

# INTERMISSION #140

**E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and all who support Ukraine in its fight for freedom, rule of law and decency! Follow @SFJournalen newstweets though we recently from lack of time update it only 1-2 times/week. Äls can make typos too! Our popular History Corner this time digs into awesome printing tech! Late Dec 2023**

Short Ed's notes: This # starts with our *traditional Xmas/New Year's story*. As NASA will return to the Moon, Santa gets the same idea... And while we're waiting for NATO and the Turkey president stop being a prick, Yours Truly...was one of five *winners of the NATO 2099 contest!* More on that too. We'll report from the Short Story Masters as we humbly call ourselves and an authors' union sf evening. The beloved History Corner will this time cover mimeo printing history, the enchanted technology fanzines relied on. At the same time we hear that our robotic friend Alsaac Alsimov of Trantor prepares to cover *pre-mimeo* copying technology in a new # of his sensational FaiNZINE - it may come with this *Intermission*. You are BTW encouraged to do a fanzine yourself - fandom needs it! - if only to have something to join our fanzine blockade against Kremlin with...

Slava Ukraini!

--Ahrvid Engholm

## **Xmas/New Year's Story: Santa Goes to the Moon**

Santa Claus, the jolly old man of red complexion, was about to embark on his most ambitious Christmas run yet: a trip to the Moon! For months he had trained his trusted reindeers for the mission, his hi-tech labs had developed special nutrition to make these already tough animals even tougher. And they had made a special space-adapted red Santa suit.

The science labs on the Moon, the small factories that harvested the lunar resources - like energy-rich Helium-3 - the astronomical observatories, emerging tourism, all that had slowly condensed into major moon colonisation. Adventurous pioneers were now making their life on the moon, working, loving, starting families. And now the lunar kids would finally also get a visit by Santa Claus!

Santa's science elves had done the calculations, plotted the course, prepared everything. Yes, it would be possible for the White-Bearded Man to make the jump over the void with the right preparations. He'd visit the underground Luna City, Luna's unofficial capital, where most of the children lived - others could easily get there. Around one hundred of them would be eagerly awaiting him. Almost all of them believed in Santa, of course. And Santa's North Pole factory complex had begun with the wish lists of the children..

It was the months long night at the North Pole. The field outside Santa's toy factories and HQ was illuminated in multiple colours from the groves of Christmas firs surrounding what they called Santapolis. The reindeers trampled nervously as they awaited the difficult journey ahead. Santa and his very special animals had finished their preparations. The reindeers were a special breed of Rangifer Tarandus, for those who know Latin, genetically enhanced by SARPA, Santa's Advanced Research Project Agency, so they could fly.

Rudolph, the leader, had been sent on an orbital test flight which had gone well. He was feed with Mrs Claus' special super eggnog which strengthened his already North Pole tough skin, so ut would stand the cold vacuum of space. He he had also been feed big portions of oxygen-rich lichens to handle the lack of air during in space. But for the full trip to the Moon, especially considering the payload of Christmas parcels, the other eight reindeers would would have to join Rudolph. All of them were now fully prepared with the eggnog and lichens.

Dasher, Dancer, Prancer looked eager and determined. The hoofs of Dancer did a little Fred Astaire imitation. Dasher had had his fur groomed for the occasion and looked dashing. Vixen stood a bit away from the others, looked down in the snow as if in doubt about what would happen. Rudolph looked at her as if communicating: I've done it, you'll be OK girl! BTW, how about my stable when we're back? Comet, Cupid, Blitzen and Donner stood ready and full of energy, throwing short snorts

## Nagoya firm attempting to brew beer in space

between them, meaning: we're ready! What are we waiting for? Rudolph was tense and tight-lipped or rather tight-muled, having a grim look in his eyes. He'd be responsible for navigation, a most vital vital task. But he has the nose for it.

From the control tower, the Flight Chief elf reported as Santa donned the facemask which would give him oxygen. He wasn't too fond of lichen. It was a facemask of his own face, so he'd travel disguised as himself.

"We have confirmation from NORAD, boss," the earphones said. "They will help with our positioning while tracking. If any problems Houston will get in touch with Ho-Ho-Houston."

The last was Santa's own space control where the tech elves in a big igloo-like building stared at a wall of monitors, screens and dials of all sorts spraying rows of ever-changing numbers. NORAD was of course the North American air defence hub in the Cheyenne mountains that tracked Santa's flight every Christmas.

"But NORAD forwarded a little request, boss. I'll patch you through."

"Mr Claus, colonel Cartridge here. As we understand your cargo-hold will be empty on the return so...!"

"Do you want me to take some blue cheese back, colonel?"

"Not that. We herd from the Japanese. They developed space yeast and have begun brewing. To put it short, their little brewery on the Moon has produced a few kegs of beer they want you to bring back. Special Christmas beer! We will send you the details.

"Christmas beer! Sure. I can take as much as you want. The sleds cargo hold has this Tardis IV compactor so it can take anything. How else do you think I can load toys for 359 million kids!"

NORAD disconnected and Santa turned to the Ho-Ho-Houston tower:

"I think I forgot the good'n'naughty list for Luna, Santa said. It should be on my desk. Please send someone for it. And NORAD has sent something too, so check my E-mail Inbox too. My Flight Chief can help you open it."

"Anything else, boss?"

"No. Or, I almost forgot: Merry Christmas!"

"The same to you, sir!"

Santa donned his special red Kevlar-Graphene-Wool space outfit and his mask. He checked the oxygen feed and most importantly the Christmas punch feed. The start was getting closer. Santa walked towards his sled, while the elves made the reindeers ready. Tension was in the air.

Those not busy with last minute tasks, gathered in a wide half-circle around the big ginger cookies launch pad. The Flight Chief elf came running with the good'n'naught list and a note from NORAD about the beer kegs. The list was compiled by the Santa-Quanta 25-12 Super-Computer, the perhaps most powerful in the world, and something NSA could only dream about. The Santa-Quanta could practically read the mind of people.

"Boss, time to go! All readings nominal."

"Gang it's time," Sant called out to his reindeers. "Rudolph, when you're ready, led the way!"

The sled soon began to move, slowly at first. And then faster and faster, a foot above the snow, two feet, thirty feet, thirty-two reindeer hoofs doing their uplifting magic. It looked exactly as in a Disney movie when Santa's vehicle shot to the polar sky between the veils of a shimmering Aurora Borealis. Santa and the animals looked like a snake against the full Moon, slowly wiggling itself skywards. The reindeers puffed and huffed as the speed increased.

"Boss, soon you reach orbital speed," Ho-ho-houston reported.

"Roger, Roger!" Santa answered, as the Flight Chief was named Roger.



A palm-size automatic beer brewing machine developed by Takasago Electric Inc.

**The Yomiuri Shimbun**

A Nagoya-based precision machinery maker is working on technology for brewing out-of-this-world beer. Eyeing a future when people will stay in outer space for longer periods than now, the company said it aims to make it possible to produce fermented **Making space beer is serious for the Japanese!**

## A taste of space: west Japan team crafts

### beer using yeast that reached the stratosphere



High altitude yeast is a start for space “bi-ru”, beer in Japanese.

Santa knew he could trust Rudolph. And he could trust Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen too. He happily sipped from the Christmas punch tube as he enjoyed the stars. Rusty Mars, cloudy Venus and giant Jupiter hang there like a Christmas tree baubles.

The lunar disk grew larger by the minute. A landing spot near Luna City had already been selected.

The animals lowered the speed as they prepared for touchdown. The fine lunar dust there wasn't too dissimilar from snow, so the sled would have no problems. The landing was undramatic and soft.

The moon settlement was nothing short of a miracle, a triumph of human engineering and ingenuity. Entrances to this wonder were covered with domes where you could take off your helmet before descending. The domes shimmered in the eerie light of the strong lunar sun unfiltered by any atmosphere. Life, however fragile, had found a home under the desolate plains of the moon. You found lava tunnels there and protection against cosmic radiation.

As agreed personnel from the lunar administration rushed out give the reindeers attention and help with the big bag of Christmas presents Santa had in the cargo hold.

“Mr Claus, we have a number of kegs full of beer for you.”

“Yes, NORAD told me. I got the documentation and everything. Place it by the side of the sled.”

The kegs were in a special container. On it was a note with the instructions and addressee the Japanese brewer wanted it delivered too. A big sign said SENSITIVE - DO NOT DELAY!

I guess they don't want the beer to have time to be frozen to ice or be degraded in other ways, Santa thought. Though my reindeers are more than ten times faster than any of their rockets... The beer container looked like a cylinder with a little door at one end.

But the container would first pass the NISS, it had been explained to Santa, as the beer needed some after-brewing in zero-G. And besides the ISS crew yearned for some malt and had been promised they would try some. (There was a scientific point to testing beer in orbit, as the taste buds seem to change in that environment.)

“The container isn't full,” one of the Luna City men said.”It's just a test batch of the lunar Beer and it didn't fill the standard sizes container.”

“I'll take care of it when it's time to leave,” Santa said as the Luna City helpers lifted his big bag and started to drag it towards an entrance dome.

“We have all the kids assembled in the kindergarten! Those not living in Luna City have also been gathered. We thought it'd save you valuable time, Mr Claus.”

Well, Santa thought, then I won't need to activate my STC, Subjctive Time Compressor. It was the STC that made it possible for Santa to spend as much time as needed to deliver all presents. Otherwise he'd only have a few microseconds of time with each child, if you did the math.

Special arrangements had to be implemented for the lunar colonists. Low gravity affected the body's development, though not as much as Zero-G. Beside having special counter-G medicine, below the

The reindeers worked furiously, but knew they had to get into an extra gear to reach escape velocity. But they they could do it. They were Santa's elite reindeers, for Pete's sake!

Santa caught a short glimpse of the New International Space Station as they rushed past, much faster than any human-built rocket could. After all, Santa and all he did could count on Christmas magic. Since his sled wasn't a mere Apollo or SpaceX rocket, the passage to the Moon would only take 2-3 hours, if the elves and Santa-Quanta had got it down right.

They had.

Rudolph who had studied the star charts made small course corrections that made the sled rock a little now and then.

Japanese craft brewery and tech company to simulate making beer on Moon and Mars

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Kanpai! - cheers in Japanese! - for a liquid golden as the sun.

colony's main level was a huge ring rotating on superconducting magnets, creating created higher gravity through centrifugal force. Along that ring's leaning walls lay kindergartens, a gym, classrooms for the lower grades, and all kids spent several hours there every day so their bodies would develop normally. The adults were also required to spend a certain number of hours every week in the G-ring.

While waiting, children of Luna City had been polishing their manners and for weeks they had behaved exceptionally well, eager to impress Santa and earn a favourable mark on his list.

Little did they know that one of their classmates, a mischievous boy named Max, had been caught stealing cookies and making a mess in the kitchen. Santa had put him on the naughty list, though Max would claim his actions were not out of malice but rather part of his plan to become an astronaut and explore the cosmos. The cookies were samples to make space food experiments and the chemical experiments in the kitchen had been necessary to analyse a new rocket fuel. Max was a bit naughty but he was bright as the star of Sirius and best in the science class.

As Santa stepped into the entrance, Max sat with the others in the kindergarten. The young scientist maverick closed his eyes. He imagined himself driving the rover across the dusty, rusty Martian surface exploring canyons or turning a huge radio telescope searching for signs of extraterrestrial life or on Extra Vehicular Activity outside the NISS. Little did he know that he would soon be involved in an unexpected turn of events.

Santa stepped out from an elevator on the G-ring level. His Christmas present bag was huge but not very heavy there on the Moon. He stepped on a platform that began to move to catch up with a moving wall. It was the wall of the G-ring and matching speeds was the way to enter it. There was a hatch where the platform had stopped and a ladder. With some effort Santa managed to raise the sack and squeeze in his big sack, followed with a little less effort by himself. He would not be able to enter the Kindergarten through a chimney, because such things were not available on the Moon. There was not atmosphere to spew smoke into. Santa would emerge for the kids through the door, in the Scandinavian manner. No stockings.

He came to the right spot, the door dilated, and he stepped in among a big crowd of the expected and expecting children and some adults. He hollered:

"Ho-ho, are there any friendly children here?!"

The children cheered. Santa checked his naughty list and began handing out the parcels. Tommy got that live action robot doll of Captain Future that he had wished. Jenny got a doll house modelled after a space station.

Niel got the VR super documentary about Apollo 11, which you could experience as if you were there through a special interface. Mary got that old, very valuable first edition, even signed by JK Rowling, plus a set of the Official AI-Written Extra Adventures. Peter got that robot puppy that was programmed and constructed to "grow" like a real dog - to export a live dog to the Moon would have been a bureaucratic nightmare. Lotte unfolded that invisibility cloak she wanted, and so on and so on.

An elderly lady stepped forth while the children smiled and prattled and tried out their toys. Unbeknownst to Max, his mischievous actions had caught the attention of Luna City's chief scientist, Dr Celestia Stern, an astrophysicist who usually worked with the super telescopes on the awayside. She had a serious look on her face.

"Santa," Dr Stern began, "there's a little problem. One of the children here, Max, has been a bit naughty, but he claims it's all in the pursuit of science and space exploration. I thought you should know and might want to have a word with him."

Santa, known for his wisdom and kindness, decided to give Max a chance. He invited the young boy to step forward. Max, wide-eyed and nervous, approached Santa with a mix of excitement and trepidation.

"Santa," Max stammered, "I know I've been a bit naughty, but I want to be an astronaut. I've been conducting experiments to learn about space and prepare for a future mission. The cookies and mess were needed to experiment with space nutrition to freeze-drying for long expeditions, and..."

Santa, with a twinkle in his eye, listened attentively. He then leaned in and said with a low, soft voice:



"Max, curiosity is a wonderful thing. But remember, being kind and considerate to others is just as important as exploring the cosmos. I'll hear what you say and have decided to give err on the side of the spirit of this day. So here you have your present!"

With that, Santa handed Max a special gift, a model rocket kit. Max's eyes lit up with joy, and he promised to use his scientific talents more wisely in the future. As Santa distributed presents to the other children, the atmosphere in Luna City turned festive. It was broadcasted on locally in 3D-VR stations and to Earth on "only" 3D for bandwidth reasons.

Santa was treated with lunar Christmas food, all hydroponic and algae-based but almost impossible to distinguish from real meat or fish or protoplasm. The local eggnog wasn't from real hens, of course, but tasted surprisingly good. At his request Santa got both the recipe and a bottle to take home.

The joy of the event seemed like it would never end, but as the time came close to 3 o'clock GMT the kids began to whisper something about Donald Duck and it seemed like time to leave. Santa waved his hand as a farewell to the children and left the same way he had arrived. His sack was almost empty, having only a christmas present Dr Stern had given him. Santa Claus *received* a Christmas gift! What next? Sun sets in the east? Lions turn vegetarian? Santa adjusted his oxygen mask and stepped out. The reindeers nearby munched on lichens and other goodies.

Santa instructed the Luna City helpers how to stuff the beer container in the cargo hold. The reindeers took the last of their goodies and lined up for take off.

The return trip was rather eventful, until it was time to deliver the beer container.

"ISS commander Curt Nelson to Santa," a call came.

"What's up commander Nelson?"

"Change of plans. We have a suspected medical situation and you can't come here. We suspect a virus, an outbreak of the Sun Corona. Suggest you leave the cargo in our orbit maybe 50-100 km away. We don't want it to drift into our solar panels., We can pick it up with a drone."

"Okey-dokey," Santa said. "We are right now trying to match your orbit, so we can do that. How is it going Rudolph, you heard the new request."

Rudolph was of course on his toes...hoofs. Finding the right orbit matching ISS was easy-peasy for the talented reindeer. But already thinking about a coming tete-a-tete with Vixen was screwing up his orbital adjustments a little. The beer container was ejected at almost the right orbit - almost. When the Flight Chief in Ho-Ho-Houston noted the slight aberration it was too late to compensate. But the NISS drones should be able to manage even if it took a little longer. Soon they landed without incident at the North Pole.

The reindeers were exhausted from the long flight. Santa reached for his STC unit as he needed a rest before continuing his ordinary Earth-bound deliveries and the STC would stretch time. He also started the STC in the reindeer stables so the poor animals could rest too.

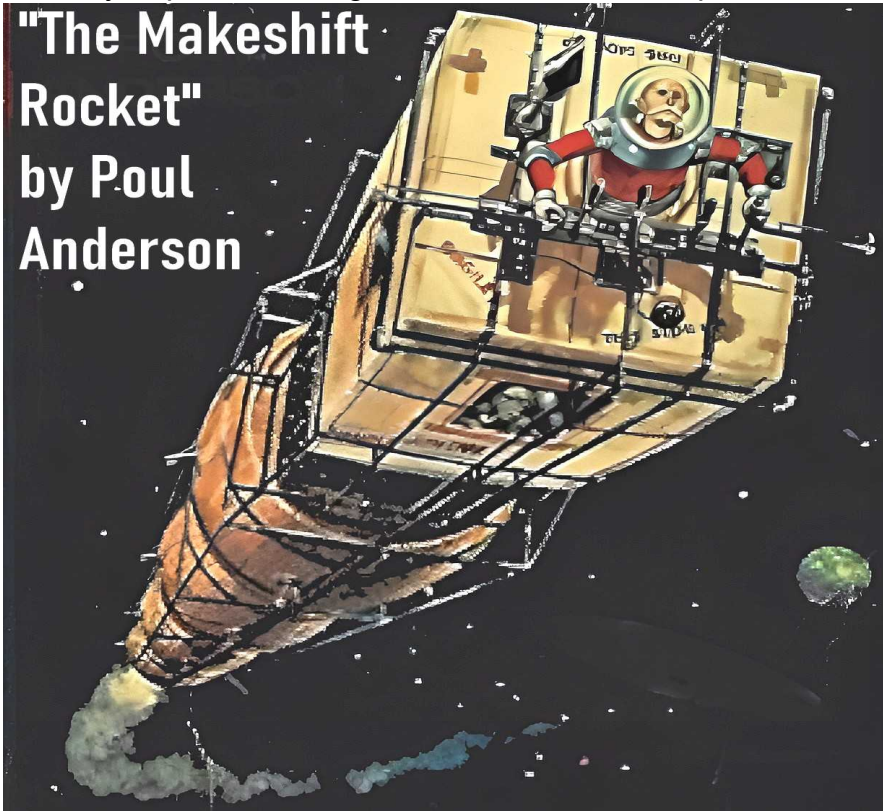
But just as he was going to place himself horisontally:

"Hey, what are you doing," a worried voice shouted in Santa's earphones. "I'm here with the beer in the container. You were supposed to drop me off at NISS. I've always wanted to see it. Now it may take days before they fetch me and I wonder if I have enough CO2-scrubbers..."\*

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\* Despite countless fictional descriptions of how trapped people "run out of oxygen", this is unlikely to happen. Humans are very tolerant to low oxygen levels. Remember that Mount Everest has been climbed without oxygen masks, where the partial oxygen pressure is 1/3 compared to sea level. The danger is rising CO2 from breathing, but we're tolerant to that gas too as it isn't poisonous as such. US Atomic Submarines tolerate a CO2 level 20 times normal. But CO2 drains

## "The Makeshift Rocket" by Poul Anderson



The voice sounded a lot like the young Max...

"What, is it you Max," Santa asked in bewilderment. "What have you done?"

"I've always wanted to see the NISS, so when the other kids played with their toys I took a space suit and sneaked out to the sled. I heard the container had some extra space and was on its way to NISS, so I hid there. I did take extra oxygen with me but I don't think it will be enough if I'm only in the almost correct orbit. It may take days for any ISS drones to find me. They are quite slow, you know."

"Hm," Santa hummed. "My reindeers are exhausted and in STC stasis and I don't think they are up to a rescue operation. And besides, I have my most important duty of the year in front of me... I'll contact NISS."

Santa did so. They became very worried and confirmed that the beer container wasn't in their immediate reach since the orbit was off a bit. They'd activate as many drones they could and launch them in a search pattern.

"When we find the container, it should take only a moderate push to put it in the right orbit. A drone can do that."

"Please hurry, said Max who had listened in. My CO2 meter is getting close to red."

An hour passed but the drones hadn't yet found the container.

"Max," Santa said, "you don't happen to have the model rocket kit with go got with you? If you can see NISS it should be easy to start in the correct direction, and then you just adjust..."

"I'm Afraid I left it. I know if it's just a toy, still it could have pushed me into the right orbit. But wait..."

There was a long moment of silence. Finally Max shot out with a triumphant voice:

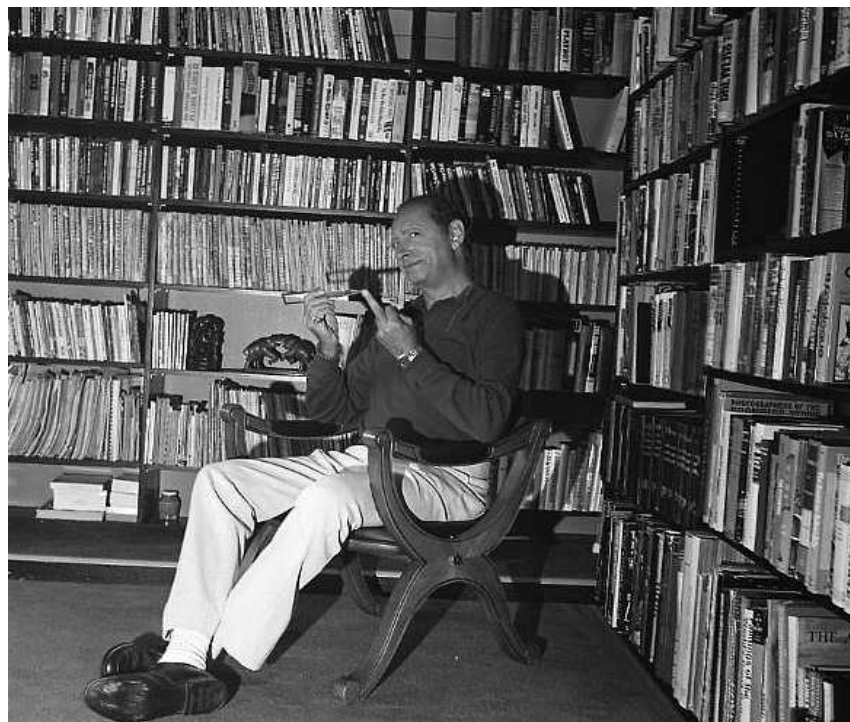
"I knew all that science fiction I've read would be useful one day! Listen Santa..."

Max informed about his plan and a couple of hours he was found by an NISS drone as he had been able to come closer to the right orbit. An ISS drone could half an hour later make contact and drag him to the space station.

The Japanese were furious, and this is why: Max did have propulsion units after all - the beer kegs! They were full of Christmas beer under high pressure, and exposed to the vacuum of space virtually all of the content would expand and spurt out. Max just had to place a keg somewhat correctly, as he knew the approximate position of NISS, and then just turn a handle to open the keg. The beer spread out like a giant snowfall with some yellow tint. He had several kegs and could make fine adjustments with each one. The Japanese were finally left with just one keg of their unique beer...

On the other hand bottles of that beer could be sold for astronomical prices at auctions, since the story of Max and beer space propulsion had become world news! The Japanese brewers probably didn't lose a yen in the end.

"Daring Mr Max Tegmark jr," Santa would later say. "I dare say your solution to the mess you created shows you have a knack for handling space! But don't do it again! By the way, we have a big Library in Santapolis, in order to know what kids want to read - good old real books on paper are popular gifts. I looked up the book that inspired you, *The Makeshift Rocket* by that obviously genius Poul Anderson, a Danish-American author. Danes love their beer, so it's no wonder he thought of a beer-powered space vessel! And now, I think it's time for some Christmas brew. *Ned med øled!* I had difficult deliveries yesterday in the skies over Ukraine. The Russians are on my naughty list, for sure."



Fan favourite Robert Bloch in his library, from the Gauer collection (see previous issues for more details).

energy and makes you sleepy if the level goes much higher than that. Without CO2 scrubbers we just become gradually duller and more sleepy and finally fall asleep and fall unconscious, not lacking oxygen - but due to too much CO2.

## A NATO Winner

As you may know, Sweden went against the wishes of Mr Vladimir Assholovich Putin and sent in a membership form to NATO, return postage not included. Finland did so too, but one Mr Erdogan, a real turkey of a politician, needs something to blackmail with so he can buy US fighter jets. Finnish licorice and Turkish Delight may perhaps go better together so the Finns were approved, but we've had to wait. Rumours say Erdogan and also one Mr Orban of Hungary will give in soon... They simply lose friends and credibility otherwise. (News: A Turkey parliament committee now approves. So... Mr Orban?)

Meanwhile, NATO announced a competition where writers were invited to speculate about the future of NATO and war, up to the year 2099. See the announcement below. Five entries would be selected to be the basis for a "graphic novel", ie a comics album, about NATO's future.

And one well-known editor, Mr A Engholm, has been selected as one of the five winners! (The other four are yet unknown to me.) I'll be credited as contributing author of the graphic novel and win €500 (about the same in \$). Reading the rules, I see nothing to stop me from publishing my contribution. I wrote it as a "matter of factly future history" and even created a little "twist" in the end. It's possible that my idea of letting NATO act against a danger from space is what put me on the prize podium.

But we'll have to see how many of my ideas will be used in the graphic novel, which is said to be launched in May...

### NATO 2099

When egomaniac Russian president Putin was ousted by usurpers in his closest circle, after a fatal "illness" sounding suspicious, it still took Russia decades to bounce back somewhat from the disastrous war against Ukraine.

NATO helped pressure post-war demands of reparation and displaced Ukrainians to be repatriated, especially children. The new Russian rulers must concentrate on stabilising the country. NATO was on its toes in the unstable situation. With Sweden, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia joining NATO had a trip-wire against unwise Russian movements. Other ex-Soviet republics were lining up because you-know-why.

Russian rhetoric still rung that NATO "planned to attack". How did they miss it's a defence alliance? To attack NATO had to convince each of 35+ governments it'd be a brilliant idea, for the weakest reasons. While keeping it secret! Impossible, especially with Russia's rusting nuclear arsenal.

NATO debated whether to help keeping communist China at bay. That the West Pacific isn't exactly the North Atlantic made most members cautious. So NATO kept eyes open, collected intel but remained passive. The US must handle China themselves, keep Peking away from Taiwan, getting some help from UK, Japan and Australia. China feared a Ukraine situation and economic disaster. Losing Taiwan's output of 80% of all advanced circuits would be a chaos making the 1930s look like a walk in the park.

North Korea's collapse after the death of "dear

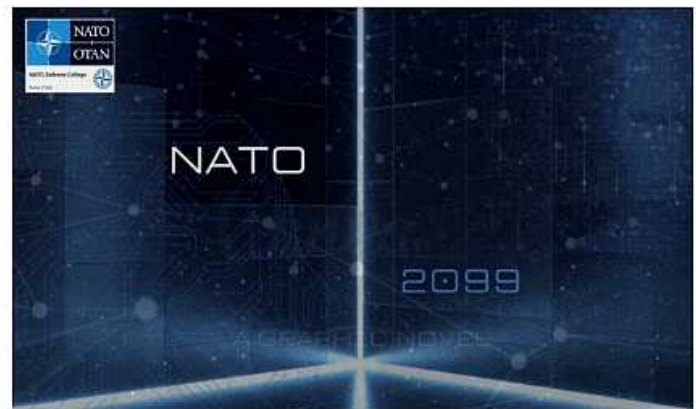
## NATO 2099: A Graphic Novel

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English | Français



In advance of NATO's 75th anniversary in 2024, the NATO Defense College invites fictional intelligence and sci-fi authors from across the Alliance to submit their creative proposal on the theme of "NATO 2099: A Graphic Novel", a creative project aimed at presenting a futuristic forecast of what the world and the Alliance might look like in the near future.



In 2024, NATO will celebrate its 75th anniversary. This milestone is expected to lead to an avalanche of analysis on NATO's last decades of existence, and the possible futures for the Alliance. True to its research mantra of thinking innovatively, the NATO Defense College (NDC), as NATO's premier educational institution, is eager to contribute to the debate on the future of the Alliance and the global scene. To this end, the NDC invites science fiction authors from across the Alliance to embark on this endeavour – through their creative thinking – to inspire current and future decision-makers on how to adapt quickly to new environments and challenges.

Science fiction, while often discredited by dint of its creative and at times outrageous character, holds real added value for research purposes. Not only does science fiction influence the present by projecting inventions (i.e. headsets, mobile phones and tablets), science fiction can leverage the wisdom of the crowd effect: when several authors "see" a similar future, such a future becomes more likely. As such, science fiction has the power of making ideas acceptable. It can entertain a wider public, which under normal circumstances, might not entertain certain ideas, thereby broadening mindsets and fostering critical thinking. Of course, the precondition to this is that science fiction be not fantastical, but is rooted in evidence. (Hence the term FICINT, fictional intelligence.)

Harnessing these benefits, science fiction has been instrumentalized by military organizations in the United States and France to increase preparedness, train critical thinking, and even spot trends in technology and geopolitics. (For example, the idea of Russia attacking Ukraine appeared in Russian science fiction in the 1990s.)

Your mission, should you accept it...

The year is 2099, NATO will be celebrating its 150th anniversary. For this reason, sci-fi and fictional intelligence authors are being asked to contribute about 1500 words on what this future might look like. Authors are asked to describe the end state, i.e. 2099, but are free to describe how we got there. Questions to be addressed include the following:

leader" Kim Jong Un, from obesity and love of imported cognac, lead to South taking over the bankrupt estate to huge costs. NATO experts helped, having some experience from the German reunification and observing Russia's economy tremors from next door.

The Middle East, an eternal powder keg, was another matter. It's NATO backyard and some would argue that the Mediterranean is just a bay of the North Atlantic. As the Israelis took over the Gaza strip to wipe out terrorists only the "relatively calm" West Bank remained for the Palestinians. After extremely complicated negotiations Israel finally agreed to evacuate it and a Palestinian state could form. NATO agreed to uphold peace as the only organisation that really could, just as in former Yugoslavia. NATO drones flew everywhere, day and night.

Drone technology took quantum leaps with AI, multi-spectral sensors, long-life batteries and jam-secure communication. It was less boots on the ground and that regular air forces began to fade out. Why put humans at risk! Training and paying a pilot and necessary support people costs. A plane carrying and protecting a human pilot becomes heavier and less flexible. Dump that bag of biological sludge and you get a cheaper ride with superior performance. The same goes for land and sea. A manned naval ship or tank must have a certain inside volume, protected by heavy armour where featherless bipeds sit. They are just in the way.

Military all over the world lost people and got machines, that can a) do most jobs without human intervention, and b) will always follow orders. Drones with sensitive sensors can clear a minefield by setting off devices with precision bullets. Human observe and take over if things go wrong. When a drone sees a target a well-aimed projective takes care of it. The enemy is usually another drone!

But be careful with programming, so drones only attack the enemy. Unfortunate episodes have occurred, ignoring the "Laws of Robotics" one Dr Asimov once envisioned. Drones are too common and so easy to make that attempts of a ban for "autonomous killing robots" is impossible. Terrorists love drones! Most cities are forced to install air space counter measures.

But counter-intelligence love AI, giving a quantum leap in capability to track terrorists. AI command systems now also directs military planning and action, reacting within fractions of seconds from thousands of parameters. Threatening drones are blown up at once, actions risking humans need special permissions.

Out of self-preservation major nuclear powers, with India and Pakistan but excluding Iran and Israel still tight-lipped, agreed to require AI-systems being physically separated from all dealings with nukes. All nuclear weapons are required to have at least three tamper-resistant layers.

Despite Ukraine, the Middle East, civil wars in Africa, tensions in the Pacific conflict levels slowly dropped in the 21st Century. The IT revolution made politicians and citizens less bloodthirsty. Economic interdependence, growth, increased trade, education, info openness all helped. Wealth and knowledge erodes sentiments for nationalism and religion. A Zeitgeist ("Spirit of the times") downplaying war and conflicts grew. Economy and information replaced battlefields.

nnNATO accelerated its cyber security, but economy "wars" were mostly a matter for Brussels and Washington, who have the bucks to make China buckle. nNATO was the strong glue in the transatlantic partnership.

Despite declared ambitions the Chinese economy slowed. Central-planning lacks correctives for mistakes, like China's huge planning flops in demographics - depopulation, millions of Chinese young men heartbroken finding no wives - housing plans creating empty luxury towns. And communist censors telling AIs what to say and think hampered them in that field too. Good intelligence needs unbiased data.

Then disaster struck!

The ELT of Europe's Southern Observatory in the Andes discovered that fragments had loosened from the comet 15P/Finlay26, to pass Earth in 2060 at the distance of the Moon. But the 39 metres mirror complex of the Extremely Large Telescope saw fragments where there was none earlier. Fragments of substantial size with jets spurting from frozen gas heated by the sun were cause for concern. The change in trajectory was minimal but enough: direction Earth. A major fragment would hit the Atlantic, it seemed, but "smaller" - city killers nonetheless - would hit land around the ocean.

NATO took charge. NASA, ESA, even Russian Roscosmos (wanting to improve the country's



standing) made all resources available. In just a week engineers working around the clock, a SpaceX rocket was adapted for a thermonuclear warhead. The Russians did a similar job. ESA provided the best available target data. But it could only take care of two fragments. Even a mighty nuclear slug can't evaporate a comet and only make a tiny course change. But if you go for a smaller fragments that you perhaps can split, parts will spread and will miss Earth, others will become small enough to burn up in Earth's atmosphere. Total mass hitting ground will be reduced.

Two fragments were treated this way. People watched in fear as comet debris lit up the atmosphere. The big one hitting the Atlantic, as predicted, caused a tsunami that swept the US east coast, putting New York City streets under water and obliterating many coastal towns. The waves made deadly visits to west coasts of the British isles while London was put under water, even if the Thames barrier helped a bit. Similar watery scenes were seen in France, Spain, Portugal and elsewhere. Norway's fjords became funnels pushing water up the mountains. And the levees of Netherlands were easily overcome, though worse than ever the Dutch took it stoically being used to floodings.

A peripheral fragment crashed near Brussels causing huge damages. The coming threat had caused all EU staff to evacuate to Strassbourg. Fortunately NATO's HQ fared better, while some had evacuated, underground facilities - intended for war - kept most functions operational.

With warnings well ahead and all resources, including military ones, tens of millions were evacuated in time. Simulations had predicted effects in detail for all coastal areas. Construction companies' shares had begun rising even before the fragments hit.

There had even been time to save most irreplaceable objects from museums and libraries. And historical buildings threatened to be washed away were hastily documented with hi-resolution laser cameras to be raised again in exact, historically correct details.

Still an estimated 317 000 lives were lost, thousands of towns were swept away, industries and infrastructure were obliterated. Fragments caused almost total destruction in Landskrona, Sweden, Essen, Germany, Charlotte, North Carolina, not to mention many other cities that were "only" half-destroyed.

In the chaotic time that followed, NATO did an invaluable job. And it led to the NATO Space Command.

NASA and ESA had bases on the Moon since the mid 2000s, manned by about over 30 science astronauts, and about 30 were also onboard ISC (the orbiting International Space Complex). Commercial companies had on a smaller scale began to investigate lunar resources. NATO staff now joined them, to study how setting up electromagnetic launchers, to hit comets and asteroids cheaper and more efficiently, and atmosphere-free telescopes and laser range finders. The new technique of atto-phased radiation subjection could perhaps even make very efficient mega-laser comet burners.

And it was NATO experts with extensive background in cryptology that were consulted when the first SETI signals were found, by interference-free radiosopes on the lunar far side. The linguists recruited were mostly from Europe, the continent with 125+ languages, as Americans speak just one language...barely. Transposing the trinary code into hexadecimal, the way cryptologists saw fit, the first message began:

60D 15A B16 F0E...

Was by accident it could read like "God is a big foe"? If so, NATO would have a mighty enemy...

*Note (not from the entry I sent NATO): Yes, the last sounds a bit anti-religious... It's a huge mystery to me that the Bible's commandment "Thou shall not kill" isn't followed by many who claim to be religious and believe in a God! Catholics and protestants have often been at each others throats. So have Christians and Muslims, to an even higher degree. And Shia and Sunni within Islam. There's this absurd concept of military captives., who lead services praying for more killings of enemies. How can this stupidity be? Can't you read the contents of your own holy texts? And speaking of religion: he religiously motivated Hamas started their "holy" war by sending out murderers of 1400 civilians. Those who "protest" against Israel's defence actions without mentioning this are hypocrites. And don't you forget that Hamas intentionally place their military units near civilians to use them as human shields and sacrificing their own people, as that makes good propaganda. Besides, the Israelis do try to go for military targets, but the Hamas tactics often make collateral damage inevitable. If a "civilian" house has been attacked, you can be sure it had a Hamas command center, military supplies etc. Israel has international rights on its side, which is the right to defend themselves until the threat is eliminated. Hamas isn't eliminated yet and must be made responsible for the actions they choose.*

## The Short Story Masters Strike Again

You have been able to learn about the Short Story Masters society here in *Intermission* as late as in October, where I reported from our September meeting. And we recently had an extra meeting December 2nd. I must confess something: I screwed up the time full time. We usually meet at 3pm so I dutifully arrived to Kjell Genberg in Bromma at that time - but it so happened that the announced time had been 1 pm! I can only explain it by that in the last few months, or longer, have felt very stressed with a lot of things to do, and that can make you read sloppily and miss things.

Fortunately the meeting wasn't over. I quickly consumed a number of hot dogs which was the ingestion the meeting offered this time - there's tradition we end together with some food. To this I swallowed a bowl of ice cream and some "Christmas must" - a special Swedish softdrink of carbonated malt, more popular this time of year than even Coca Cola.

The formal part of the gathering had approved adjusted statutes, and let Cecilia W "resign" to become "honorary member" instead (the point being that has no activity requirement). Despite that we that day welcomed one new member in the form of



*New short story master Lena Köstner. To right a strange fellow who doesn't know the clock.*

Lena Köstner - among other things former pop science journalist - we are down to six members, excluding honorary ones (and I have some suggestions here, which I will air on next meeting which will be in February), instead of the usual nine. Possible new members were discussed. Many in the society are getting methusalem-like in age and new fresh, younger blood is welcome.

We also learned that we in May have been invited to help out with a writers' day in Uppsala. Plans for that was also discussed. I have a whole bunch of ideas here. It's an event to increase the public's interest in writing. I can help with a short lecture. We could have a flash fiction contest. Make informational wall displays. The subject "The Writer and AIs" is something worth to



*Cecilia Wennerström, from ordinary to honorary member. In the back Ulf Broberg,*

do something about. Etc. We also discussed our next writing projects. There's an E-anthology this spring and later 2024 a printed book is planned with the best from previous anthologies. I informed about the Bertil Falk Space Opera-Proze and gave them the news about me and the NATO 2009-win.

For being a small rather laid-back club we do have surprisingly much activity...

Anyway, though my own misreading

of the time made the meeting a bit shorter for me, but it was rather OK. I got hot dogs. Yum yum.



*Kjell Genberg left, author of 250+ books, society's chairman Helena Sigander right*

## An SF Evening with the Writers' Union

We live in a science fiction world. First a worldwide plague that shut down half the planet, closed all borders and put billions of people under house arrest! Alternative history à la Tom Clancy can be called when a Russian dictator invades a neighbouring country and 200+ years (!) of neutrality is reversed at home. Robotics suddenly gets an artificial intelligence boost that would make Dr. Asimov proud. And above our heads are thousands of internet satellites, James Webb super telescopes, a new Chinese space station, recyclable Starship, NASA's moon landing plans, Jupiter probes, Mars rovers and soon a Swedish Esrange satellite. Space has always been science fiction!



*The panel: Eva Lejonsommar, Stafan Foconi, Gunnar Strandberg, John-Henri Holmberg.*

So it was not without some interest that the Writers' Union announced an sf evening on Monday, December 11 - the birthday of sf fandom BTW. The sf genre was to be discussed by the authors (all of whom have done sf, with the books indicated), Stefano Foconi (Three dystopias), Eva Lejonsommar (Traumatransit), Gunnar Strandberg (Chikima and the hunt for the snail) together with the long-time sf non-fic writer, translator, etc. John-Henri Holmberg, guilty of Drömmen om evigheten (Dreams of Eternity), Inre landskap yttre rymd (Inner Landscapes, Outer Space), Fantasy, anthologies, the magazine Nova and other things.

Before the corona plague, yours truly often went to lectures, book releases and the like, but all that was stopped by the C-bug. When the effects of the virus began to fade, however, I was too busy - writings, studies, SFJ, zines, SKRIVA, contests etc - to have time to jerk around. But of course I had to attend an sf evening! And thanks to Tora and publisher TiraTiger for contacts!

When I at about 7 pm stepped up the winding stairs of the Authors' House I learned there were 35 registered but "only" a little over 25 were present, including the panelists. Also on site were carbonated malt ("Julmust"), a wine box, ginger cookies and blue cheese - the latter is advantageously applied to ginger cookies, actually. No coffee to heat in the early winter.

The first three panelists introduced themselves, their writing and how they viewed the sf genre. Scattered wisdoms: Sf is great because it can test boundaries. By writing about a future, you can influence the present. Much of the technology in SF already exists. Someone thought the genre was good because it can bring physics, VR, AI and other things together.

Then JHH took over and gave a general background of the genre. Sf he argued relies on the natural science and rationalism that emerged in the 19th century. It created both science fiction and crime fiction. SF relies on a rational view of the world, that one can take knowledge and draw conclusions - make speculations. This is in contrast to fantasy that relies on magic, strange myths and superstitions. Crime fiction - at least in the form of whodunnits, solving crimes - is also based on rationality. To like Sherlock Holmes make observations, gather facts, think and draw logical conclusion that, for example, the Butler had dunnit. (That a certain EA Poe became a foreground

figure for BOTH sf and crime fiction is typical.)

In "modern" form - as a market category - the sf genre originated in the dreadful popular magazines in the USA, the so-called pulp magazines. Jules Verne's comprehensive Voyages Extraordinaires was not mentioned, but it also belongs to the genre's growth. In Sweden, Verne was so popular that his mere name indicated the genre, as with Jules Verne Magasinet!

American sf was spread after WWII by American soldiers who brought along the magazines with the fanciful covers. Some inspiration from the British should also be inserted here. Thanks to HG Wells, there was a not insignificant British SF scene, and American pulp reached the British Isles as bulk cargo in shipping traffic. American pulp publishers - or maybe the distributors rather? - were grateful to get a few cents per kg for return ex which was then shovelled across Atlantes to remnant stores, where Brits starved for space stories could unearth Amazing, Astounding, Wonder etc. (Rob Hansen has depicted it in his history works. Pulp-in-bulk distribution disappeared during the war, when all transport had to prioritize arms and ammunition. After the war, currency restrictions bred the infamous British Reprint Editions of US magazines.)

But this was partly extra information that JHH did not convey. On the other hand, he could tell how sf broke through in the 1950s. The reception was even cautiously positive! As you know, Harry Martinson wrote about the spaceship Anlara and received good reviews.

(Anyone who has followed my History Corner in Intermission knows that the exact "breakthrough" year WAS 1953 - that's when press articles about the sf genre shot up like a rocket.) There appeared several sf book series, sf news stand series, the magazine Håpna! , ditto Swedish Galaxy where a certain Pär Rådström was in the editorial office! But after a while the enthusiasm faded. All of the publishers' sf ventures lasted about two years, "the time it takes to see if the venture works" according to JHH - i.e. normally it didn't work. Håpna! could live for a dozen years "because it was run by enthusiasts who made money from other things".

JHH explained that sf faded due to the special cultural climate in Sweden. Swedes are very uniform, think alike, and the preferred literature was social stories, a little psychology, the introspective. No flaming spaceships against crackling starry skies here!

The 1970s and a bit into the 1980s saw a second, slightly smaller sf wave. Again, the publishers started some sf book series and sf "kiosk" series. JHH didn't mention it but, in addition to the hype

surrounding the Apollo project of course, a major contributing factor must have been the sf series by Sam J Lundwall in 1969. There were up to a dozen programs, both in the spring of 1969 and in the fall of that year, at a time when TV was a real campfire: discussions about the sf genre (including a visit to a British sf con), short films, cartoons, experimental films and even a special drama "Hunting season" with famous actors.

Lundwall then went to Askild & Kärnekull, to publish both a science fiction book series and talking over the Jules Verne Magasin that Bertil Falk had restarted in 1969: This in turn became the base for the Delta publishing house Sam J started



*Peekaboo! With part of the audience.*

when he left A&K (at which time JHH jumped in after Sam J and made the sf book series linger on for a while). Sam J almost single-handedly fought for the genre when others gave up.

Despite a lot of 70s "buzz" around the genre, few Swedish sf writers appeared. It was Sam J himself, Bertil Mårtensson, Dénis Lindbohm, Börje Crona with his twist-end short stories, Sven Christer Swahn, who mostly wrote for children/youth. (Not mentioned, but it's worth pointing out: a

certain Steve Sem-Sandberg published no less than three small sf novels at this time! Now he is in the Swedish Academy.)

Others who wrote sf, like PC Jersild, didn't really dare to confess to it - although I have heard PC later in the SF Bookstore admit that he wrote sf - but Lars Gustafsson was an exception who agreed he was writing sf. An exception was also Jan "Crazy Guy" Myrdal - he defends Lenin, Chinese communists. Pol Pot etc - who made a thick anthology about the 1940s Jules Verne Magasinet of his youth. Those who have read his childhood accounts know that little Jan, the Meccano-builder, was very fond of these technical tales. Another who wrote sf already in the 1960s was Per Wahlöö, before he together with Maj Sjöwall became famous for crime novels. A heavier name that was added in the 1980s was Peter Nilson, who wrote space-oriented, more philosophical skiffy. Among later Swedish science fiction writers we have for example Lars Jakobson (sadly I find him quite boring!) and someone who is often mentioned is Karin Tidbeck.

Within the broader fantastic field Swedish horror has reached quite far. We have John Ajvide Lindqvist, Mats Strandberg, Anders Fager and others. But if I didn't hear wrong - JHH tends to talk too quietly - there are indications that Swedish sf is starting to overtake Swedish horror.

In this context, JHH also emphasized that the Swedish detective wave has now passed its zenith and as a member of the Crime Fiction Academy, he should know. In 2023, up to 500 crime novels are expected to be published in Swedish, of which only 120 are translated. Pubbing local talents is cheaper, as you don't have translation cost. But we cannot reasonably continue to have close to 400 Swedish crime novels per year! The audience is too small. But you can gamble with an unknown Swedish crime writer, as "break even" is low, no more than 1,000-1,500 copies. The panel mentioned but did not discuss that a lot of sf today comes from the countless small publishers and with Print on Demand and the like, really small editions can still break even. A good way to keep track of the small publisher is Ordspira's newsletter Aktuell Svensk Fantastik: <https://www.evaholmquist.se/aktuell-fantastik/>

If you go and check the shelves, female detective writers account for about 2/3 of the output, although the fact that the ladies carry a significant murderous desire has been true since BSH (Before Sherlock Holmes), so it's no surprise.

Speaking of detective stories, it was emphasized that the biggest influence on Nordic Noir's international success comes from a certain Stieg Larsson. (A fan. We used to quibble in the legendary basement of the Scandinavian SF Society.) When his sales soared, foreign publishers began looking for other Swedish crime writers. Even Henning Mankell benefited from it. "He originally came out at a small American socialist publisher and sold no more than 3-4000 copies," we were told, "But after the Millennium he was taken over by larger publishers." Sjöwall/Wahlöö then? Their success was probably too far back in time, more than 50 years ago, for Läckberg and others to benefit.

What else was discussed?

Jonas Ellerström interjected from the audience that perhaps we should skip genre differences. "Let a novel be a novel," he thought, regardless of whether it was sf or not. (Myself, I'd like to keep genres so you know what you're getting!) Eva L in the panel said that when she wrote sf, she got a completely different kind of reader, and I think that may be true. Right now Armageddon sf is very popular because of our trying times, fertile ground for thoughts of doom and the dystopian.

AI was of course covered and that Isaac Asimov wrote about his robots already in the 1940s. Machines that follow his "robot laws" and are basically AIs that walk around. Arthur C Clarke's HAL 9000 in "2001" should have been mentioned as even more relevant. Hannes Alfvén's *The Tale of the Big Computer* was mentioned too. Elon Musk et al warn that we run the risk of AIs saying "Sorry Dave, I can't do that" while they turn us into paperclips...

So-called cli-fi was mentioned, i.e. "climate fiction", which of course is fiction inspired by a certain Miss Greta. It was argued that sf is not suitable for audiobooks, something that otherwise is growing



*With Jörgen Jörälv, holding a ginger cookie. Without cheese.*

rapidly at the moment. (It will grow even more when the audiobook publishers program AIs to narrate.) The reason was stated to be that sf requires the ability to think and reflect, and it doesn't go as well when the book enters through the ears.

Sf as inspiration for inventing language and speculating about future linguistics was also taken up. I raised an arm and exemplified with the slang in Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*. Nils Håkanson's *Ödmården* was suggested, with its mixture of slang and antiquated language (a really interesting book BTW, a bit difficult but funny). In Robert Heinlein's *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*, the moon colonists speak an English with Russian parts, although one can wonder how much Russian we will tolerate in the real future, considering their behaviour in Ukraine...

Most people stayed to chat for a while, sipped a little wine and ginger cookies with cheese. I spoke with Finnish-Swedish Ole, another I think is called Peter and of course Jörgen Jörälv, the Delta bibliographer who was there. Jörgen talked about his latest project, a reissue of all episodes of Lars "LON" Olsson's classic Froggy Gordon, as they appeared in Stockholm University's student paper *Gaudeamus!* It comes in the spring. A valuable act of real culture, and LON is almost "staff artist" in Intermission BTW.

*\* Tora and Tira Tiger who published my latest collection, Spacetime, got me the invitation, as it was supposed to be for union members. I decided never to join long ago due to their own arrogant stupidity. You are eligible after two books. Applied way back in the 1990s, but was rejected without motivation. That's unacceptable. Without motivation you don't know what's wrong, can't make corrections or so. By staying away I have through the years saved many thousands of euros, to their loss. Someone claimed: "Its understood they address 'literary qualities'." Well, my first two were non-fic about computers. Imaginations of 'lit qualities' - however to define that! - here borders the irrelevant, besides they were probably also incompetent to weigh the factual contents.*



LON's avant garde comic strip FROGGY GORDON to be reprinted! (We decided, in our wisdom, to translate the original Swedish "Blixt-Grodon" to that. Te word "grod" refers to frogs.)

## Saint Lucy

The Italian Saint Lucy (or *Lucia* as we say) is celebrated here Dec 13. Girls dress up in white, wearing candles, one is The Lucia with a crown with candles. They come in the morning, singing, serving coffee, ginger cookies and saffron buns. They bring light on year's darkest day, which Dec 13 was under the old Julian calendar (that Sweden used until 1753). The Lucia marches extends to our Nordic neighbours too some extent, but the Swedes are crazy about it. The modern Lucia tradition began early last century when newspapers presented Lucia candidates to let readers select the paper's official Lucia. Youngsters tend to to party and consume certain liquids on the Lucia Day. Right a Lucia march visiting a local library.





# HISTORY CORNER

In this # the History Corner column, always the readers' favourite, will cover what was once the busy bee fanzine editor's most trusted friend: *the mimeograph*! I heard from my AI friend Alsaac Alsimov that he (it?) plans to cover really old pre-mimeo copying machinery, so the mimeograph thread is left to me.

To begin with: the basic concept of the mimeograph - letting ink leak through a stencil - was invented by Thomas Edison in 1876. He received US patent 180 857 for "Autographic Printing" August 8 that year. He used a vibrating electric pen to perforate the stencil, which was then put in a flatbed device where sheets were placed and printed manually. In 1887 he licensed the patent to the firm AB Dick, founded by one Albert Blake Dick, who after some time mounted the stencil on a rotating drum, and the mimeograph in the modern form was born! Though the machine was produced by AB Dick it was often marketed as The Edison Mimeograph. The name Edison sells better than Dick, one may assume. At the same time, by introducing the drum and many other improvements Dick did more for the mimeo as we know it than Edison.

The mimeograph printing uses what is called silk screen printing (even if silk may not actually be used) where ink transfers to a sheet through holes or weaknesses. In 1874 just before Edison and his mimeo inventions came, the Italian Eugenio de Zuccato - but living in the UK - invented what he called the Papyrograph. It also used silk screen printing and a form of stencil, but in a much more complicated way. You wrote with caustic ink on "varnished paper", and the chemical ate through the varnish leaving holes. It is obviously much easier to just strike through a wax layer as with mimeographs, so the papyrograph saw limited success. The most common paper for mimeo stencils was mulberry paper, an Asian plant paper popular in e.g. China and Japan.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper\\_mulberry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper_mulberry).

We read <https://www.printmuseum.org/blog-3/history-of-the-mimeograph>

*Chicago based AB Dick Company took an interest in the technology in the mid-1880s. AB Dick got its name from its founder Albert Blake Dick, who started the business in 1883 as a lumber company. Within the next ten years, the A.B Dick Company transformed into a major manufacturer of printing equipment. Dick designed his own version of the electric pen and stencil and reached out to Edison, who controlled the patents for the technology. The two established a working relationship as they began to design the first stencil duplicator. The result was the Edison Mimeograph...No. 1 model cost \$15 back in the 1890s, equivalent to \$500 today*

It was Albert Dick (1856-1934) who coined the term "mimeograph". His company was quite successful, becoming a main supplier of mimeograph material - they would even require customers to use *only* AB Dick's own stencils, paper, ink and other supplies...



ALBERT B. DICK.

*One such case - 1912's Henry vs AB Dick Co - went all the way to the Supreme Court, and became one of the most influential patent law decisions in American history. At the time, the Dick Company was selling its mimeograph machines with "licensing restrictions" meaning a purchaser could only legally use the machine with stencils, paper and ink also supplied by AB Dick. Incredibly, the company's power to do this was ultimately upheld by the court in 1912, but it also led directly to Congress passing the Clayton Act two years later, essentially restricting this sort of monopolization of new tech.*



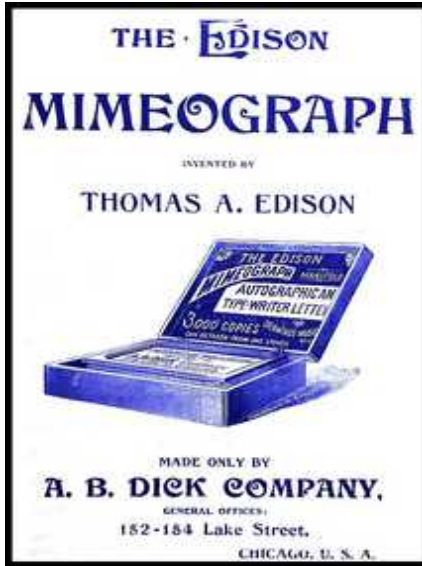
After different acquisitions and such what was left of AB Dick filed for bankruptcy in 2004. For the company's 50 year anniversary in 1934 they published the book *Fifty years* in which Mr Dick himself summarises, <https://www.madeinchicagomuseum.com/single-post/ab-dick-company/> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.\\_B.\\_Dick\\_Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._B._Dick_Company)

*My aim was to find a means of duplicating letters other than by printing from movable types - something more economical of both time and money. I first attempted to make a typewriter with needle-point type, which would perforate a sheet of paper to make a stencil. But that was not successful. I tried many experiments. I almost let my time*

*and imagination run away with me in the attempt. But I didn't seem to arrive. Dick finally stumbled upon his solution in 1884 by following a curious whim. He placed a bit of candy wrapper wax paper over a steel file, then drew over it with a piercing awl. When he held the paper up to the light, he had his eureka moment. Then I secured the finest file obtainable in Chicago traced a few lines on paper held against its surface, and took impressions with a roller and printer's ink. I then realized I had found the principle for which I was seeking. But the job was not yet done. For a while, Dick only used his handy "autograph stencil" to solve his own letter writing issue. But when someone brought up patenting the process and developing a proper machine, he saw dollar signs. He also found some intimidating competition - Thomas Edison's "electric pen" had already been around for 10 years, and hopes of moving forward with Dick's machine would result in running into the mighty brick wall of the growing Edison empire. Rather than challenge the master or flee from him, Albert Dick reached out a friendly hand. And in this fortunate example, 37 year-old Tom Edison was quite amiable himself. I immediately got in touch with Mr. Edison and secured a*



The earliest Edison Mimeograph, produced by AB Dick, a flatbed device.



*The Edison Mimeograph is recognized as the STANDARD DUPLICATING DEVICE for autographic or type-written work by the commercial, educational and religious world, a pamphlet claimed in 1890. It will produce copies which so faithfully follow the original that the difference is scarcely perceptible.*

*license agreement to use his patents pertaining to stencil duplication, for Mr Edison was quick to see the advantages and possibilities of my process. He also furnished me with a device that could be used for coating the wax stencil sheets. Edison ever motivated by his own dollar signs saw some advantages to forming a partnership with this 28 year-old Chicago lad, and , and invested in Dick's project and forged a long term working relationship and friendship with him. Now all their new machine needed was a name. . I had an old friend in Chicago who was superintendent of one of the schools. He knew that I was on the lookout for a name, and that I didn't like the term 'copygraph,' which had been suggested. One day this friend hit upon the combination of 'mime' and 'graph.' But it didn't have the right swing. It wasn't euphonious. Then the 'o' was added, to give it the swing - and the right euphony was acquired.*

It seems the drum was added sometime after year 1900:

*In 1902, the AB Dick Co moved both its manufacturing and executive offices to 163 W Jackson Blvd. (which soon became 738 W. Jackson Blvd after Chicago's street number changes). By 1905...the new factory employed 191 workers -143 men, 48 women, and surprisingly enough, no children. While the Dick Company did manufacture some other products during these early years...most of the focus was on the next evolution of the duplicator: the "rotary mimeograph." This new design substituted the sometimes cumbersome flatbed tray and hand roller with a simple turning crank, automatic ink, and a rotating cylindrical drum that looks like a lottery ball dispenser. Advertisements hailed the rotary mimeographs as "the next step after the typewriter in office economy" and "as far ahead of the typewriter as the typewriter is of the pencil." That may have been true in some respects, but duplicators still needed an original typewritten or hand drawn document from which to do their magic. AB Dick tried to remedy that situation by developing its own*



An Edison Automatic Mimeograph No 51, 1898, a middle stage in the development. The flatbed has fixed rollers, probably driven by the crank laying below.

**Write for Books, Samples of Work and Special Demonstration**

Do this today. Learn what the "Rotary" is doing for others in similar lines. Study its possibilities as applied to your special requirements. Comparison will prove its supremacy over all other duplicating machines in economy, speed and efficiency. Ask for our "76" catalog and "Testimony from Users" also name of our local dealer, who will be pleased to demonstrate the machine.

**A. B. Dick Company**  
Makers  
738 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago  
15E Murray Street, New York  
Agencies Throughout the United States and Canada



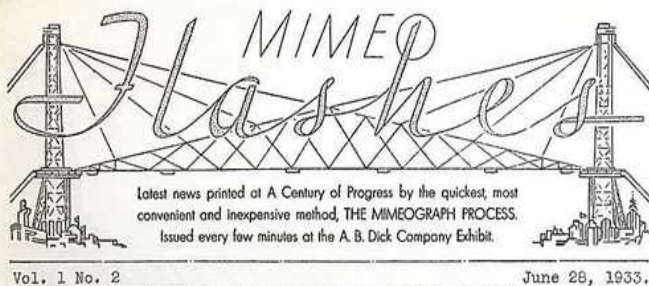


typewriter for a while, but it never really took off. ...The cost for the machine had risen to \$30, but its productivity potential had grown accordingly, with the similar Model No 76 able to churn out 17,000 to 20,000 copies per day, or a rate of 50 to 100 per minute, depending on the skill of the drum spinner... This marvellous duplicating machine - the Edison Rotary Mimeograph - places you in command of one of the mightiest constructive forces employed in the business world, according to a full page ad in a 1912 issue of *Cosmopolitan*. "The Typewriter, the Rotary and the U.S. Mails, working in unison, are irresistible trade winners for merchants and manufacturers." That same year, 1912, was the final bow for the old wax stencils, as the company's tougher "Dermatype" stencils took over the designs for the next decade. /Ed: I have tested all kinds of stencil qualities, most works fine. So I doubt one special brand could "take over"! When the Edison Mimeograph 77A debuted shortly thereafter, historians believe it was likely used to produce a copy of each and every order communicated by the U.S. Military during World War I...During the 1920s, the AB Dick Co had offices in most major cities in the US, and



AB Dick's HQ at 728 W Jackson as it looks today.

it expanded its Jackson Blvd headquarters in Chicago with a brand new eight-story, neo-gothic high-rise at 728 W Jackson, designed by the famed local architect Alfred S. Alschuler...demands were great enough that another five stories was plopped on top of the building. It would remain AB Dick's home for over 20 years...From inside the walls of this fancy new home, Dick's prime product- now finally known officially as the "Edison-Dick Mimeograph" - continued to evolve. The "Mimeotype" stencil sheet, first developed in 1924, didn't need to be moistened like earlier sheet types, dramatically improving ease of use. Shortly thereafter, the mimeo machine itself went fully electric and mostly automatic, producing terrific results for any company still in business during the Great Depression. The AB Dick Co celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1934, and with 900 workers in its employ, it was one of the city's most respected and resilient enterprises. Even after the death of Albert Blake Dick that same year, aged 78, the company was left in capable hands, with Dick's sons Albert Jr and Edison Dick taking over the reins. Its dominance in the



WORLD'S FAIR DOUBLES  
1893 ATTENDANCE

AB Dick had its own exhibit at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago, and produced a daily newsletter called "Mimeo Flashes," using its own mimeo technology

duplicator industry would become harder to cling to in the years after World War II however, as the double-whammy of new competition and the march of technology made for plenty of sleepless nights. One of Dick's chief emerging rivals was another Chicago company, Ditto Inc., which manufactured "spirit duplicators" - a similar product that utilized pungent chemical solvents, rather than ink, to produce copies.

Into the 1950s and '60s, even the word Ditto became more of the generic lingo for making copies in a school building or office, as mimeo gradually faded. Both brands, of course, were fighting an ultimately losing battle without realizing it. The Xerox age was just waiting around the corner.



The first Rex Rotary mimeo of the 1920s, from Denmark.

An interesting video of AB Dick opening a new plant in the 1940s. There's a huge crowd around, so the manufacturing of mimeographs was obviously important business.

<https://youtu.be/IHe0tUHYUJg>



Crowd for opening of new AB Dick plant.

A variation of the mimeograph was the *menucator*, a flatbed mimeo made especially for printing restaurant menus, as the name implies.

Now, while AB Dick may have been the leaders in the US, it was difficult to reach all markets (and patents would expire) so in Europe, the company Gestetner became the market leader, founded by the Hungarian David Gestetner living in Britain where he in 1881 constructed his own mimeograph. Gestetner later moved to the US and the brand is today owned by Ricoh of Japan. Gestetner mimeos



A menuator.

was very common in Sweden, beside the brand Rex Rotary, that we find very little info about, except <https://contex.com/news-post/contex-100-years-of-inventions/> It was a Danish company founded in 1923. That it was our neighbours may explain why Rex Rotary grabbed a piece of the Swedish market. (Your editor has a Rex Rotary D490 mimeo, not used for many years...but it should still work.) As I understand, the brand Rex Rotary today sells computer printer supplies and is also owned by Ricoh. Here's a film from 1927 showing how a mimeo is produced at the Gestetner Works in Tottenham, England:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TSVuH5yiFo>

In the 1970s photo copiers and office printing began to take over, so you could get a second hand mimeograph machine

cheap or for free as companies wanted to get rid of them.

The mimeo dominated the Swedish fanzine scene up to ca 1990 as it offered far, far cheaper printing than eg photo copying which could cost up to 10/page!

Computer printers then began to take over. (Your editor would for a while use a combo, using a computer daisy wheel printer cutting stencils...)

You could also get special

“thermal stencils” to which an original could be etched in an ordinary copying machine provided the light source has a bit of hump.\*

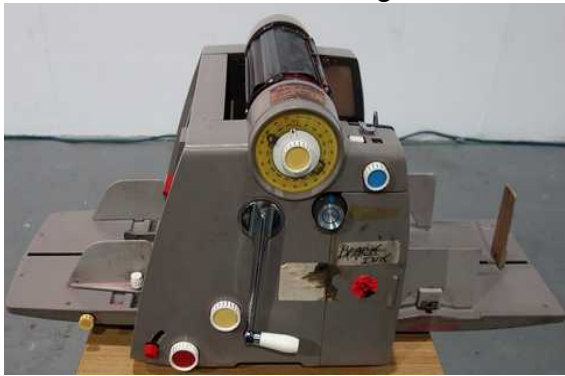
Surprisingly, the mimeograph still exists but under another name: a risograph! A risograph from Japanese Riso Kagaku, Gestetner also does them, is basically a 100% automatic mimeo. It will read an original from a glassplate and “burn” a high-resolution electro-stencil, automatically mount it on a print roller and pump out copies! The technology is mimeography, and the advantage is the risograph is cheaper than photocopying for runs of a few hundred.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risograph>

Electro-stencils existed before the risograph. A fax-like device scanned an original from a drum, and a special paper sensitive to a heated tip is etched with a copy. As I remember etching the electro-stencil took some time and quality of text could vary, so it was cheaper and easier to type the stencil manually



A Rex Rotary D490, among Mankind's finest pieces of machinery!



A Gestetner mimeo, a common model that many fanzine publishers had.



An electro-stencil etcher.



A risograph, ie a hi-tech mimeo.



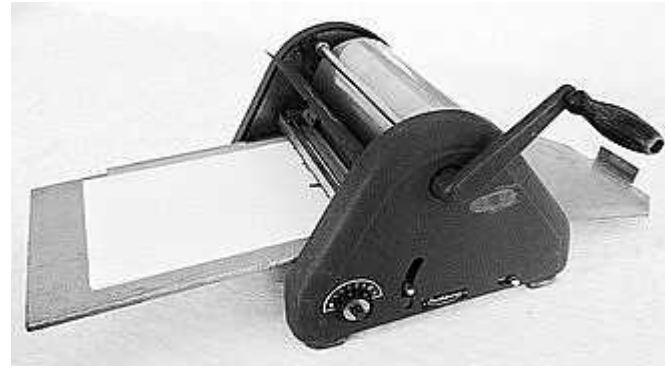
At the Gestetner Works in Tottenham.

\* For printing, to minimise “ghost print” on the back, a soft, porous paper called twiltone - where ink absorbs and dries fast - was favourite among US fans. Not available in Europe but you could get porous paper simply called duplicator paper. Alternatively there was an device for “slip-sheeting” that let every second sheet be a blank. Some could after training slip sheet manually without such a thingie. Your editor's trick was instead to crank slower with a pause between sheets.



- unless you absolutely needed to reproduce a photo.

*It is sometimes called a printer-duplicator...When printing or copying many duplicates (generally more than 100) of the same content, it is typically far less expensive per page than a conventional photocopier, laser printer, or inkjet printer. The underlying technology is very similar to a mimeograph. It brings together several processes which were previously carried out manually*



*A Spirit duplicator, common in schools.*

We saw that the spirit duplicator or dittograph became a fierce competitor to the mimeograph. The technology depends on stencil carbons having a layer of aniline based very strong dye, transferred to an original by typing

or a by drawing. The ink is slowly dissolved by applied spirit and will be good for perhaps 100-150 copies. The best ink is purple but other colours exist. The system is simpler to use than mimeography and you can print several colours at once by changing the carbon. The drawback is that the text may become a little weak and purple text isn't the most aesthetic. The ease of use made it common in schools. Teachers could save the stencil and re-use it year after year doing small class runs. (Ordinary "black stencils" may also be re-used, but it's slightly more complicated.)



*A very basic 1909 mimeo., with recently invented rotating drum. On the blue paper attached you can barely make out: Gestetner.*

When you read about the history of the mimeograph you note that sf fandom must have been the first outside non-institutional use to put it into action. The mimeo was of course from the beginning used by offices, schools, churches, the military, for administrative messages. It was fandom that found artistic and literary use for it, from the 1930s and on. After WWII we begin to get college alternative student publications, an "underground" press and self-published poetry by the so called beat generation, often using mimeographs. You'll easily find information about it through Uncle Google - but at that time *fandom had already been cranking out mimeographed fanzines for a couple of decades!*

Fandom has never received full credit for its pioneering of "alternative" Do It Yourself culture. Outside institutions, the ink-greased paws of fans were the first taming the mimeo, creating a culture on stencils. There's a lot of buzz about how "counter culture", "underground press", beatniks and poets stencilled their self-published poetry and "little magazines". Fandom was invisible when National /M/i/m/e/o/o/Geographics covered mimeo press:  
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/article/mimeo-mimeograph-revolution-literature-beat-poetry-activism> The earliest year mentioned is 1943, William Burroughs dirtied his hands with mimeo ink in 1953, Allen Ginsberg howled on twiltone paper in 1955. Meanwhile fans had already *decades* of blisters from mimeo cranking, and when you compare the sf fanzines were usually much more advanced in layout and art!\* The old use by governments, businesses, schools, the military etc was purely administrative or for internal info, not artistic having with fiction and creative content. Fans beat

\*There are examples of crossovers between fans and beatniks, Ginsberg's *Wichita Vortex Sutra* was inspired by *The Martian Newsletter* - see above - from Pacificon, 1946, published by "local beatnik (and sf fan)" Lee "Telis" Streiff, <https://www.mimeographrevival.com/posts/tag/history/> "Unlike other Wichita beat poets and artists, Lee Streiff never escaped the Wichita Vortex, where he taught English and continued to participate in fandom." Streiff was also engaged in the group Young Fandom for teenage fans, [https://fancylopedia.org/Young\\_Fandom](https://fancylopedia.org/Young_Fandom)

beatniks by decades in mimeo poetry. Fans were the first DIY authors on stencil, from the time of Edgar Rice and not William Burroughs.

*Sf fans were the first "counter culture", with their own creative literary and artistic movement on mimeo, before anyone else.*

Alas, it hurts me that it was a Swede who killed off this brilliant invention of Mr Edison and Mr Dick. As we found the mimeograph dead in the library the conclusion of the culprit became obvious: it was the butler Photo O Copier whodunnit! And the one inventing the Xerox process was one Chester Carlson of Swedish ancestry. You find the full confession here <https://www.xerox.com/sv-se/innovation/inblick/chester-carlson-xerography>

*The xerographic process, which was invented by Chester Carlson in 1938 and developed and commercialised by the Xerox Corporation, is widely used to produce high-quality text and graphic images on paper. Carlson originally called the process electrophotography. It's based on two natural phenomena: that materials of opposite electrical charges attract and that some materials become better conductors of electricity when exposed to light. Carlson invented a six-step process to transfer an image from one surface to another using these phenomena.*

And <https://www.aps.org/publications/apsnews/200310/history.cfm>

*Carlson began conducting experiments in the kitchen of his apartment in Queens... in October 1937, he set up a small lab in Astoria and hired a lab assistant, a German refugee named Otto Kornei. It was there that the first xerographic copy was made on October 22, 1938. The two men prepared a sulphur coating on a zinc plate, and Kornei printed a notation in India ink on a glass microscopic slide: "10- 22-38 Astoria." They pulled down the shade to darken the room, then rubbed the sulphur surface vigorously with a handkerchief to apply an electrostatic charge. The slide was laid on the surface, and the two pieces were placed under a bright incandescent lamp for a few seconds. The slide was then removed and*



Stencil killer Chester Carlson!

*lycophodium powder was sprinkled on the sulfur surface, then blown off. What was left on the surface was a near-perfect duplicate in powder of the same notation on the glass slide... Carlson shopped his invention around for several years trying to find a company to develop it into a*

*useful product, and was turned down by more than 20 companies, as well as the National Inventors Council. "How difficult it was to convince anyone that my tiny plates and rough image held the key to a tremendous new industry," Carlson later recalled. Finally, in 1944, Battelle Memorial Institute, a non-profit research organization, signed a royalty agreement with Carlson... Three years later, Battelle made an agreement with a small photo paper company called Haloid (later to be known as Xerox), giving Haloid the right to develop a xerographic machine. Twenty-one years after Carlson made the first xerographic copy in his modest Queens laboratory, the first office copier was unveiled in 1959: The Xerox 914 copier*



The world's first xerox. Damn Carlson!



Could be a newsletter for their unit these British tommies are busy with? Their short pants imply North Africa and WWII.

As young, fresh newborn photo copiers invaded, the scrap metal bodies of mimeographs were unceremoniously thrown out. And as paper fanzines are getting rarer, we've seen another cycle of death. The US military, in the form of ARPA, decided to connect computers together which made it possible for Al Gore to invent the Interweb. No paper no more!

But I miss feeling the structure of stencils on my fingers, the fine chaff of wax, the spots of ink covering my hands, the "ooga chaka...ooga chaka" as you crank the machinery".

## Swedish Christmas Food

I had a very tasty encounter with a buffet of Swedish Christmas food. As the situation was, I was unsure if I'd get a second and third helping, so I put all I wanted on one plate, which I'll here present for you. It's similar to an ordinary *smörgåsbord*, but that would lack *lutfisk*, have more meat, eg more sausages, cheese and fresh vegetables.



The ham is the centre piece of a Swedish Christmas Table, oven-baked and eaten with mustard, and the meatballs of course. The ham broth is saved and used for what is called the "dip in the pot", here missing - you soak up the liquid with bread and eat it. Missing is perhaps what Google Translate calls head cheese ("pressylta" in Swedish) and definitely "lutfisk", whitefish treated with lye, becoming a sort of jelly and eaten with white bechamel sauce - but I have never liked it. No turkey, except some Christmas tables have lately added smoked, thin-sliced turkey. Roast

beef may also be present sometimes, but not here.

Gravlax is of course salmon and its sauce is from mustard, vinegar, dill and sugar - yummy! There are lots of different sorts of pickled herring, and I tend to like the mustard herring. I'm unsure of what species that the smoked fish was, but rather common it's some sort of trout. Under the ham is hidden a big scoop of Jansson's Temptation, a cream-stew of chopped



Swedish crispbread

potato, anchovis and onion, a temptation I find irresistible! Small *prince sausages*, a couple of slices of *smoked sausage* and *liver paté* were also hidden under the ham, the latter primarily for putting on bread which usually is Swedish crispbread. Potatoes go with the Christmas food but I skipped it on my overloaded plate.

Traditional drinks to this is mulled wine, called *glögg*, a carbonated malt soda drink called *julmust*, which outsells Coca-Cola during Christmas, and *Christmas beer*, dark and stronger than ordinary beer.



## Mailing Comments

*Only EAPA - MCs for latest N'APA was in #139. But hey! Why not do your own fanzine and join! It's fun and educational, AND you don't even need a mimeograph for it. Burping 2 sentence, two cent chitchat on (a)social media is for amateurs with a shoe number IQ. Get smart, do a fanzine!*

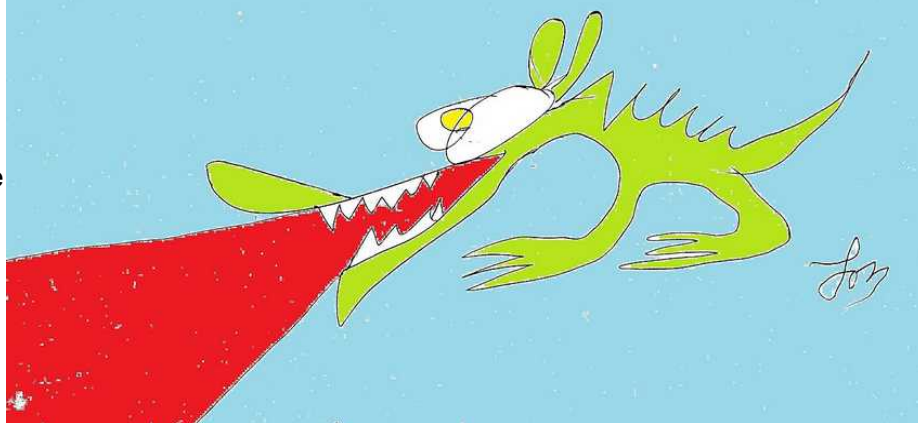
**Aisaac Aisimov:** Nice to see you here, buddy! Weird pictures of mimeos... How is life on Trantor?

**Fanac Chronicles:** As already pointed out, the AI makes a lot of mistakes when it comes to describing fandom. The pioneering years of fandom weren't the 1950s, but the 1930s. The first fanzines came in that decade. The sf cons didn't rise in the 1960s, but also in the 1930s. The Americans claim the first one was in Philadelphia in 1936, the British say Leeds in 1937. I side more with the British here, because their event was really organised as a convention, while Philadelphia was more a travel party. Professional sf mags didn't start in the 1970s of course, but already in the 1920s.

**Henry Grynsten:** Interesting. Buffy Saint Marie, isn't American Indian? Has she been aware of this all the time? Not that I care much. I have BTW seen her perform at an event at Stockholm University in the early 1980s. And Bob Dylan is quite a fraud! That was a bit shocking. I've never been a big Dylan fan. Some of his stuff is good, some not so good. The Nobel Prize in literature was exaggerated, I think. :- ) I agree with you on writers and gender and Ukraine, of course - since you basically agree with me here.

**William McCabe:** It seems you don't want books in continuing series. Me too. It's so boring getting "Part IIX in the Space Cucumber series"... It's OK with new novels placed in the same settings, but they shouldn't rely on being in a certain sequence, continuing each other. I like independent episodes more than a never-ending story. :- ) For me there is just *one* fandom and it's non-hyphen: not fringe-fandom, media-fandom, gaming-fandom, comics-fandom, all those with hyphens. The Fandom - ie us - traces its history and traditions in a straight line from the first clubs and fanzines and cons in the 1930s. It is true that in literature followers of Sherlock Holmes may have been the first literary fan movement - but they didn't call themselves a "fandom"! Fandom, us, both deal with literature AND call ourself Fandom. It may also be that some earlier sports fans occasionally were referred to as a fandom, but that label was rare and they didn't engage in literature or anything artistic. The people who dress up as comics figures, play bang-bang-shoot-shoot games, wave plastic swords, etc are unserious wannabe copiers and not Fandom. To masquerade as Conan's cousin is pretending. To build a plastic model of USS Enterprise from TV is copying. To run in the woods imagining you are a princess is mimicking medieval history. To write fanfiction is imitation. In most areas mediafans are just taking something and try to make a new copy of it! So boring and it's not creating something new. And besides, trying to "dive into" or be "a part of" a fantasy makes you near-sighted, depriving you of a healthy general overview making you unable to analyse it. Media-fans, the "sci-fi" crowd, are unaware of Fandom's long history, don't know its traditions and are just aiming for superficial entertainment from pretending and copying. There aren't several real fandoms, :- ) I suspect the English Tories don't argue "the rich" should have no taxes. It's a matter of what taxes benefits most people most. It's easy to shout "Tax the rich! That'll solve everything", but there are several problems. Too high taxes and highly productive people will leave the country and you lose. The heads of successful companies like IKEA, H&M, Tetrapak and other all fled Sweden. Others will just see that taking risks and make efforts isn't worth it, so they downsize and you lose jobs. Your general economic growth suffers and everyone lose. And if you do the math, even if you taxed "the rich" to the extreme you won't get as much as many think. "The rich" aren't that many. I agree that "the rich" should be taxed more, a little bit more, BUT the level must be carefully discussed. Someone explained: "The problem with the left is that they don't

*Lars LON Olsson just drags on with a dragon.*



really want to help the poor, instead they just want to hurt the rich." That's destructive and unethical.

**Garth Spencer:** Yes, it may be true that Golden Age writers, and even a little later unlike today wrote more pioneering breakthrough stories. And it's also true that commercial "sci-fi" recycle old stuff a lot. :- ) We shouldn't forget Minneapolis in '73! :- ) Well, Mussolini may have thought fascism was "combining public, or governmental institutions with private, or corporate institutions, into one" but it's not a *complete* definition of fascism. We also have concepts around "strength makes right", and you actually need that, need force to create Mussolini's corporativism, because it will be resisted. Fascism is also the idea of one great leader basically directing everything. It's the idea of that your tribe is better than other tribes. There are other aspects also around fascism - a lot of them these days seems to fit well with Putin's Russia...

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Robert Bloch, a leading figure in fandom, on a real swinging party - with booze and broads! From the Gauer collection. #138, #138.5 and #139 had more pics and other stuff about Bloch! This picture is AI coloured.

**Слава Україні!**