

INTERMISSION #113

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA & other innocent victims. Follow @SFJournalen [sf/f/h&fandom](https://sfjournalen.com) newstweets. If the trademark office was dyslectic, world would had been in the spell of BABA®! Watch out for msispellnigs! Late September 2021

Editorially: ABBA AParently Without Sin Down Under

A mixed bag in thish, possibly the most exciting issue for a long time! First a little plea: this zine is done for two little APAs, but mailed to some outsiders too. Both EAPA and N'APA could *really* use new members. Why not join? Ask eg me for more info. Making a PDF is easy-peasy. Just write something somewhat interesting and go to "save as PDF" in your word processor. More fen should do more to pub more fanzines! Do your duty! You can read and write...or?

So, expect a look at the comeback for the music industry's biggest band since the Beatles. Doing it after 40 years! A really surprising nuclear blast in music. And coming spring ABBA will pay us a visit as digital hi-tech virtual stage clones. The future is here. Some say ABBA was an injection the world needed in a world gone bonkers.

That singing foursome was bigger than anything Down Under. So those pop stars should be needed there to keep spirits up. Aussie politicians have had kangaroo loose in the top paddock and let civil rights be waltzing right off on a walkabout, causing angry demonstrations in major Australian cities. I guess it would be fair to say you look bewildered. Their politicians seems to do anything to shut you down if you care for citizen's rights: house arrests, detention camps, terrorist squad vehicles, rubber bullets and tear gas, officers on horseback, helicopters, checkpoints outside supermarkets, military patrols on beaches, animal shelter dogs being shot...

As for the C-virus here Up Over (as opposed to Down Under) all so called "restrictions" were shelved in Sweden in late September, a few days after Norway and Denmark did the same. "Restrictions" used to be called the *Public Health Agency's general advice*, but politicians re-named it "restrictions" - not a legal term, BTW - to make it sound more threatening. Rate of virus deaths have been quite flat since four (!) months back and 85+ percent are vaccinated. Of the rest most have already natural immunity. I know it's different elsewhere, but here things looks rather calm, except for smaller local outbreaks. One would expect a slight rise as weather gets colder, but nothing drastic.

Since our government hasn't been too harsh with "restrictions" they haven't pissed people off. Vaccination seems popular, only limited by time and practical measures. Pop-up vaccination spots pop up and folks faithfully line up. I went past one in Stockholm which had a queue of 25-30 people.

I suspect that huge street protests, as in Australia, against vaccination "mandates" (force-jabbing) is an emotional reaction against politicians too hard-handedly pushing citizens around. First you put us under house arrest and now you wave a syringe in our faces! Go suck an egg! Is this China or North Korea? For my part I think vaccines re *just fine*, so take a shot. But injecting something into your body *must* be something fully *voluntary*. Those who worry about the corona virus can protect themselves by being pricked, but don't tread on others. Respect personal integrity.

Meanwhile, let me present the History of Sin...

--Ahrvid Engholm

When Sin Was Born

Nowadays the concept of any special "Swedish sin" is unfair. The Swedes don run around naked, making love in the woods. But two things established this concept in the 1950s, a couple of naughty films and that Swedish schools began with sex education at that time.



Vaccine queue in a September sunny Stockholm.

The films were "One Summer of Happiness" (1951) and "Summer with Monika" (1953), causing world wide sensation by flashing the breasts of Ulla Jakobsson (the first film) for just a few seconds... You can check it out yourself. The "infamous" scene is ca 1h 19m in:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOh6u-O7BDs>

Unfortunately there're no subtitles, so you might not be able to follow what really is a sensitive drama about summer love, with manuscript by Volodja Semitjov, brother of space reporter Eugen Semitjov (covered in earlier issues). In New York the queues went around the blocks, so the artistic qualities of it was certainly appreciated. Or could it be that they wanted an orgy of lustfulness? Famous director Ingmar Bergman followed in 1953, with more unhinged filthy desire in "Summer with Monika", in the



This was you saw of Monika. Shock!

form of Harriet Andersson seen nude from behind a few seconds (I don't find it on Youtube). And for sex education in the schools, it was just for a couple of hours and it was more clinical than explicit.

For the rest of the world, the stork continued to be busy.

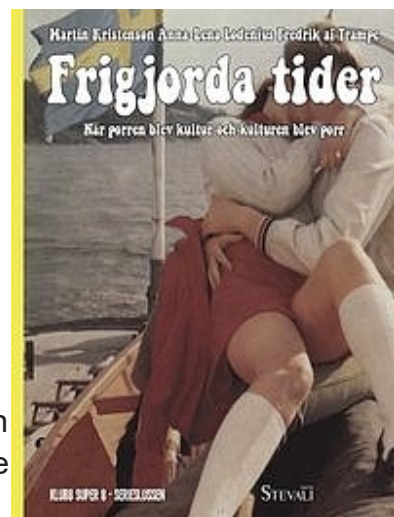
The history of how porn and filth took over Sweden is told in a new, heavily illustrated (mostly book covers, posters and pictures of the Monika kind) 400+ pages book by Martin Kristenson, Anna-Lena Lodenius and Fredrik af Trampe, *Frigjorda tider*. (The best translation of the title would be "Libertine Times", so I'll use that.) I should confess that I know the authors, Martin since more than 40 years through fandom (he and buddy David Nettle used to do some of the whackiest, funniest fanzines I've read!), and all three have been regulars of the cult music club Sunkit for 2+ decades, which

this zine often has reported from. I'm also mentioned on the last page as contributor. When I heard of the project I took some hours to ransack my memory and tried my tippy-tappy and to see if the rumour was true that Internet was full of sex, and if I could find some of it for the book. I sent them a few MBs of source texts, URLs and ideas. I don't know what was used, except that the thing about the film "Cosmic Love" may have come from *Intermission* a few issues ago.

My own closest connection to the field of filth was in the 1980s when working for pop-tech mag *Teknikmagasinet*. Our layout guy had earlier worked for the notorious men's mag *FIB Aktuell*, a pioneer in getting porn to penetrate the newsstands. But even more: our editor-in-chief Anders Palm (and oldtime fan!) regularly had material for this raunchy rag, which dared to also have other stuff than sex. He often sent me to deliver his manuscripts to the office of *FIB*. I saw how they worked, got to know some of the guys a bit, and so on. Most where middle-aged men. Picture material usually came from porn-picture agencies on the continent, Germany as I remember. And the "true" sex letters from the readers were often written by the staff themselves... (Except I know that the founder of Swedish APA SFF boosted how he made extra money by also writing such stuff. All stories by him coming closer than a foot to a girl was pure fantasy, of course.)

All three of the Libertine writers are excellent researchers, which this rich book is proof of. Libertine Times is divided into scores of chapters, each covering a certain subject - literature, film, music, comics, theatre, etc - or a more specific event, scandal, prolific author, debate, film, etc. The timespan is from the beginning of the 1950's, until sometime in the late 1980's, when in fact the rest of the world had become *more* sinful than us.

From nudeness in the 1950's and hinted sex, books and films began to become more and more explicit in the 1960's. Though explicit descriptions were formally illegal, the limits of the law were tested and stretched throughout that decade. By the late 1960's there was so much sex around that the ban on porn (the Swedish word is "porr" BTW) became increasingly more difficult to uphold. So the ban of indecent material was formally scrapped in 1971. Sweden was actually later than Denmark where they did that in 1969. (But Danish historians must tell that story, this book leaves it.)





Porn got a tougher opponent in the 70's, Martin Kristenson explains, in a TV interview.

The boundaries were stretched to the breaking point in the late 60's leading into the 70's, which became the peak of Swedish porn. Later in the 1970's the left wingers got other things to think about, like promoting crap music and demonstrating against Pinochet in Chile and Franco in Spain, but not so much much against Castro in Cuba.

"But in the 1970's the porn liberals got another and more difficult opponent," Martin Kristenson said in a TV interview Sept 13. "And that

was the women's movement." And they could really pick a fight. Martin and co-author Anna-Lena were interviewed in a main culture news program. Anna-Lena added:

"What happened was that the material became more raw and commercial. And porn moved from cinemas to home movies", ie video. (And those naughty tapes had a lot to do with popularising VCRs!)

From what I see in their book early sex was rather innocent, even sort of cute. And then came porn with some artsy ambitions and a political message about free speech, like a pin-up posing with a picture of Tricky Dick Nixon to protest against the Vietnam War. But of course what went down best with a sex-starving audience (men, to a huge majority - an attempt to publish a porn mag for women lasted only a few issues) was Basic Level 1A Sex. Artistic ambitions, serious debate and such haver never been the source of horniness. But some formalities were upheld, like the

porno cinema which in desperation outside said on a poster: *"Note! All our films have a plot too!"*

There's no way I could give a complete rundown of the history of sex in Sweden or cover everything in this jam-packed book. But I'll give you a few notes of some things worth mentioning.

The mental atmosphere around porn is perhaps illustrated about the long-debate in the 1960's on if there should be government operated brothels! Some serious politicians actually proposed that. Of course it would be heavily regulated, good working conditions, regular hours, sick-pay, pensions... There was also (though a bit smaller) debate about setting up "intercourse rooms" in high schools. All in an attempt to solve sexual inequality - in the sense some got laid, some didn't, which is unfair and a sign of inequality.

One of the really big shelf-tumblers was the anthology series *Kärlek* ("Love") which came with 14 volumes from the mid 1960's and into the 1970's. A number of very established writers contributed with stories attempting to give us "literary" filth and at least the first volumes sold 100

The campaign against the porn ban had two or three flag bearers. One group was the youth federation of the Swedish Liberal Party, but you should note that "liberal" in Europe usually doesn't mean "left wing". Euro liberals tend to be centre-right and are often in coalition with conservatives, seldom with socialists. Another group were the real left wingers, socialists who as usual wanted to be against anything traditional. Avant garde artists may be seen as a third group, though they have always tended to be left wing anyway. The opponents to porn in the 1960's were religious groups



In protest against the Vietnam war.



"Is there place for sex in school?" Intercourse rooms in high school debated.



Johnny Bode recording.

000's of copies (for a population of 8 million at the time). However, one wonder how "literary" the stories were. In *Libertine Times* we are given examples of commercial porn compared to examples from the peak of literature. And you can't find much difference.

One of the major door-openers for porn was Johnny Bode's "Songs of the Brothel Madame", which sold hundreds of thousands of copies - before ABBA. Songs like "Jerk me off with White Gloves" is today a mainstay on the Sunkit music club. Bode was a fat cat who defrauded hotels, restaurants, friends - everyone with a temperature around 37C - stole antique carpets from film stars and sang for the Nazis during the war. A real scoundrel, when he didn't led the avant garde attack in sex music.

An interesting chapter for me is a visit to and interview with Kjell Genberg, one of our members in *The Short Story Masters* (see last issue!). He is a prolific writer and with 250+ published books has appeared in virtually every genre. He's mostly famous for crime fiction and the long paperback series about Wild West hero Ben Hogan. However he has also written a number of what was called Sexy Westerns. That's westerns with a few sexy encounters squeezed into every story. These kinds of books were earlier available on every newsstand kiosk of what is known as Pressbyrån ("The Press Bureau", a newsstand chain with near monopoly) and were called "kiosk paperbacks". Those have



since disappeared, I'm not sure exactly why, but the kiosk paperbacks are gone from kiosks and other type of paperbacks have now come and moved into eg supermarkets. Anyway, Kjell would back in the days of the 1970s take perhaps a week - record time is one weekend - to write a "sexy western" (see examples above) under the pseudonym Clay Allison. They of course had a strict format for both length and contents. Kjell is a good hack, better than me. My own only attempt at a kiosk paperback failed and had to be stencilled in a fanzine instead.

I must jump back and forth in this well-filled volume. We have for instance the notorious theatre play "Oh! Calcutta!", with an ensemble ripping of all clothes. Leading

daily Dagens Nyheter tongue-in-cheekly reviewed the nude bodies of the cast. One of the gents magazines sent a group of nudists to see the play, but they were thrown out. "Why can't we be naked when they can on stage!" they complained.

When Mr Hefner founded Playboy clubs in the US, someone thought something similar in libertine Sweden would be a sure success. An attempt with a local version of a playboy club (re-designed bunnies, and called the Scala Club) only lasted a few months. Maybe the Swedes had too much sex around them that a club was unnecessary. There were also cafés with topless waitresses, Miss Nude competitions in amusement parks, sex art exhibitions in even respected galleries, topless nightclub bands... But one of the strangest cases is the



"Handball team fixed finances with porn club."

handball club which was down to a handful of members and in desperation started a sex club. They got huge news coverage and suddenly 500 new members!

Political youth associations would organise discussion evenings where sex and freedom of speech would be debated, of course showing some porn films, for educational purposes. They would quickly sell out all tickets, but before the porn ban was lifted the police would take action if someone filed a

DE VISADE SAMLAG PÅ FILM - SKA DE FÅ FÄNGELSE?

AV JIMMY NYSTRÖM

Sex personer — en flicka och fem pojkar — i Liberala studentklubben står nu åtalade för att ha arrangerat den uppmärksammade sexdebatten i Medborgarhuset i höstas.



"They showed intercourse on film - will they go to jail?" Liberal student politicians' debate ending with a porn film took them to court in 1965. (In the end they were given low fines.)

came in a reprint volume. It was well-drawn by one Leif Rundquist and is of course covered in *Libertine Times*. And so is the 1980's controversy around the comics publisher Horst Schröder, who did artistic new wave comics. A religious anti-porn group reported him for "violent porn" (which was re-banned in the early 1980's) and forced newsstands to remove his production from the shelves.

Though he was freed in a two-day court case (I was there and did a long report in my newszine *SFJ*) his publishing company was hit very badly. Horst is known in fandom, has guested the local SFSF

club and for a time shared his comics bookshop with the SF Bookstore.

Let me quickly cover other sf and/or fandom related stuff in this book.

Space composer Ralph Lundstens film-project "Cosmic Lover" is already mentioned. Another filmmaker is Carl Johan De Geer, also author of some sf novels (you may remember that *Intermission* last autumn was on the release of his apocalyptic *Lord of the Rats!*). As originally a photographer he in the 1960s of course tried nude - artistic, of course - pics of this then wife Marie Louise. But he also appeared in in the famous avant garde poet Åke Hodell's experimental feature film "Du gamla, du fria" ("Thou Old, Thou Free", title of Sweden's national anthem) shot in very chaotic sessions, and despite nudity a total flop at the cinemas. (But I'd love to see it! *SVT, please!*) An unexpected encounter is the story of how a very young fan Johan Tibbelin, friend of Martin, interviewed a centrefold model in an article for his school paper. Nudity was also the issue a satirical photo series (the same girl would

be presented as a *different* student in each issue) in the Stockholm university student paper, photographed by fan Christer Landergren, famous for the fine fanzine *Prry*. We of course learn about Denis Lindbohm, who wrote in famed p-publisher H:son's mag *Piff*. Denis also

wrote serious sf-porn novels like *The Golden Rim* and *Eden Without Adam* (but the book misses that the last later came in an extended version as *A Snake Turned Up in Eden*). Not mentioned is that fan Ulf Westblom and John Ågren also wrote a series of porn stories for *Piff*, but we do hear about other sf porn in the *Piff* mag, like "The Sex Samaritans from Space". And Sven Delblanc - a famous, very respected writer - unexpectedly turned up with the apocalyptic sf theatre play "Robot Base", made much more interesting with much less clothes. At peak in the 1970's Stockholm had around 30 sex clubs, and the most famous one was probably Chat Noir. I knew a fan who was there part-time as entrance host 40 years ago, with the job of convincing guests to buy expensive non-alcoholic cider as "champagne" (they had no booze license). It was just before they had to close as such clubs were banned having explicit sex shows live in the early 1980's when the laws changed again.

We must return to the films. Lots of svenska flickor ficks were made through the 70's. It's a pity they

complaint. Some members of a Liberal Party's Youth Federation were taken to court for such an event, and were fined (rather low amounts, but still). But before 1971, it was difficult to know what degree of sex and nudity that was illegal, since the assessments varied a lot.

An earlier *Intermission* covered the long-running porn comics "James Fång", which now has become cult and a few years ago



"James Fjång" was famous for onomatopoeic words like "Ynfl!" and "Isch!"



Stockholm student paper's "Student of the Month" series, shot by Prry ed Christer Landergren, was intended as a satire (but soon stopped).

left out the cult director Bo Arne Vibenius dystopian "Breaking Point" starring a fannish father, not too gloriously, but they do cover astonishing, wonderful Christina Lindberg, https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0511350/?ref=fn_al_nm_1. She was the queen of the centrefolds in the 1970s and also the standard nude of the movies. Her "Thriller: A Cruel Picture" (1973) about a woman seeking revenge in a vaguely dystopian world is a classic, said to have inspired Quentin Tarantino. It's worth seeing if you stumble upon it. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0072285/> (Lindberg's latest, "Pandemonic", is an sf move too, but IMDB says it hasn't been finished. Let's hope it comes when the virus gets tired!) Christina has in later years led campaigns to save the Swedish wild wolves. Swedish nude films was once so popular that the Japanese came here and shot half a dozen "Sweden films" in the 1970s. with Swedish actors under Japanese directors - shown only in Japan.



The most well-known sex club.

Even the demon director Ingmar Bergman had plans for a "glad porn" movie, which were scrapped after the Swedish taxmen Gestapo-style assaulted him with tax fraud accusations, which were later dropped. But Ingmar was so upset he stopped all projects and moved to Germany for many years to get away from Gestapo. The script of his porn-picture project has



A long series of films, without any connection at all to old Sweden!

survived and is summarized in the book, a confusing story of conspiracies among historical European royals and rulers.

"Glad porn" was the label used for a long series of Danish porno flicks from the time. They often had some Swedish actors, but are for some reason omitted here, maybe because some things just have to be left out due to lack of space. In "The Sign of Sagittarius" we find the industrious Ole Söltoft hunting secret plans of a space station base, beside Ingmar's daughter Anna Bergman and Sweden's Olympic discus medalist Ricky Bruch.

The Danish "Sign" and "Bedside" films were hugely popular. (As said, Danish sex history is probably just as juicy, but someone else will have to write that book.)

In the early 1980's porn clubs were banned from showing explicit stuff and the rest of the world had overtaken the Swedes in porno films and all. But the reputation stuck. A label like "Swedish Erotica" is produced in Hollywood with 0% Swedish connection, "Schweden Porno" is a German concept, etc.

But time to pull the brakes! This has become longer than intended already. As a reviewer I must say Libertine Times is a very well-researched, fascinating book, a *cornerstone of any sex history library!* The only thing I think they perhaps should have added is a page spread or two with a timeline of different events. It would have been valuable to get a quick overview of when the different things happened and how they connect.

Anyway, it's a book for everyone to read in times like this, when a virus has made all of us fucked...

Without a Song or a Dance What Are We?

There's absolutely no way to avoid it. If someone had told me how the biggest band in the world in the 1970's, which went silent for four decades...would come back, I'd rejected the story for my sf magazine. But everyone in the whole wide world now know: ABBA is orbiting Earth again!

Two new songs now, an album in November with ten songs, with a Christmas song for December, and in May a computer generated digital show in London, done with help of the Star Wars crew.

These virtual concerts are themselves pretty much skiffy. Anni-Frid, Benny, Björn and Agnetha spent five weeks (!) jumping around on a stage in black pyjamas with coloured dots, in front of 160



Alternative title of "Thriller" is "They Call Her One Eye". Worth seeing!

cameras and a crew of hundreds from Industrial Light and Magic (the George Lucas CGI company). There are examples of such digital concerts before, but ABBA is the first band to really go all in for it. They have worked on the concept for 4-5 years by now and are building a special arena equipped for it London, with 3000 seats in. Around 850 people have been involved in creating their "abbatars".

One wonders if, with all this work, they'll be able to push this technology further. As they have scanned the group for weeks in all angles and poses, these virtual figures should be able to move around more "spontaneously", so it all isn't like a film being shown. Or? Will be interesting to see.

I shortly give you my amateur analysis of one of their new songs, but first other thoughts.

While it was never true that ABBA was worth more than Volvo, they have probably been just as important as any car company or furniture chain for the world-wide perception of the "brand" of Sweden. But did you know that on their home turf they were *hated* by many?

In the 1970's there was the influential so called "alternative music movement", called "progg" (a word used differently from "prog" in the UK). It came from the left-wing that dominated those times, and said no to everything commercial, made progressive music for the proletariat, had solidarity with the third world, argued that everyone can play (many couldn't) and all that...well, not jazz.

And ABBA was their sworn enemy.

When their "Waterloo" success brought the Eurovision to Stockholm in 1975, the proggers organised their own Alternative Music Festival. As the Eurovision Song Contest was shown on SVT1, the Alternative Festival was simultaneously on the SVT2 channel. We could for instance hear a guy using the nom-de-plume Herring Strangler sing, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOFqfMuSEsI> (and I translate):

*And here is ABBA in costumes of plastic
As dead as canned fish
They don't give a damn, want fast cash
My French nerves are smoldering
Doing the immoral music festival...*

"Herring Strangler" comes from that "Abba" is also the name of a Swedish fish canning company, which however gave ABBA manager Stikkan Andersson permission to use the name ABBA "as long as you don't do anything to shame us". I don't think this company found they ever did... (We should be grateful they didn't keep the original name, from when their first single was released in Japan in 1972: "Bjorn and Benny with Svenska Flicka", the last = "Swedish Girl").

National TV was and still is massively dominated by left wing sentiments, so of course they'd dedicate one of their channels to this more Politically Correct festival. It was people who in many cases banged on cooking pots instead of drums, who forced the radio's music top-list show to shut down ("You can't compete in music!"), a music movement where one of the big "hits" was Philemon Arthur & the Dung's "In comes Gösta", consisting of them monotonously repeating the "song" title in a recording from their kitchen. If you don't believe me, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d69hYZsGoo>. When this was given the Swedish "Grammis" prize the critics were so upset that the award was cancelled for 15 years! The proggers ruled and set the agenda.

ABBA was everything these guys hated. They didn't have politics in their texts. They sung about things interesting for young people - longing, love, happiness, sorrow. They had outrageous stage costumes full of glitter. They made catchy well-produced quality songs, money, money, money and were successful all over the world. There wasn't one molecule of the politically correct in this foursome. ABBA must be the demons from hell!

Personally, I was never among the ABBA haters then. At the time I just didn't care much about them, being too occupied by sf and fandom and other things. But I remember I already in the 1980's

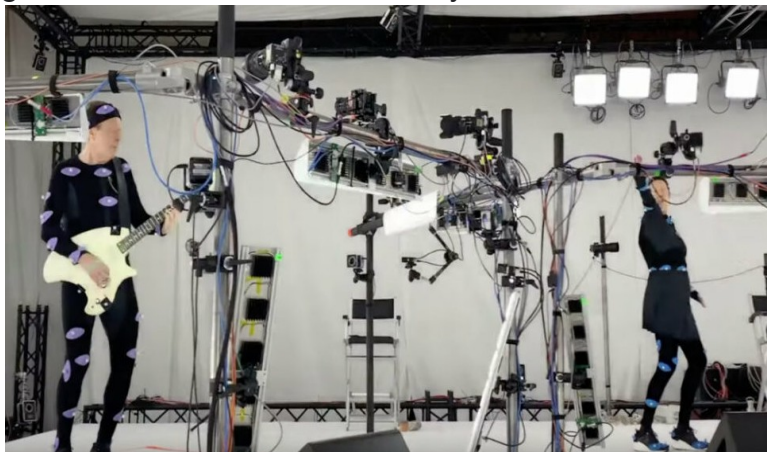


Herring Strangler sings on the Alternative Music Festival.

bought several of the ABBA LPs, at least second-hand cheaply, and of course it happened I put them on the record player. When ABBA took their (very, very long) break in 1982 it was quiet around them for years. But then the buzz slowly began to grow.

Many of the punk rockers that popped up liked ABBA, for instance Six Pistols who covered "Dancing Queen". Punk was anti-establishment and "prog" was the establishment. Heavy Metal fans liked ABBA too. The elaborate production qualities of the ABBA tracks were something symphonic heavy rock could relate to. And of course lots of ABBA tracks were perfect for the discotheques where the yuppies danced and enjoyed themselves.

When the ABBA Gold album came in the early 1990's ABBA began bouncing back for real. (And this album has since stayed on the 100 most sold list for a record 1000+ weeks in Britain!) The Australians, who had adopted the Swedes as their own, made films with ABBA music. We got the "Mamma Mia!" musical, now done in scores of languages, said to have been seen by 65+ millions, and also been made into two films. There came TV documentaries (half a dozen can be found on Youtube). Madonna, Erasure, symphony orchestras and others used ABBA music. We saw dozens of tribute bands with names like Björn Again, A-Teens, Abbaesque, Volez Vous...



Björn and Agnetha from ABBA's motion capture sessions.

We got the "Mamma Mia!" musical, now done in scores of languages, said to have been seen by 65+ millions, and also been made into two films. There came TV documentaries (half a dozen can be found on Youtube). Madonna, Erasure, symphony orchestras and others used ABBA music. We saw dozens of tribute bands with names like Björn Again, A-Teens, Abbaesque, Volez Vous...

If liking ABBA was once an embarrassment, it now became cool, even an intellectual thing. You could write doctoral theses about their many layered lyrics and sound landscapes, maybe first studying their history in the ABBA museum that opened in Stockholm. And for me it was now, sometime in the 1990's when all this became obvious, I too got bitten by the ABBA bug. I don't regret it one bit, and what I write here is of course a bit biased. Just so you know...

So why did ABBA make this comeback? First we should note that the members weren't inactive for 40 years. Björn and Benny wrote musicals (I saw "Kristina from Duvemåla", which had several hits on the Swedish charts), were involved in the films, opened the ABBA museum and did many other things. It seems Björn Ulvæus is the businessman who travels all over the world to help all local stagings of the "Mamma Mia!" musical. Benny on the other hand leads his own folk music/schlager Benny Andersson's Orchestra.

And Frida and Agnetha have now and then released songs and albums, sometimes doing some chart climbing. Search Youtube for eg "Something Going On" by Frida or "The Heat is on" by Agnetha. I'm myself rather fond of Frida being guest singer on a Ratata hit, with the English version here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvC-IU1kvy8> ("As Long As I Have You"). Both have given interviews, Frida from Switzerland where she now lives, Agnetha less frequently - but while she's been a bit more reclusive she hasn't been a Greta Garbo. Agnetha has turned up on premiere events, been on TV and has released new albums as late as 2004 and 2013, also doing promos for them. (But she refuses to fly, having earlier had a scary episode with a thunderstorm on a plane during a US tour.) Agnetha has done more music than Frida, who on the other hand has become a real Swiss princess, through marriage. When ABBA not unexpectedly climbed to #1 on Swedish Radio's main pop charts show ("Svensktoppen") Agnetha gave a long interview, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGok5U-YRBw> (with English subtitles). Agnetha had more than 50 years earlier been #1 on "Svensktoppen" too, as a young solo artist!

In the 1960's Agnetha Fältskog was a star equalling Björn and Benny, writing her own music, often topping local charts. One of my favourite early Agnetha songs in Swedish is here, "Doktorn", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jc2qAzUM1lo> (English translation is below, on the site). She's credited with only one ABBA song however, though Björn - her husband at the time - said they

always in vain urged her to write for the group. She must have had a writers' block of some sort. Agnetha is credited with composing only one ABBA song, "Disillusion", on the Ring, Ring album.

But how strange isn't it that ABBA now in 2021 is reaching orbital speed! They are outdoing other billionaires - who cheat by using real rockets. The ABBA rise through the stratosphere is like a three-stage rocket, something like this:

Stage One: Preparing a Christmas Show (for NBC and BBC) leading to the idea of a virtual stage show.

Stage Two: Preparing that show (the one being set up in London) they got together for the motion capture, thought they should have a couple of new songs for it, so they recorded the two songs now out.

Stage Three: But since they seemed to enjoy that, why not a new EP, Benny asked. Or a whole album! The four members were now "fired up" and recorded eight more songs.

Björn Ulvaeus said in an interview:

To tell the truth, the main inspiration to record again comes from our involvement in creating the strangest and most spectacular concert you could ever dream of. We're going to be able to sit back in an audience and watch our digital selves perform our songs on a stage in a custom-built arena in London next spring. Weird and wonderful!

But I also believe ABBA came back out of the irresistible feeling of nostalgia, a longing for the past, that we all have as we get older, awoken by everything around the new show and recordings. It became a challenge they set up for themselves: Do we still have it in us? Dare we?

They had no need for money. The individual members are estimated to each be worth between 1.5-2.5 Billion Swedish crowns (divide by 8.5 for Dollar value). They have nothing to prove, with a legacy firmly fixed to the starry sky already in the 1980's, when they took "a break". And it seems they were professional enough not letting being divorcees from each other get in the way. That was 40+ years ago, after all. It probably caused some strains then, but as years passed feelings around such becomes softer and more distant.

ABBA was never much into touring. They would guest TV shows instead and were pioneers doing videos (or 16 mm film at the time). Björn estimate they weren't on the road more than six months in total. And in 2021 doing live stage shows would be even more out of the question, as old-age pensioners. Someone should tell The Rolling Stones, who should be renamed The Rolling Chairs...

4.5 years ago NBC in the US and BBC in the UK announced they were preparing a joint Christmas Special about ABBA, aimed for December 2019. The work on that started 2017, and according to a radio interview with Björn it was British TV's (of "Idol") Simon Fuller who suggested: even if you won't go on stage live, how about a virtual show? So Benny and Björn began to work on that concept. That was the lift-off for *stage one*.

The TV show was delayed because of a certain virus. (It seems to have been laid on ice. I haven't heard anything more about the NBC/BBC project, but if I was those TV producers I'd love to go back to it!)

But for a stage show, even if its digital, it's almost insulting to have no new material. A couple of songs perhaps? Benny phoned up their lead singers, ready to hear a "Sorry but..." But they said yes!



ABBA-tars and originals in the motion capture costumes.



Agnetha's and Frida's ABBA-tars, done as they were in 1979

ABBA went back to the studio, Benny's own studio on a central Stockholm island. The *second stage* fired up. That was in 2018 and they began preparing the virtual show..

While in studio the four of them found they hit it off splendidly. And because of the virtual show they had to jump around in front of 160 (!) cameras, in dotted leotards *for five weeks*, all managed by the Star Wars crew. They performed the 22 songs of the coming show over and over again. *ABBA's only live shows for four decades have been for Star Wars film crews!* (Lucky bastards!) And it was all done in the most outrageous costumes ever. It's unknown if the ABBAtar shows will use the voices from these sessions or if from older recordings (maybe a mix?). All that motion capture was done in one of the big film studios of the Swedish Film Institute house. Up to 850 people from the Lucas gang is said to have worked the knobs and dials of the computers and lasers.

After jumping around in a pyjamas, Benny asked: Since we've done two songs, why not a whole album? They did eight more songs, as I understand recorded this passed year, a couple of years later than the first two. The second stage had now burned out and separated. Orbital speed was to be reached as *the third stage lit up*. (I like space metaphors, as an old space fan.)

Björn and Benny had never taken a break from anything. And the brains of Agnetha and Frida were totally soaked in nostalgia from reborn ABBAmania and the ABBAtar posing and the first new studio sessions. It was the key thing that they too came along for the ride into uncharted territory - which surely will lead to some chart encounters. Benny expected Frida and Agnetha to say no when he phoned them up, but to his surprise they jumped at the opportunity. They crammed twenty something violinists of the Stockholm Concert Orchestra into Benny's studio, to fiddle with the new tracks, B&B grabbed the sliders of the control board, and Frida and Agnetha opened their vocal cords...

Björn has explained how incredible it was to record the tracks, the first two recorded about two years before the rest of the new album, where the last mixing was done in late August 2021. It just took a few seconds and they were catapulted back in time to how they worked in the studio 40 years earlier. It seems the material is basically new, though Benny maybe had some half-baked songs that they could add to and finish.

I'm certain that some of the new songs on the album will be top notch! (We can't expect all new ones to be hits. ABBA did some strange not too brilliant tracks too, in the beginning.) They did it because they loved what they once did and were curious to see if they could do it again. And they *could*. In an interview Benny Andersson said that their coming album, titled "Voyager", will be sold in all forms, including CD, vinyl - and music cassette! Do you remember those things you 40 years ago had in your Sony Walkman? 78 rpm records weren't mentioned...

Of the two new songs we have already heard, I'm slightly less enthusiastic about "I still have faith in you", mostly because it's a bit too slow and I'm not too much into ballads. But a) it's better than 95% of the questionable noise our radio stations annoys us with today, and b) Frida does a wonderful job, considering she's a 75 year old princess. Her voice may be a little darker, but she is in total control and has aged well. We can also hear that Agnetha has become a little lower in her voice. I think we willingly accept that Frida and Agnetha now are maybe only 98% of what they once were - ie the best female pop singers of the 1970's - but we take what we get, gratefully! The more mature voices of the singers brings the material patina and life experience.

If the first song was average ABBA I really think their second new track, "Don't Shut Me Down" is a world-tumbler! It's the gobsmaacking proof in the pudding. You can find small echoes from both "Dancing Queen" and "The Winner takes it all" in it. It's extremely catchy, danceable and sounds like classic ABBA. As always with Ulvaeus it has clever and deeper lyrics than you might think at first. You can hear it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWGWFa3jznI> At the time of writing it's No 1 in 18 countries, while "I Still Have Faith in You" does a notch better on Youtube - nice for Frida.

Agnetha's "Doin't Shut Me Down" works on four levels, with three stories:

- 1) *The story of a woman who returns to her former husband or lover.*
- 2) *The story of ABBA and lead-singer Agnetha herself.*

3) *There are cues to ABBA's coming virtual show.*

4) *Finally, I think the song also comments on the virus situation.*

The title "Don't Shut Me Down" can't be a coincidence. Everywhere owners of pubs, cafes, shops, theatres and sports venues have begged "don't shut me down!". Still the lockdowns have come and with them economic hardship and all kinds of long-term damage. Sweden didn't have lockdowns, but caps on gatherings still efficiently killed off concerts and music. Björn and Benny must have seen how their colleagues were badly hit by bans on concerts. And ABBA musicals were stopped all over the world. While B&B could easily survive, they saw how tough it was for all other artists. The song title could be interpreted as a comment to this. The biggest daily's - Dagens Nyheter - music critic Fredrik Strage, wrote in his Friday column September 10:

"It strikes me that 'Don't Shut Me Down' feels political: don't shut down the music, I don't empty the dance floors, abandon restrictions."

I think he's right. The lyrics also talks about changes and transformation, which is what both society and the mindset of people have gone through. It isn't a 100% "anti-lockdown" song, since it has so much else, but that must be seen as a component.

In the story that carries the lyrics we find a woman waiting in the park below the flat she once shared with her lover or ex-husband. That's what I call story 1, but also story 4. We have been isolated, like the lonely woman on the bench, and separated from our loved ones. It has been dark and cold in our lives, but a break in isolation is near ("lights are on, it's time to go") we all hope. We hear:

*A while ago, I heard the sound of children's laughter
Now it's quiet, so I guess they left the park
This wooden bench is getting harder by the hour
The sun is going down, it's getting dark
I realise I'm cold, the rain begins to pour
As I watch the windows on the second floor
The lights are on, it's time to go
It's time at last to let him know*



As we come to the next verse, we can also see it as a comment to the divorce song "The Winner Takes It All", where the woman was left by her lover and crushed by it. But in this song it's the other way around - she left. She has now had a change of mind and there are hints it all will end well. She has "learned to cope and love and hope". Love is back and she "will let him know". That is all story 1, but story 2 as well as ABBA is coming back (and story 4 in learning "to cope" with high-handed virus measures). ABBA but also Agnetha left because they had "had enough" but now they're back in another "shape and form". That ABBA is back must make fans "look bewildered and..they/ should, I would" - catchy fast, double rhyme! There's also story 3 in that ABBA will "appear" in a new "shape and form" as avatars:

*I believe it would be fair to say
You look bewildered
And you wonder why I'm here today
And so you should, I would
When I left, I felt I'd had enough
But in the shape and form I appear now
I have learned to cope
And love and hope is why I am here now*

Having "had enough" may be what many listeners have felt about extensive lockdowns, government rules, tests, masks, vaccine passports and such - story 4 in there.

More story 3 follows in the next verse, with "another" ABBA, "reloaded" soon to be "fired up". You "fire up" a system or machine, just as computerised avatars, don't you! (To "fire up" BTW comes from starting old steam engines.) And you are asked not to "shut down" the coming ABBA-tars - story 3.

During the virus days many pubs, shops, venues of all kinds have also been "shut down" - story 4. VR-like computer figures can be described as "a dream within a dream", story 3, while it's also a dream for all ABBA fans that they are back, story 2. And "decoded" definitely connects to advanced number crunching technology - more story 3. The new ABBA is "not the one you know" (story 2, but also 3) but also "now and then combined" (story 2). They are "not the same this time around" (story 1, 2, 3 and maybe 4, much of society isn't the same):

*And now you see another me, I've been reloaded,
yeah
I'm fired up, don't shut me down
I'm like a dream within a dream that's been decoded
I'm fired up, I'm hot, don't shut me down
I'm not the one you knew
I'm now and then combined
And I'm asking you to have an open mind (And I won't
be the same)
I'm not the same this time around (Ooh)
I'm fired up, don't shut me down*

In the next verse we learn that it will probably end well (story 1). She isn't left standing in the hall, but invited in - so she can see "the apartment hasn't changed at all". This hints that her former lover wanted to stay in their life together, the rooms "witness to our love". The hinted happy ending is also what people want now in the real world, as the virus hopefully is winding down (story 4). We will be ready to find love again. Agnetha ensures us that she has matured, gone "from mad to not so bad" (I like that phrasing!), story 2, and maybe the world itself will go from mad to not so bad (story 4)?

*Will you leave me standing in the hall
Or let me enter?
The apartment hasn't changed at all
I got to say I'm glad
Once these rooms were witness to our love
My tantrums and increasing frustration
But I go from mad
To not so bad in my transformation (So now)*

The chorus is repeated once more and as it all ends, we are getting certain it all will end well. He "asked me not to leave" so he wants her, and she "love(s) you still". That's all story 1, but also a bit story 2 - about Agnetha herself. While she never was a Garbo, she was a little bit more reclusive and more further away from ABBA than the others. But now she is back, just like the woman in the song:

*You asked me not to leave
Well, here I am again
And I love you still and so I won't pretend
I have learned to cope*

TRIVIA ON SF & ABBA

- ABBA's original manager Stikkan Andersson was an artist himself and toured the 1950's Swedish "folk parks" together with Börje Crona, who later became a famous sf writer.
- Hans Arnold, horror artist and well-known in fandom (eg being on our cons), did the cover for the ABBA album Greatest hits. This very typical Arnold artwork depicts the group in horror style. ABBA made a "greatest hits" album already in the mid-70's, when they hadn't had their greatest hits yet... The reason may be they thought they had reached their pinnacle by then. How wrong they were!
- Agnetha Fältskog have sung on records by the cosmic composer Ralph Lundsten, who does skiffy inspired music and is also well-known in sf circles, also guested our cons.
- Björn Ulvaeus is said to be a big fan of sf. Details are unknown, but in later years he has often been involved in popular science and philosophical debates. Here he is interviewing pop science writer Richard Dawkins, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmacqKEJHvM>
- The cover of new ABBA album Voyage is space themed, showing the Sun and planets. In 2021 Björn Ulvaeus opened (as one of the main initiators) a digital culture activity centre in Stockholm, which they named "Space". It is three floors in of the Sergel highrises in central Stockholm. <https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=auto&tl=en&u=https://www.di.se/digital/eqt-grundare-och-abba-bjorn-bakom-jattesatsning-pa-digitalt-kulturhus-i-stockholm/>
- Finally the story of Stranded Records, a small independent record label later acquired by ABBA's label Polar Music. It was started by fans Klas Lunding and Anders Tapper, with publishing a fanzine named Stranded. Both had fannish connections. Lunding began with sf zines and was - if I remember - a founding member of the SFF APA, around in 1978. Tapper was around fans, I saw him in the SFSF clubhouse, and the brother of long-time fan Siv Tapper. When they drifted away they began their music zine Stranded (turned into the record label). Here's a 1983 article about them through Google Translate: <https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=sv&tl=en&u=https://www.blaskoteket.se/artiklar/schlagar/068/stranded-records/>

And love and hope is why I am here now

And the world may also bounce back, we all hope (story 4), just as love bounces back in this song.

I think it's great lyrics! ABBA often had fine lyrics, written by Björn Ulvaeus who is very well-versed in languages. He speaks German too and I have seen a short interview with him in French. Maybe he doesn't know French very well, just some phrases, but that's more than most (except Frenchmen). ABBA's lyrics often tell little stories, like in "Dancing Queen", "Fernando", "Chiquitita", "Thank You for the Music", "Happy New Year" and others. And "The Winner Takes It All" is so obvious storytelling that I shouldn't have to mention it.

That you can interpret this latest song on so many levels - anti-lockdown, a love story, ABBA's story, about the ABBA-tars - makes it transcend simple pop. It helps enormously that the song itself is catchy and happy with a tint of sadness. It prompts you to shake your legs and arms and dance, forgetting all your worries. Without a song and a dance, what are we, as someone queried.

On the net you read about people who have had "Don't shut me down" on repeat for days at end. I have myself heard it at least 20-30 times. It only took a couple of days for people to start doing their own re-mixes and covers. A particularly fine one is by young Emilia of Sweden here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdCsMIRsyrg> The ABBA comeback has released a deluge of emotions and joy. Spotify reports several hundred percent increase in downloading of ABBA's old albums and songs, also among younger people who weren't even born when ABBA decided to have their long, loud silence.

Among the old songs, a probably not too much remembered gem, we have "The Visitors". Unexpectedly it is a song against the oppression of Soviet communism. It's about people living in fear of late night knocks on the door by unwelcome "visitors", ie KGB. Be a visitor to

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_xFpjlF38 It's a rather "un-ABBA" sound production with Frida showing total singing mastership. It's worth a click and in itself says how much the world has changed in 40 years. ABBA was popular in the USSR back in the days, though perhaps not "The Visitors". Did you know that since the Soviets couldn't pay ABBA in their non-transferable Roubles - they paid in oil! <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/money-how-abba-actually-came-paid-oil-david-wylie> https://www.rferl.org/a/The_Biggest_Western_Pop_Stars_Behind_The_Iron_Curtain/1986337.html

But an ABBA opposing communism wasn't perhaps what the 1970's left-wingers wanted. They were usually naively apologetic to all forms of communism. While being accused of being political idiots by the proggers, I'd say say ABBA rather showed themselves to be both masters of their craft and smarter than those herring stranglers.

The reviews and comments I see on their comeback are dominantly somewhere between ABBA back is pretty nice to "OMG squared - I can't believe it!" Some compare them to angels descending from outer space to rescue mankind from a 2020-21 that has been a rotten hellhole...

I wouldn't go that far, but it seems they can fly.

HISTORY CORNER

Time for more sf & fandom history from the Royal Library's newspaper vault. Some of you can read the original text of the clips, but for the rest I'll translate and summarise.

I have covered early Swedish sf cons a lot. But here's a little story I missed, in Svenska Dagbladet August 23, promoting Stockon 1957, "A Whiff of the Universe in the Afternoon Rush":

Just before 5 pm there was a knock on the door to the Marg column editors. In came a 16-year old youngster who presented himself as the publisher of the magazine "Super" /slang also for drinking booze!/. We bounced a bit but it showed that the title had nothing to do with anything of interest for teetotallers, but dealt with sf. "There's an sf convention starting tomorrow on the Gondolen restaurant", he said. "It continues Saturday with a speech by author Sture Lönnerstrand in a venue on S:t Erik Street. Organiser is the club Future /corr:

Futura!, which publishes the magazine *Star Stuff SF Fancies*. /Sic! "It sounds American. Don't you use Swedish?" "Yes, partly." We asked about the activities of the club and were told it includes studies of space travel technology and literature on that. They haven't yet signed up for any moon trip, but an aeroplane will be brought in time for next convention. Harry Martinson is of course discussed, and also something called *Sverifandom*. "Sverifandom is declining in Sweden", the young editor-in-chief of "Super" explained and quickly left the office without us becoming wiser regarding sf or what this "Sverifandom" is.

"Sverifandom" is just Swedish fandom (from "SVERIGE"=Sweden). The young editor was Sture Hällström, who sadly passed away last year. His fanzine was one of the best of its time, and later merged with Roar Ringdahl's Norwegian "Fantasi" under the name Super-Fantasi.

When the sf mag *Häpna!* ("Be Astounded!") started in 1954 they promoted it with a number of small ads in major papers. This example from Dagens Nyheter November 5, 1954, concentrated on a strange titled story to arouse interest, "Captain Wyxtphll's Flying Saucer":

Kapten Wyxtphlls Flygande Tefat

heter den märkliga historien om rymdvarelserna Crysteels och Danstors första besök på jorden med ett flygande tefat. Dessa två hade av sin chef, den fyrrarmade och fyrbenta kapten Wyxtphll, fått i uppdrag att hämta ett exemplar av det underliga släkte som man antog bebodde planeten Terra. Efter många groteska misstag lyckades verkligen Crysteel och Danstor fullgöra sitt uppdrag... — en sensationell och andlöst spännande novell i science fiction-tidskriften HÄPNA:s novembernummer av den engelske vetenskapsmannen Arthur C. Clarke.

is the name of the strange story about the first visit to Earth by the space creatures Crysteel and Danstor with a flying saucer. These two had by their boss, the four armed and four legged Captain Wyxtphll been assigned the mission to bring back an example of the curious species they assumed lived on the planet Terra. After many grotesque mistakes Crysteel and Danstor really managed to fulfill their mission... - a sensational and breathtakingly exciting short story in the November issue of the sf magazine *Häpna!* By the English scientist Arthur C Clarke.

An alternative title for this story is "Trouble with the Natives" and if you're interested you can find

it here: <https://www.you-books.com/book/A-C-Clarke/Trouble-with-the-Natives>

From one of the Greats to another: Bobby Heinlein! I knew that he visited Scandinavia (he mentions it somewhere) and here's proof of one trip, "Little Interview with space writer who wants to reach the Moon", Dagens Nyheter July 26, 1955:

A space writer on a trip around the world is these days visiting Sweden. His name is Robert A Heinlein and is one of the most talked-about sf writers in the USA today. Robert Heinlein came to Stockholm together with his blonde wife Virginia after visiting 13 European countries.. He has then still four countries to visit in Europe before he returns to his house in the Rocky Mountains. Robert Heinlein uses half of the year to write and the rest of the time he travels. Last year he made a trip to South America, Africa, Asia and Australia and this year he goes through Europe. But Robert Heinlein dreams about far further journeys. I hope I may experience the day when a trip to the Moon is possible, I he confesses. In technical terms there's nothing to stop such a voyage today, but it'll cost a huge amount of "money". It'll be as expensive as the atomic bomb, Heinlein says, who however is convinced that Man one day will make interplanetary journeys. It is as necessary as it once was to go to the North Pole, he says. Robert Heinlein began as an engineer. During the war he was employed by the marine aviation and it was there he met his wife. It was a pure coincidence that I began to write, he says. I wrote a short story in 1939 and when it sold I just continued. The purpose was to get money for the house I have built near Colorado Springs in the Rocky Mountains. During the war I was fully occupied by my work as an engineer for the navy but since I left that job I have been writing full time. I have published around 20 books, Heinlein says, and two more are ready to go to print when I am back. My books have been translated to 13 languages, among them Japanese and Arabic. Robert Heinlein wo9nt say much about his writing. You must remember that a writer mainly writes to entertain, he says. He works in the "clown business" whether you want it or not. But that won't stop him from presenting his own philosophy of life. In the sf genre I'm more interested in people than machines, he says. I would rather call the genre "speculated fiction". But that doesn't stop me from trying to get all scientific details correct. Robert Heinlein is also an amateur astronomer and has a three inch telescope in his house. I built my house after I had grown tired of big city life and it is sited very isolated, he says. At night time bears may come into the garden. Robert Heinlein intends to

En fläkt av universum i eftermiddagsbrådskan

Strax före kl. 17 knackade det på dörren till marg-redaktionen. In trädde en 16-årig yngling, som presenterade sig som utgivare av tidningen "Super". Vi studsade lätt, men det visade sig att titeln inte anspeglade på något som nykterhetsrörelsen kunde intressera sig för, utan på science fiction.

— En science fiction-kongress börjar i morgon på restaurang Gondolen, berättade han. Den fortsätter på lördag med ett tal av författaren Sture Lönnerstrand i en lokal vid S:t Eriksgränd. Arrangör är föreningen Future, som utger tidningen "Star Stuff Science Fiction Fancies".

— Det låter amerikanskt. Använder ni ingen svenska?

— Jo — delvis.

Vi frågade om föreningens verksamhet och fick veta att den omfattar studium av rymdfärdsteknik och litteratur om ämnet. Någon månfärd har man ännu inte antecknat sig för, men ett flygplan skall inköpas till nästa kongress. Harry Martinson diskuteras givetvis, och också något som heter "sverifandomen".

— Sverifandomen är i avtagande i Sverige, förklarade den unge chefredaktören för tidningen "Super" och lämnade snabbt redaktionen utan att vi lyckats bli klokare på vare sig science fiction eller vad som menas med "sverifandomen".

Liten intervju

med rymdskribent som En rymdskribent som vill till månen på jorden runt-resa

besöker i dagarna Sverige. Han heter Robert A. Heinlein och torde vara en av de mest uppmärksammade science fiction-författarna i USA i dag. Till Stockholm kom Robert Heinlein efter att tillsammans med sin blonda fru Virginia ha besökt 13 europeiska länder. Kvar i Europa har han sedan fyra länder att besöka innan han kan återvända till sin villa i Klippiga bergen.

Robert Heinlein använder halva året till att skriva och den övriga tiden reser han. Förra året gjorde han en resa till Sydamerika, Afrika, Asien och Australien och i år av-
verkar han Europa. Men Robert Heinlein drömmer om betydligt avlägsnare resrutter. Jag hoppas att jag får uppleva den dag då en resa till månen är möjlig, bekänner han. Tekniskt är det inget som hindrar att man företar en sådan resa i dag, men det kostar en oerhörd mängd "money". Det blir lika dyrt som en atom-



bomb, säger Heinlein, som dock är övertygad om att människan en dag kommer att göra interplanetariska resor. Det är lika nödvändigt som det var att komma till nordpolen en gång, säger han.

Robert Heinlein var från början ingenjör. Under kriget var an-
ställd vid marinflyget och där lärde han känna sin hustru. Det var en ren tillfällighet som gjorde att jag började skriva, berättar han. Jag skrev en novell 1939 och när jag fick den placerad fortsatte jag. Syftet var närmast att få pengar till det hus som jag byggt i närheten av Colorado Springs mitt i Klippiga bergen. Under kriget var jag helt upptagen av mitt arbete som ingenjör vid flottan men sedan jag lämnat min tjänst har jag helt ägnat mig åt att skriva. Ungefär 20 böcker har jag hittills gett ut, berättar Heinlein, och två nya är klara att tryckas när jag kommer tillbaka. Mina böcker har översatts till tretton språk, däribland japanska och arabiska.

Om sitt författarskap är Robert Heinlein mycket förtegen. Man får inte glömma att en författare i första hand skriver för att underhålla, säger han. Han jobbar inom "the clown business" vare sig han vill eller ej. Men det hindrar inte att han har möjlighet att servera sin egen livsfilosofi. I science fiction-genren är jag mer intresserad av människorna än maskinerna, berättar han. Jag skulle också hellre vilja kalla genren för "speculated fiction". Detta hindrar inte att jag anstränger mig mycket att få de vetenskapliga detaljerna korrekta.

Robert Heinlein är också amatör-astronom och har i sin villa ett teleskop på tre tum. Jag byggde mitt hus sedan jag tröttnat på storstadslivet och det ligger mycket isolerat, berättar han. Om nätterna brukar det komma björnar in i trädgården. I Sverige ämnar Robert Heinlein studera svensk heminredning. Det är nämligen ett annat av hans stora intressen, bekänner han.

study interior decoration in Sweden, since that is another of his interests, he confesses.

I haven't found any indication that Heinlein met Swedish fans on his visit. Sverifandom was young at the time and not very well organised, and probably didn't even know about the visit in advance. Maybe some tried to get in touch after reading this interview? It sounded like he would stay at least for a little while. Swedish interior decoration was BTW quite well-known at the time, even before IKEA.

I have earlier (especially in #96) covered the attempts to find a Swedish word for "science fiction", which was considered a bit awkward. A number of contests were announced in 1953 - the year sf became a big topic in the papers - but despite clever suggestions and announced winners, "science fiction" it remained. The two most enduring suggestions were "faktasi" launched by sf author Sture Lönnerstrand and "vetsaga" proposed by scholar Tord Hall.

The perhaps first contest was announced in Svenska Dagbladet August 27, 1953 (see #96). I don't know who won, but the enthusiasm among readers was limited. September 4th the paper had received just one entry, as noted in "World Literature":

was what we happened to call this stuff "science fiction" the other day, upon which the readership was invited to make suggestions for a Swedish name. A total of one suggestion has now arrived: it is the signature "Grewlin" who writes: As Swedish name I'd like to suggest fictective novels, as connected to detective novels. The name connects to the English original and in pronunciation to the Swedish one, as seen above. The popular name "decker" could get an equivalent in "discoverer". So far the letter. Marginalen doesn't think the name "fictective novel" really says much - all novels tend to be fictitious (except those based on a real story). More suggestions are welcome.

The translation needs comment. I tried to give the original suggestion "fictivromaner" a more English flavour with "fictective novels" (from "detective"). Detective novels are often called "deckare" in Swedish, which here became "deckers" in my translation attempt. Aftonbladet announced an sf naming competition later in several notices, with a major article November 28, 1953, "Good Swedish Name for Science Fiction":

Yesterday the radio audience sat with ears flicking of fear and listened to readings from books of the type called "science fiction". It was spaceships and robots and atomic magic. It was Robert Heinlein and AE Van Vogt and other greats of the genre. The informed average American who reads high-class novels and fine poetry, he also reads "science fiction". It is an accepted form of entertainment reading. It is expected to also arrive here - in reality a number of translations have already been made - and because of the expected invasion the the public was prepared through this radio program. The radio commentator Torsten Jungstedt showed the ways of horror literature from the 1800s by comparing "science fiction" with figures like Frankenstein, Dracula and Mr Hyde. He took some of the exciting properties in "science fiction", the blood thirst, destruction - the lust, but he couldn't

unveil the social commentary and the cultural discussion that also exists in a corner. Yes, he mentioned that Harry Martinson with his latest poetry collection - Cikada - had an sf story of 60 pages as poetry. That should quiet those who believes that the genre only is a danger for culture. But we must have something to call it. We won't avoid it in the long run. We can't talk about "science fiction" in the long run. Aftonbladet has decided to let the Swedish people compete about what "science fiction" shall be called in Swedish.

"Världslitteratur"

kallade vi visst den anglosaxiska företeelsen "science fiction" häromdagar, varvid läsekretsen samtidigt inbjöds att komma med förslag till svenskt namn på litteraturgenren i fråga. Summa ett förslag har nu inströmmat: det är signaturen "Grewlin", som skriver så här:

Som svensk benämning skulle jag vilja föreslå fiktivromaner, som en pendang till detektivromaner. Benämningen anknyter i betydelsen till den engelska förebilden och uttalsmässigt till den svenska föregångaren enl. ovan. Populärbenämningen "deckare" skulle kunna få sin motsvarighet i "upptäckare".

Så långt insändaren. Marginalen tycker förstås att benämningen "fiktivroman" egentligen inte säger så mycket — alla romaner plär väl vara fiktiva (utom de som kan öppnas med nyckel, kanske). Fler förslag emottas!

"Science" means science, especially natural science.

"Fiction" means something made up, especially novels and short stories. "Science fiction" thus means novels and stories inspired from the field of science, novels about technology's future. The radio program gave a number of examples from typical sf reading. More excerpts will come in Aftonbladet coming week in the Blinken column. That should give a clear picture of what this is all about. Send us a good name for "science fiction" in Swedish! Your own name should be included, of course, so we know where to send the prize - 50 crowns, 25 for second prize and third prize is books of science fiction type., Write to "Science fiction", Aftonbladet, on the envelope! Last date for the prize competition is December 10.

The eventual winner (see #96) was "teknodikt" (dikt=poem, made up) which didn't catch on.

Let's move on. Fanzines were mentioned now and then in the press (you have eg seen it about my VÄ/Fanytt/SFJ), and here's more, "Fine Fanzine", Expressen April 7, 1979:

Around 50 different fanzine/s/ are these days published in Sweden, ie publications with a few short stories, reviews, messages and opinions - all about science fiction. All major

Fina fanzine

I SVERIGE utges numera ett femtiotal olika fanzine, dvs skrifter med några noveller, recensioner, meddelanden och åsikter — allt om science fiction. Alla stora sf-författare har gjort sina första publiceringar i ett fanzine.

Fanzine är nästan alltid billiga, mellan 1:50 och 5 kr per nummer. Kvaliteten varierar kraftigt, från 60-sidiga offsettryckta tidskrifter till ensidiga spritduplicerade blad.

Ett av de senaste alstren i fanzinefloran heter Ziméria och utges av sf-föreningen vid Zimmermanska skolan i Västerås. För tre kronor får man 44 sidor med goda noveller, några recensioner, lästips samt en presentation av författaren Isaac Asimov. Med lite bättre layout och bilder har Ziméria utsikter att bli ett av landets bästa fanzine.

— Fred Stenbom

sf authors have first being published in a fanzines. Fanzine/s/ are almost always cheap, between 1:5 and 5 crowns per issue. The quality varies, from offset printed publications of 60 pages to spirit duplicated one-page sheets. One of the latest works in the fanzine flora is Ziméria which is published by the sf association of the Zimmerman school in Västerås.

For three crowns you get 44 pages with good short stories, some reviews, reading tips and a presentation of the writer Isaac Asimov. If it had a little better layout and pictures Ziméria could very well become one of the best fanzines in the country.

I was glad to discover this, which gives due credit to Michael Svensson, one of the three editors, together with Öjvind and Mikael Bernander, a Good Fan and co-owner of the SF Bookstore who unfortunately passed away in early March last year. (I don't know if it was from corona. He suffered from diabetes, but the time was a bit early for the epidemic.) Unfortunately, we also learn that Mikael Bernander also passed away last year, in September

from cancer, as reported in SFJ. Zimera was a very good, serious fanzine. One thing they did was "boxed pages", ie manually adjusted right margins, which takes a lot of work! Third editor Öjvind Bernander once took part in a "Writers of the Future" (scientology sponsored...) contest and appeared in this anthology: <https://www.writersofthefuture.com/the-anthology/anthology-volume-07-1991-winners/>

Another fine fan not with us any more is Lars-Olov Strandberg (1929-2018), active in fandom since the very first Swedish con, Luncon 1956, and Fan-GoH of the 2005 Worldcon in Glasgow. 2018. Here's an interview with him in the evening paper iDag, September 4, 1991. "A Quite Incredible Collector" (the odd colour shifts are for technical reasons from the Royal Library search system):

Ny AB-tävling:

Bra svenskt namn på science fiction!

Radiopubliken satt i går med öronen viftande av fasa och lyssnade till uppläsningar ur böcker av typen "science fiction". Det var rymdskepp och robotar och atomtrollerier. Det var Robert Heinlein och A. E. van Vogt och andra genrens storheter.

En bildad genomsnittssvenskan som i allvarliga stunder läser högklassiga romaner och god lyrik, han läser också "science fiction". Det är en accepterad form för lätt förströelseläsning. Den väntas också komma hit till landet — i själva verket har en del översättningar redan gjorts — och inför den väntade invasionen förbereds allmänheten genom radioprogrammet.

Radiokommentatorn Torsten Jungstedt ådagalade beläsenhet i skräcklitteratur från adertonhundradakallt genom att jämföra "science fiction" med figurer som Frankenstein, Dracula och mr Hyde. Han tog fram en del av de rafflande egenskaperna hos "science fiction", blodtörsten och förstörelse-lusten, men han fick inte fram den samhällskritik och den kulturdiskussion som också är med på ett hörn. Jo, han nämnde att Harry Martinson i sin sista diktsamling — Cikada — har en hel 60-sidig science-fiction-historia på vers. Det

bör väl tysta munnen på dem som tror att genren enbart är en kulturfara. Men vi måste ha något att kalla. Vi undgår den inte i längden. den för. "Science fiction" kommer inte att kunna användas i längden.

Aftonbladet har bestämt sig för att låta svenska folket tävla om vad "science fiction" skall heta på svenska. "Science" betyder vetenskap, särskilt naturvetenskap. "Fiction" betyder dikt, i synnerhet romaner och noveller. "Science fiction" betyder alltså romaner och noveller som fått uppslag från vetenskapens fält, romaner om teknikens framtid.

Radioprogrammet gav en del utdrag ur typisk science-fiction-läsning. Flera andra utdrag kommer Aftonbladet med under den närmaste veckan på Blinken. De bör ge en någorlunda klar bild av vad det rör sig om.

Skicka alltså in ett bra namn för "science fiction" på svenska! Ert eget namn skall också vara utsatt, förstås, så att vi vet vart vi skall adressera priset — 50 kronor första, 25 kronor andra, 10 tredjepriser som är böcker av science-fiction-typ. Skriv "Science fiction", Aftonbladet, utanpå kuvertet! Sista dagen för pristävlingen är den 10 december.

With gene-editing technology scientists want to bring back the mammoth. The idea of reviving a long-dead prehistoric animal came from the ABBA reunion.

Lars-Olov attended the first Swedish sf convention in Lund 1956. Since then he has had time to attend almost all that have been arranged in this country, plus many foreign. Talk about record interest! ... You can collect anything - from books and stamps to advert pens and porcelain gnomes. But is there anyone else than Lars-Olov who collects sf conventions? He went to the first one in Lund 35 years ago. There have been a few hundred since then. "But I really don't know exactly how many," he says. Every year a couple of thousand sf cons (short for congress /no, convention/) are arranged in the world. /Not that many, eh?/ Some are big with thousands of attendees, the majority are small, with less than 100. On a con fans, authors, publishers and others meet to discuss, trade books, watch films, exhibitions etc. Cons began in 1939 /no, 1937, Leeds/ but the first one in Sweden didn't arrive until 1956, Luncon in Lund. And Lars-Olov was there. "At that time a con was almost the only chance to meet a kindred spirit. Sf was frowned upon, and it was nothing you could speak with your work mates about. Today the genre is respected in a quite different way," he says. /Frequent Guest/ Luncon was followed by more Swedish cons and Lars-Olov set as a target to attend them all! "I haven't managed exactly all. I have missed a few for purely practical reasons. But on the other hand I have managed some foreign ones, so it evens out," he says with a laugh. Through attending cons he has made friends all over the world, of all ages. In Sweden he is an institution: a con without Lars-Olov isn't a real con. "Those who attended in the 1950's doesn't come now. /Eh, there was 3-4 in the early 90's: Lundwall, Stenfors, Palm.../ But there are some 1960ers who still hang around. We are now in a generation shift, noticeable by that the attendance is a bit lower than

Lars-Olov Strandberg var med på den första svenska science fiction-kongressen i Lund 1956. Sedan dess har han hunnit besöka nästan alla som arrangerats här i landet, plus många utländska. Tala om rekordintresse! BILD: LEIF GUSTAFSSON



En helt otrolig samlare

Man kan samla på allt - från böcker och frimärken till reklam pennor och porslins-tomtar.

Men finns det någon mer än Lars-Olov Strandberg som samlar på science fiction-kongresser?

Den första besökte han i Lund för 35 år sedan. Det har blivit några hundra sedan dess.

— Fast exakt hur många vet jag faktiskt inte, säger han.

Av JOHAN WOPENKA

Varje år arrangeras ett par tusen sf-cons (förkortning för congress) runt om i världen. Några är stora med tusentals deltagare, men den absolut majoriteten är små, med mindre än 100 besökare. På en con träffas fans, författare, förläggare och andra för att diskutera, handla med böcker, se på filmer, utställningar etc.

Cons började arrangeras 1939, men den första i Sverige kom inte förrän 1956, Luncon i Lund. Och där var Lars-Olov Strandberg med.

— På den tiden var en con nästan den enda möjlighet man hade att träffa andra sf-intresserade. Sf ansågs inte fint, och det var inget man kunde tala med arbetskamraterna om. I dag är

genren respekterad på ett helt annat sätt, säger han.

Flitig gäst

Luncon följdes av flera svenska cons, och Lars-Olov satte som mål att besöka dem alla!

— Riktigt har jag inte lyckats. Några enstaka har jag missat av rent praktiska skäl. Fast å andra sidan har jag hunnit med en hel del utländska, så det jänmar väl ut sig, säger han med ett skrull.

Genom sitt con-deltagande har han skaffat sig vänner över hela världen och i alla åldrar. I Sverige är han näst intill en institution: En con utan Lars-Olov är bara ingen riktig con.

— De som besökte cons på 50-talet dyker inte upp nu. Men det finns en del "60-talare" som fortfarande hänger med. Just nu är vi inne i ett generationsskifte, det märks på att deltagarantalet är något mindre än normalt, förklarar han.

Stjäl tid

Allt resande kostar naturligtvis en del, men det bekymrar inte Lars-Olov.

— Nej, någon hobby måste man få lägga ner lite tid och pengar på. Och det här har gett mig oerhört mycket, inte minst kontakt med en mängd trevliga människor och en bakgrund till all sf jag läser. Finns det någon riskdel med allt con-deltagande så är det att jag inte hinner läsa så mycket som jag vill...

normal," he explains. /Steals

Time/ Travelling around of course costs a bit, but it doesn't worry Lars-Olov. "You must be allowed a hobby to spend time and money on. And this has given me very much, not the least contacts with many nice people and a background to all sf that I read. If there are any drawbacks with all con-going it is that I don't have time to read all I want.

I have corrected the article's "Lars-Olov" to Lars-Olov. He did so much for fandom, was secretary (often) for the cons or club boards, wrote the minutes, kept track of everything, always had a camera on his belly documenting cons and meetings through many thousands of photos, then showed on the Lars-Olov Slide Show on every con!

Finally, stepping back a to libertine times and the history of sex, a little story from Expressen November 18, 1957, "Pretty French Venus Beats Swedish Bathing" (film stills and poster below):

Frenchmen now don't have to look for Swedish films to enjoy nude bathing on the silver screen. Their domestic production has taken up the competition, lately through a funny sf parody, "Un amour de poche" - that could perhaps be "Your Beloved in the Pocket". It is the shooting star Agnes Laurent, who there pops up in the waves "in natura" to embrace her beloved professor Nordmann, somewhat clumsily portrayed by Jean Marais. The reason is simple and can be explained. The professor is working towards a Nobel Prize and have produced a method to deep freeze living beings, who only need to be exposed to salt water to regain their original form. So what is simpler than to take

Söt fransk Venus slår ut svenskbad

Av SVANTE LOFGREN

PARIS (Expressen). Nu behöver fransmännen inte leta upp svenska filmer för att få njuta av nakenbad på den vita duken.

Den inhemska produktionen har tagit upp konkurrensen, senast genom en skojig Science fiction-parodi, "Un amour de poche" — som på svenska skulle kunna bli "Sin älskade i fickan".

Det är nya stjärnskottet Agnès Laurent, som där dyker upp ur vågorna in natura för att omfamna sin älskade professor Nordmann, en aning valhant framställd av Jean Marais.

Orsaken är enkel och kan förklaras: professorn jobbar på ett Nobelpris och har lyckats framställa en metod att djupfrys levande varelser, som bara behöver lösas i saltvatten för att återfå sin ursprungliga gestalt.

Vad enklare då än att han tar sitt söta laboratoriebädd, "frysar ned" henne till en liten statyett, som han stoppar i fickan undan fästmon-ragatans blickar, och far ut till kusten för ett trivsamt litet bad.

Metoden kan rekommenderas helt, filmen kanske bara delvis — om det inte vore för det friska, fräscha filmfyndet, med det även i Sverige uttalbara förnamnet.



his sweet laboratory assistant, "freeze her" down to a little statuette, which he puts in his pocket out of the view of his fiancée-bitch and go to the coast for a nice little swim. The method can be fully recommended, but the film only partly - if it wasn't for the fresh movie find, with the first name than can be pronounced also in Sweden.



Shower scene.



Scene from the film.

Mailing Comments

First EAPA and then N'APA - but Mr Thiel is in both, so those are merged. But first: A number of outsiders get Intermission, so I'd like to lure you into joining an APA! More members are welcome and needed. The fanzine world is struggling in this electronic era and more zines would be fantastic. PDFs is the "natural" format and they are easy to do, usually by just selecting "save as PDF" in your word processor. Fanzines used to be the backbone of fandom, so do your fannish duty. Roscoe demands!

Garth Spencer: I understand you had only the ToC and OO in the mailing due to moving house. OK.

William McCabe: Interesting to hear about that exhibition on your old school, and see a picture young William! I remember my early school days. I began 1st grade at age six. Usually you begin at seven here but I was born just a few days into January. B just a few days "underage" they made a test and I was allowed to start in school. (I could already read, something I have taught myself to be able to follow the TV programs. As mentioned before, there several shows I liked, "My Favourite Martian", "Space Patrol", "The Flintstones", "The Addams Family", "The Saint".) I was probably the last generation who went to school on Saturdays, though there was only three hours of school then. People also worked Saturdays at the time. It changed shortly thereafter and Saturdays became free. Folks today probably think it's strange working on Saturdays... In first grade my school house was the old municipality building of the now Stockholm suburb Hässelby (I believe it is now a Hässelby Museum), which until it in 1949 was incorporated into Stockholm was it's own independent "köping" (a term which seems should be translated into "market town") with its own administration. When I was in 4th grade I remember that a film team came to our school to record the school scenes of a major adventure series for TV, "Crows Gold", which was very exiting. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kr%C3%A5kguldet> says it has been shown in Britain too by BBC, as "Gold on Crow Mountain". The theme song of the series is here, in both English and Swedish: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vvS3kBSVUk> My general views about education is that it must concentrate more on results and knowledge, and less on messing around. It doesn't have to mean mean more "discipline", but you must try to connect to a kid's natural curiosity and urge to find out. / So you were in an APA for a long time that was finally down to three members... I hope we can do something about EAPA before that happens! Doing fanzines is such an overlooked fandom activity these days. Get away from games and junk, and *write!* Learn to express yourself in words! Doing fanzines is an excellent school for that. You did the Brum group web for 20 years! Impressive! / Several of the players of the Swedish women's national football team are now in the English top league. The Swedish league is quite good, but the big countries have more money so our top players get signed for foreign clubs. An excellent player rumoured to be interested in the English league is Stina Blackstenius. Five goals in the Olympics, a girl to keep an eye on! (Women's soccer is slowly getting more money, of course not even close to the men's game. Still, women in the top leagues are full-time pros.) / When it comes to corona statistics I'm not too interested in claimed number of infections. Such numbers are very, very fuzzy, as they depend on a) how much you test, b) incentives for those feeling or not feeling symptoms to test and which groups you reach, c) reliability of tests (quick tests have low reliability), d) and efficiency of statistics handling in each country. Death figures are much more reliable! You are either dead or alive and that's easy to figure out and report. There *are* however doubts about causes of death. Many die with and not from the virus. So called "excessive death" figures are more reliable, and Swedish ones indicate that only ca 40% of reported corona deaths are from the virus. 60% are deaths *with but not from* the virus. The death definition is simply to "generous", just having had the virus 28 days previously even if you died from falling off a ladder...

Henry Grynsten: No, I don't think languages have been static in complexity for thousands of years. Hundreds of years ago Swedish for instance had two types of objects (like German still has) and four genders, now merged into two. During my first school years they still tried to convince us that we had four genders (called neuter, reale, feminine, masculine). In reality, the last three had since long merged into what

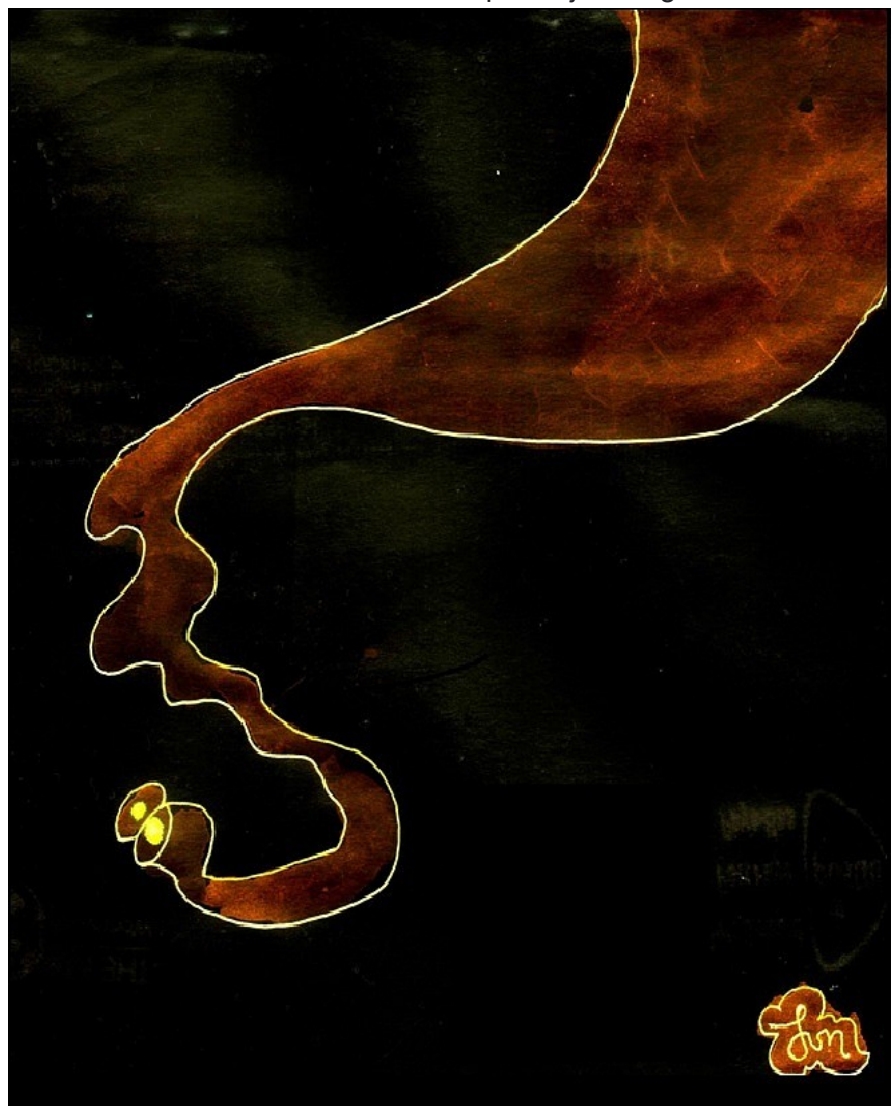
we now call utrum. The grammar of eg Latin, a very old language, is much more complex than most modern European languages, and it seems that grammatical complexity is grinded down by time and the more spread and used a language is, probably out of necessity. The more you need to use something, the more need for shortcuts, which means stripping down the grammar. Vocabulary of course becomes more complex, but not grammar! / I don't know if anthropologists are sure that Neanderthals mourned their dead, but *if* they did I would see that as a sign of consciousness. / Sorry, I'm not with you when it comes to coffee. It may have negative effects if drunk to a more extreme excess, but normal usage is probably harmless. There's always talk about that and that food or substance being poisonous or harmful, but remember the golden rule in toxicology: the poison is in the dose! Everything is a poison, it just depends on how much you take. Even water is poison. There has been cases of water poisoning on rave parties by people under influence of drugs - but it was water, not drugs, that did them in. So many herbs and plants in nature contains caffeine that it should be strange if we haven't through evolution developed a certain tolerance for it. The big drawback with coffee however is that it can interfere with your sleep for many hours afterwards. And if anything, not getting enough sleep is a bad thing, for both your body and mind. An article I read says your immune system goes into overdrive while you sleep, a thing to remember in virus times! Sleep helps curing corona. Worth informing foreigner reading this is that Swedes are among the biggest coffee consumers in the world, being at or near the top in coffee drinking statistics. A national trait is the concept of having coffee breaks now and then throughout the working day, which is called "having fika". Offices of course have their "fika rooms". The word "fika" is what is called "back slang", the syllable in "kafi" - coffee, or kaffe - just switched. Fika as a word is on it's way to become as famous as smörgåsbord...

John Thiel: Sorry, there was no picture of me and that other guy (speaking of punks...). You're having a mix-up with pictures of my cousins. / You don't have recordings of your compositions? To bad. If you should find a cassette or so I'm sure someone could help you to transfer it to files. That it's jazz sounds interesting. I used to listen a lot to Swedish radio's jazz program "Smoke rings" a lot. / Strange poetry: *Bap-Dep-Gip-Pop / Excuse me, which way to the sea? / Dap-Ge - - Madam, does this puppy belong to you?* My buddy Comet John Benzene may like it... I like poetry and interested in sf related poetry - *Intermission* has eg written a lot about "Aniara" by Harry Martinson. One of my friends in fandom was the fine Swedish sf poet Kjell Borgström and I sometimes write poetry myself, eg in the form of filksong texts. But use a better, more readable typeface for the poems! / From what I know, sf fans have always been interested in all kind of things, like science, philosophy, space and such.

Jefferson P Swycaffer: On masks: A) Big studies have shown infection differences (mask Vs no mask) smaller than the margin of error. B) And the reasons may be (1) that masks may also cause infections - by touching the mask and then your eyes, nose etc - and (2) when wearing a mask you take distancing less seriously. I suspect that authorities insisting on masks more want it for the psychology and symbolism of it, to have people going around wearing something to constantly remind them about corona. / I think sf was better in the older days! The Swedish idiom for what today's authors do is "word shitting" ("ordbajseri"). Novels today are 6-700 pages, a waste of space, words, paper and the reader's time. Writers have no discipline today, can't cut, and are too much in love with their own pretentious prose. Before word processors came, novels were 200-250 pages, writers were "to the point". Less is more!

Will Mayo: Sorry, no comments.

George Phillies: About the missing MP of the Swedish parliament: the party groupings, expected "passive support" - abstaining helps a government, ie passive support - and such have shifted so that the runaway parliamentarian is irrelevant and



How the Virus sneaks into your body? Lars "LON" Olsson speculates.

not needed in the vote mathematics right now. As I write the social democrats have just nominated finance minister Magdalena Andersson as new party leader, and thus probable new PM. It's less than a year to next election and no one wants to rock the boat. The government still has a weak position. / About UFOs, that 5% may be unexplained doesn't mean it's *inexplicable*! The explanation just can't be pinpointed out of several possibilities. We don't have enough info to know exactly what. It's highly unlikely that there are LGM (Little Green Men) from Galaxy 666 visiting us. One argument for this is that as our SETI search has constantly been expanding, with better and more sensitive radio telescope, on more channels, using better computer analyses, etc and we *still* haven't found any aliens! The more we listen, without any results, the higher the odds for LGM. On the other hand, If we'd find traces of earlier micro life on Mars, the odds would shorten, of course.

Samuel Lubell: "Cases" of corona infections is a *lousy* criterion! It depends on rate of testing and incentives for different groups to test. Testing more gives you more "cases". Were you test, who, how you reach out, and other social factors will affect "case" numbers. The *best* measurement is "excess deaths", and the *second best* is number of deaths, but that has uncertainty in the form of varying definitions of cause of death. In Sweden for instance it's too "generous", like if you die in a car crash but had the virus 28 days earlier. Excess deaths will catch infection tallies independent of too wide definitions. Analysis of Sweden's excess deaths indicate that deceased from the virus are about *just 40% of the official figures*. Virus deaths statistics globally are probably very, very uncertain numbers. There are reasons to assume many are deaths *with but not from* corona. We must wait until the epidemic is over and apply some very careful statistical analysis before conclusions can be drawn. About masks, see my comment to JP Swycaffer. / About the Hugos: what I don't particularly favour is having ballots and awards decided by ideological/political campaigning, which is what we have seen for the Hugos for years. I think everyone is aware of that the Hugos have become a ideological/political battleground, which lowers its status. Who wants to "win" an award on the basis of writing from the "correct" political opinions, instead of being a good writer? / I disagree with the claim that the sf "industry" in the past "blocked" female writers. It has never been that way. I've read tons of genre history and never found any examples of such "blocking". The simple fact is that female writers have tended to be much, *much less interested in writing science fiction*! That's reflected in the fact that women have always been much less interested in reading the stuff. The proportion of sf published by female writers in the past is in all likelihood close to *equal* to the proportion of manuscripts received, and that means no "blocking". / Eric Flint has written a number of alternate history novels involving the Thirty Years War in Europe in the 1600's, with the Swedes (we were heavily involved) and king Gustavus Adolphus playing a big part. But I have yet to read them... Too much else to read!

-Your Faithful Ed, Ahrvid E

Since there's space left, some pictures of interest...



Australian police out of control, pepper spraying lockdown protesters.



Four brave, strong Aussie officers handle the "crime" of being maskless.

