceptable", major problems! 1) What that would be banned is very, very loosely defined, so it becomes a rubber rule. I have for instance never heard a definition of what "sexist" is, that isn't what my university professor in linguistics defined as a "persuasive definition". 2) It may be applied to argumentative expressions and thus stops necessary, free debate. 3) Generally, I think groups should only be "protected" under exceptional circumstances. For instance, saying "all Newyorkers are assholes" must be protected under freedom of speech. (Sorry NY guys! Only an example.) 4) If something is legal to say it's unacceptable to invent private "laws" to ban it. 5) Generally, bans on expressions should only apply if inciting others to violence and similar aggressive actions. "I think all Newyorkers are ugly and stupid" must be protected to say, while "Come on, grab your gun and go out and shoot Newyorkers!" should



"He overinked his mimeo, and then he happened to get stuck under its roller..." Art by Lars LON Olsson.

be banned. Expressions and speech must be allowed to have edges and cause feelings of "discomfort" - just not concrete damage. (Feelings are not concrete.) // Anyway, science fiction in the modern sense came with Gernsback and the early pulps.// Is "pirk" used in English? "Pirking" is ice-fishing, ie fishing through a drilled hole in the ice. In my youth I tried some pirking in Lapland, not getting any fish... // Many Scandinavian words, over a thousand I believe, came into English with the Vikings. // Here's a newbie guide to the sport of orienteering, in English:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26Zc5AVkFis> Not a sport I follow, but be warned I may dip into skiing a bit this winter (depending on that my favourites race well). // As for the word "fandom" I think that sf fandom was the first to use it consistently and often, while in baseball it was only used rarely. // "Skip" isn't used in Swedish except as a newly borrowed English word, so it's interesting it's Scandinavian originally...// As for minerals you forget the elements Yttrium, Erbium, Terbium and Ytterbium, which are from a mine near Ytt-Erb-y...Ytterby north of Stockholm, where those elements first were found!

Jefferson Swycaffer: It's true that fanfiction is old. It began already in the 1930s when fans began mocking religion by inventing new gods and debating if magazines should be bound by chewing gum. // No, I really mean that fanzines should lead fandom, carry fandom! Fandom is or should at least be a text-based thing: it's written fiction, it's written fanzines, once it was letterhacks and LoCs. Though I realise that fanzines, writing and text has been shrinking, I still say that text and the written word, must be at the core of fandom. We should rally fan to do more fanzines! // I have studied Swedish immaterial laws a bit. (No need to go to the EU. Local laws are here obliged to reflect the general EU principles.) I think I already mentioned that the Swedish word for "copyright" is "upphovsrätt", ie "origin-right".// I see it as illegitimate and discrimination to "include" away some because they aren't a politically correct "minority". "Affirmative" action is wrong. You punish innocents for perceived wrongs by others, usually a long time back in history. The scum on Earth - middle-aged white men – are "diversified" away, they get a small fraction of prize nominations and you can be sure they DON'T get to publish as much as they deserve. A mediocre manuscript by a female will be judged more positive than a much better one by those "scums". The magazine rejection rates have been studied, showing that manuscripts by male writers get a substantially more rejections. // Putin cling to power because he has the security apparatus, the police, agencies projecting power, media etc in his hands. But that grip may begin to slip if he meets enough of failures - let's hope for that. The Ukrainian's try to impose as much casualties on the Russian army as possible to that end, that rather than foolhardy offensive rushes into minefields. // Paludan and others burn religious books as provocations, to get Muslims to over-react. In that he seems successful. (I won't go into immigration generally. It's too complicated.)

Heath Row: Thanks for your film tips! // I think I was quite clear about book burning: don't ban it, but don't do it. Formal bans on expressions should be avoided, but you can still abstain from certain expressions.// No, I don't know about longer biographies on Hugo G. // What about the Cult and scientology? Tell us more! // To EAPA. Well, back in the middle ages the royal families were often not very far from gangs. It was clans or families in a power struggle, attacking and killing each other. That was a reason the position as king became hereditary. That way the successor was known and there was no point of fighting over it. // Without having an exact count, I think I have maybe 10-15 short stories written in och translated to English, and that includes several not-so-serious, "funny" stories I distribute for Xmas/New Year. Anyway, I think I'm capable to ,translate my stories myself, if needed... // I have actually a couple of times submitted stories to US sf mags, but been rejected, of course. I think the competition is rather intense.

Kevin Trainor: But the US spends a lot on the Mexican border already. Compared to the total US military budget support to Ukraine is very tiny, and causes major destruction of the military capacity of a possible adversary at an incredibly cheap price! Something like half a percent of the US military budget, has destroyed half of Russia's military! They've lost 300 000+ soldiers, 5 000+ tanks, 700 aircraft, half the Black Sea fleet...and it has costed the US peanuts! // Vance's Demon Prince And Planet of Adventure novels are wonderful! I call that first rate space opera! // Don't say anything good about Campbell! Don't you know he was a "bloody fascist"... // CoCs "have too often been used to browbeat Wrongthinkers." My thinking too.

Simon Lubell: I tend to think the "characterisation" isn't as important. It's often meaningless internal

monologues. // "Minorities" getting extra perks is a problem, because it means that others who are innocent of any wrong doing are pushed aside and are discriminated. To use discrimination to fight perceived discrimination is simply wrong. // I agree about book burning. // We had Joe Haldeman guesting one of our cons. Met him and sat with him on a short writers' workshop, where he commented a story I had written, in English. We had to write and submit a short story in advance. His comments were rather helpful. // Interesting about Hawthorne. Should read him more. // About your fanzine title...perhaps you noted I recently wrote about the "real" Samizdats!

Henry Grynsten: The active gang members in Sweden is difficult to estimate. Many are more passive hang-arounds, but the "hard core" actively engaged in shootings can't be more than say 1000. // Yes, there are few original pages of Soviet Samizdat to be found. I googled around for it myself with few results. // Miniatures and games with them is interesting. I think some more adult types do it as an indirect way to "control the world". The model and the game becomes a substitution for the world, ie the full-sized version. Its the same with Meccano or Lego. You become the boss over machines and buildings. You play Monopoly, Risk and other games to feel as if you control a big company or a country. I've seen stories and material about artist Peter Dahl's fantasy world Caribani and can't understand why he spent decades and 10 000s of hours on it... I mean, I sometimes invent fantasy worlds when writing, but I spend a few dozen hours there, part time a month or two at most, otherwise I'd be bored. // As a kid I too built some plastic models (do you remember Airfix?) and together with cousin Jonas in the summers played around with small plastic soldiers. Later we would both instead sit at the dinner table in uncle'n'aunts Lapland cottage and draw airplanes, primarily WWI double-deckers that had more interesting shapes. // I'm getting tired of computer SFX. It allows you to do anything, but whrn anything is possible noting becomes interesting. Old-time SFX with models, travelling mats, camera tricks are much more attractive, even if they look less realistic. // Tiny Houses should be of special interest in Sweden, since we in the 1980 got the "Friggehut", named after the then housing minister Birgit Friggebo. That was small buildings of max 10 sqm - later 15 sqm - you could put up on your own land without planning permission! It has now been extended to "Attefall houses" - once more after the minister responsible - allowed to be up to 30 sqm, still without planning permission. A positive development. Politicians should meddle less in people's housing. There meddling and the slowness of handling planning permissions have significantly contributed to somewhat of a housing crisis over here.

William McCabe: Hope your fingers gets well! // Yes, mundane APAs were earlier and are still around. But as I understand it there's an important difference between fannish APAs and mundane: NAPA and UAPA don't collate publications into mailings for co-distribution. They just give you access to the addresses of the others and you mail your publication yourself. That fandom APAs began with co-distribution probably comes from that young fans - all were young then - were poor and co-distribution saves a lot of money. Mundane APAs tended to be for people being slightly better off, a typical middle-class hobby, who didn't need cost staving co-distribution. // TV license has been scrapped in Sweden. The semi-governmental SVT is paid directly over the state budget. The loopholes for avoiding the license fee became too many. // Yes, Lindbergh was only first over the Atlantic with a *solo* flight. Chaps Alcock and Brown were the first already in 1919 in a Vickers Wimpy WWI bomber. // We can't forget Ukraine and Russia's war. That'd be dangerous! Slava Ukraini, as it also says below in Cyrillic.

Rogers Cadenhead: Welcome back to the fanzine world. // I don't listen much to radio and think tennis is boring. (But be warned: I may in the winter babble a bit about cross-country skiing, which others think is boring...) I think space opera is more interesting than soap opera.

Garth Spencer: For me, fanzine fandom IS fannish fandom to a high degree! Unfortunately, fanzine fandom is on the way down...especially in Sweden. *Intermission* and *SF-Forum* are the only two fanzines done here today. There were times in the 1980s when we had 100 titles/year!

Time to sign off! We keep our fanzine blockade against Kremlin tight. Bloch are superb! Fanzines are superb! Ukraine is superb!

Слава Україні!