

INTERMISSION #115

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA & other suffering victims. Follow @SFJournalen sf/f/h&fandom newstweets. Bewäre öf typös, they are pricks! Late Nov'21

Editorially: Con, Sam, ABBA, 7 hour PM, Vikings & ESC in America...

This will have a broader mix than some recent issues. Of course I'll do some sf/fandom history, as well as showing proof of Vikings in America exactly 1000 years ago, we'll spend an evening with our local Mr SF, Sam J Lundwall, and a weekend on one of the few physical sf cons held this dystopian 2021. I'll toss in winners of the latest short story contest (because I'm behind it, so who'll stop me!) and we'll rejoice at the news that Notre Americanos will now also have Ze Giant Song Contest. That'll be a version of the thing were four Swedish youngsters achieved a bit of success in 1974. You may have heard that those kids now are 70+ and made a comeback after 40 years. We'll look into that and ABBA's new album *Voyage*. Last some APA Mailing Comments, which you may ignore if you're not a member. But you should become a member! *The world needs more fanzines!* Obey, please...

At the time of writing (late November) we've had the most spectacular spectacle in the Swedish parliament. We got a new Prime Minister who *resigned after 7 hours!* The old PM Stefan Löfven of the Social Democrats earlier announced he'd resign. His finance minister Magdalena Andersson was elected as his successor as party chairman. She was then voted through by parliament (the Riksdag) as prime minister...but resigned just seven hours later!

What happened was that while Mrs Andersson had just enough support to get the keys to the Sager House (PM's official residence), her weak coalition didn't have support for the national budget. An opposition of the Moderates, Christian Democrats and the controversial Sweden Democrats got their budget voted through. At this point the Green Party said "We won't stay under such a budget!" and left the coalition. Anderson had to resign for constitutional reasons: a PM is expected to resign if a coalition breaks down. But as expected a few days later, she came back, voted through by the Riksdag again, now for a one-party government from the Soc Dems. You see, she still had "passive support" from her former partners, the Greens. But one wonder if they couldn't handle this a bit



Our new Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson. Magdalena Andersson.

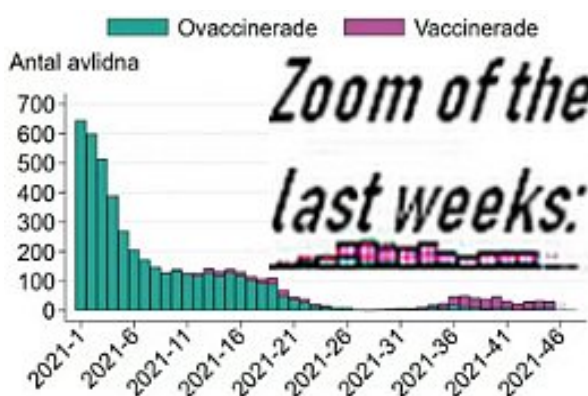
better than to play Musical Chairs with the PM office? Magdalena Andersson BTW has a masters degree in economics, seven years experience on the tough job as finance minister and can probably fill the PM chair. But as her government has weak parliamentary support life won't be easy for her!

But I guess this doesn't interest you half as much as *Virus News!* The world is going bonkers again from a new virus variant called Omicron, fittingly an anagram of *moronic*... Many borders close again, politicians hold solemn speeches, and some countries introduce new lockdowns, mandatory vaccination and similar *inefficient* methods, as statistics show - tough measures leave hardly a trace (eg Sweden who skipped

most of that circus has curves near bottom!). And this new scare is for a virus that seems to be very mild! <https://fortune.com/2021/11/29/omicron-covid-symptoms-new-variant-mild-cases-health-experts-early-information/> The vaccine works fine against Omicron too. *Moronic!*

Meanwhile millions of ordinary folks all over the world protest lockdowns and forced government injectables. It's mostly *unreported* by ordinary media, but search "covid protests" on eg Youtube and you'll see. Our own government restricts 100+ meetings from 1 Dec to the vaccinated, for no good reason (but no mask or vaccine mandates, wisely). Corona will probably end by 2029...

Listen! Get the shot! The vaccines are fine. But we must insist that they are *voluntary!* --Ahrvid E



Virus deaths, Sweden's Public Health Agency, 2 Dec. Very low curve, even dropping!

Fantastika/Swecon 2020-21

Since a Certain Bug from outer space or wherever stopped last year's national Swedish con, the year 2020 was added to the 2021 Swecon, also named Fantastika. It took place in Dieselverkstan, Stockholm, November 19-21 with GoHs Peadar Ó Guilin (Ireland), Adrian Tchaikovsky (UK), Eva Holmquist (local writer) and Maria Nilsson (local scholar), <https://fantastika2020.com/in-english/>. We were lucky! Despite having Europe's lowest virus curves - and dropping - our ever so wise government announced a cap of 100 for meetings from December 1. Just over a week later, and Fantastika with close to 300 attendees would have been impossible!



FANTASTIKA/SWECON HAS STARTED. 400 reg, but as some may not come prob 300+ here, from Nordic countries, Germany, UK. Climate Panel noted James Blish 1968 story about today's climate debate. Hear my sf/fandom history talk, on finds in Royal Lib newspaper archive. 7pm (that is now)

Despite that the con's WiFi - the culture centre site's "guest" one - wouldn't work for me and many



From sf/fandom history found in the Royal Library archive

Screenshot from SFJ ed's talk on sf&fandom history found in Royal Library newspaper archive. Here several (failed) competitions on finding a Swedish term for "science fiction", like *teknovision*, *teknodikt*, *vetsaga*, *faktasi*, *vetenlek*... In the corner your ed talking about it.

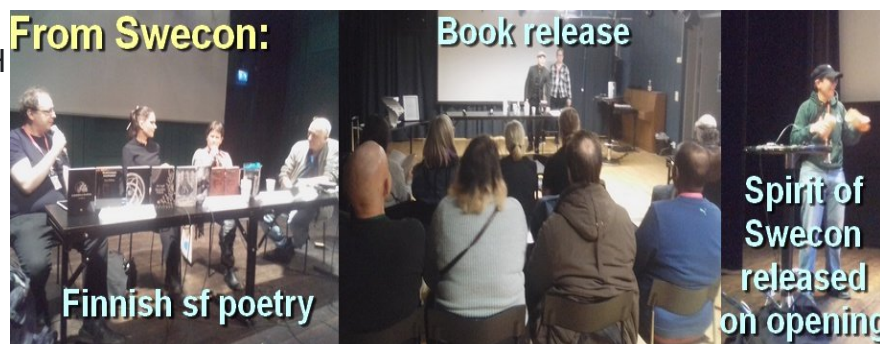
others, I managed to post about a dozen tweets reporting from the con, which I'll run together with this report (with my original tweet texts as captions). It'll look very compact since Twitter only allows 240 characters, and I tried to squeeze in 2-3 news items in each. See the tweets and their pictures beside this conrep.

The corona situation wasn't prominently present. Some bottles of hand sanitiser were placed around and I saw perhaps half a dozen facemasks. No one seemed to worry much about the blasted virus, but there was of course a pandemy panel, among the ca 70 program items in three tracks that the con had. Nearly half the program was in English.

A few samples: climate fiction, Finnish SF poetry, enhancing humans for space (I counted 100 in the audience for that), Danish horror fiction, 5 minute

author readings, Vikings (of course!), humour in sf (when the audience was invited to give tips, I put forth Bob Shaw, especially his Serious Scientific Talks!), auction (prices varied widely - I managed to snatch a small bundle of magazines for a decent SEK40, ca €40), and of course GoH interviews and signings, which I missed - b I went to the more intimate Coffee Klatsches. There were 25+ foreign fen attending - not bad in pandemic times - from the Nordic countries, the UK, Germany and US. Latest TAFF winner Mike Lowrey had planned to come, but everything has become so complicated with this corona thingy so he had to cancel it, with regrets he said. Let's hope for a TAFF delegate to the coming Eurocon instead. The Finnish delegation of 16 was the biggest, including half a dozen from the newly founded sf club on the Åland Islands.

No major scandals erupted, but two fen fainted during the "Medical Trauma in Historical Fiction"



Few tweets since SWECON WIFI STINKS! Anyway, y'day: eg Finnish sf poetry panel. book release AB Persson's *Annorstädes*; today: Swe Space Opera, "Spirit of Swecon" released from its bottle during opening ceremony. (Hope Wifi gets better!)

item - from it's gory slides, which caused a blood pressure drop for them. (I learned both recovered.)

More program items: a interesting lecture on 17th century explorer Nils Mattson Kiöping by Martin Rundkvist (somewhat of a Swedish Münchhausen), Peadar Ó Guilín's lively stories of Irish mythology, John-Henri Holmberg defending John W Campbell unfairly trashed on the Irish Worldcon, panel on unisex worlds in skiffy, talk on medieval technology, AI...

This thing with Campbell is of some interest. On the Hugo ceremony at the Irish Worldcon 2019 he was condemned as "a bloody fascist" from the podium by the attention-seeking Jeanette Ng. That



Coffee Klatsch with ADRIAN TCHAIKOVSKY in local library's sf/f corner. Panel on ENHANCING HUMANS FOR FUTURE SPACE TRIPS. (Spacex, take notice!) 100 in the audience! Rumours: VÅSTERÅS DOES SWECON 2022 BID (and not to be combined with Uppsala Eurocon 2023).

was a mean stunt, to put it mildly, loosely based on that Campbell was an elderly technocrat which some fanatics hate, generally just having the opinions that were the mainstream of his times. An that vile attack was also against the con's own "Code of Conduct" (a highly questionable document). But did they give a damn? No. So called CoCs are biased missiles aimed at some with the "wrong" opinions. Hypocritical CoCs must be scrapped. We only need to follow the law of the land, including its protection

for freedom of speech - nothing else. CoCs come from the type of ignorant mob who don't know history and want to tear down statues of the "fascist" Winston Churchill. Anyway, JHH noted that Campbell didn't hate blacks, didn't discriminate

against women or against minorities etc. Digging for a word here another one there, out of context, is no excuse for cancellation and vile attacks.. In Campbells case we should note he was known to use ideas as test balloons to get reactions. I myself covered it in Locus (#705, Oct 2019), which you find in this tweet: <https://twitter.com/sfjournalen/status/1182996873050755072>

Moving on. I myself presented historical sf and fandom newspaper clips from the Royal Library (earlier covered in *Intermission*). Nordic readers may note that if you want to, you can ask me for my lecture PDF, with the illustrations and text summaries. (Sorry, not in English, but the same material has been before in this zine.)

The con had book rooms, a nearby (expensive) bar, an art show with illos to space opera by Oskar Källner and Karl Johansson, a

Note to Nordic Readers:

Beställ gärna min PDF från sf/fandom-historieföreläsningen på Fantastika. En PDF på ca 5MB, med tidningsklipp och beskrivningar. Kontakta...

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Coffee with GoH PEADAR O GUILIN telling stories from Irish mythology - interesting! SFJ talked with filmmaker Micke Engström on his coming SEMITJOV DOCUMENTARY. Eugen's space comic Allan Kämpe/Strong to be re-issued in Sweden & https://harnby.com/Seriesida/SiFi/Allan_Kampe.htm

gopher hole, and of course a program booklet. The only snag was that the facility's WiFi worked very badly or for me not at all. The bheer price was a whopping 75 SEK, nearly €7! Is it the post-pandemic



SWECON 2022-23 TO BE KONFLIKT Uppsala Eurocon June'23, today's biz meet decided. Also: ALVAR AWARD for 2019 to M Lövfström & C Werner (tie), '20 to J Jörälv - '19 ESFS ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD to M Petersen & G Jonsson, '20 CHRYSTALIS AWARD to S Engström were also handed out.

inflation we see already? Politicians have been letting the electronic money printers run in all those pandemic support measures. I stayed alive on coffee, from my thermos and the Green Room. Maybe a bheer afterwards...

This is how the WiFi behaved strangely! At first attempt at connecting your computer's WiFi would find the guest net wireless connection - but nothing else. As you know, when opening the WiFi you'll usually find 5-10 WiFi networks because there are lots of them around. Here you found only one. Anyway, you then got a fill-in-for-guest-account form, which didn't work of course. I tried several times. There was always "wrong user name or password", though I had of course noted that info and know I entered it correctly. So you disconnected and tried again. After a couple of tries, the computer suddenly didn't find any WiFi at all! Well, lets try a re-boot to get back to at least the



Interesting by @mrundkvist on EXPLORER NILS MATTSSON KIÖPING, a Swedish Munchausen. <http://runeberg.org/authors/kiopinim.html> (RSN transl to Engl!) 2 congoers FAINTED ON PANEL OF MED TRAUMA IN SF. Medics came! (Think all went OK.) SALE NOW in the "Fantikvariat" on bound books, 10SEK



Nils Mattson Kiöping's TRAVELOGUE <https://apan.net.wstub.archive.org/details/arkivkopia.se-runeberg-treresor> Shana Worthen w 1st "good" Scandinavia map CARTA MARINA 1539 & early tech, mills, iron, clocks <http://sworthen.owlfish.com> HUMOUR PANEL. (But women weren't "banned"! Tired cliché. They were into other stuff.) SFJ tip: READ BOB SHAW!

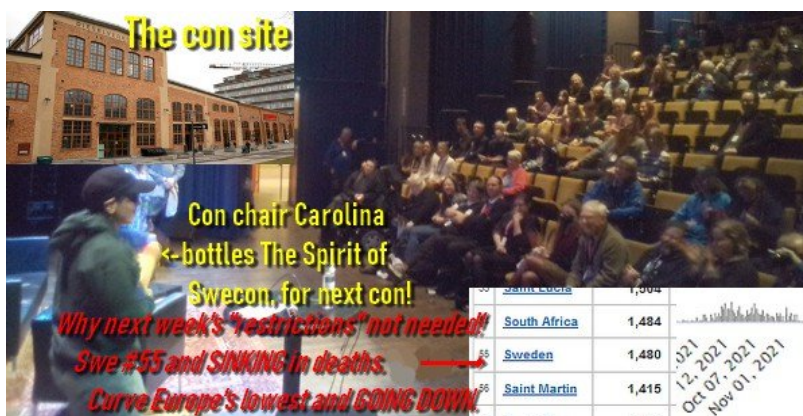
one WiFi there was. But upon re-booting, your computer's WiFi was suddenly gone... I went to the BIOS to check, and the box for the internal computer WiFi had become unchecked! This sequence repeated at least twice: 1) You only find one WiFi, 2) guest account reg won't work, 3) the guest WiFi disappears, 4) your computer's WiFi is turned off in the BIOS. Does anyone have any idea what this odd behaviour was all about? I had to access the net through my mobile phone account (which worked far from smooth, mainly because I'm not used to navigate all menu options for "tethering", as it's called). All this actually took me

several extra hours of work, but I still managed to follow at least 1/4 of the program items, or maybe more counting those I dashed in to hear the last half of...

But I of course followed the Swecon meeting, the business side of the con. Since there was no 2022 Swecon bid - maybe due to virus hesitations - the 2023 Uppsala Eurocon (<https://eurocon2023.wordpress.com/>) will be Swecon for both 2022 and 2023, it was decided on the formal Swecon session. (However two from this year's committee was appointed to be able to appoint another 2022 Swecon should anyone show serious interest.) The Alvar Award (for fan activities) 2019 was handed to Calle Werner and Marika Lövström (tie). And



John-Henri Holmberg DEFENDS JOHN W CAMPBELL. Big editor, just having common views of his time, no "Bloody fascist" - scandal Irsih Worldcon let that pass! See PROGRAM BOOK & BADGE. News: Fantasticon Copenhagen jun 24-26 '22. <http://VILDEUNIVERSER.DK> Århus 2 Nov '23. End tweets as con closes



SWECON CLOSING CEREMONY. Carolina bottled Spirit of Swecon for release on next con. Final tally 265 fen. BTW forgot hashtag #swecon2021 as post edged 240 chr. Goto @SFJournalen for our con postings! (Swecon would be illegal Dec1 from needless "restrictions" <https://worldometers.info>)

the votes for 2020 were counted, landing the beanie-light Alvar statuette in the arms of Jörgen Jörälv, known for eg his bibliography of the prozine *Jules Verne Magasinet*.

That award is named after the hyper active 1950's, early 1960's fan Alvar Appeltofft, who died much too early in 1976. It is run by the Alvar Appeltofft Foundation which inherited parts of their money from Alvar's parents (by now having a worth of over 1 million SEK, or € 100K+).

Overall a nice con, mostly about literature and not one of those gatherings where people play games and masquerade as superheroes in silly comic books costumes. I could perhaps have wished for a bit more about fandom itself, say more on fanzines or fandom's traditions and history (though I covered some in my speech). It was interesting that this Blasted Virus wasn't something we'd had to bother much about. I doubt we'd hear anything about someone being coronaised during the con, as 85%+ are now jabbed here and many of the rest have natural immunity.

It all ended late Sunday afternoon, when con chair Carolina Gomez Lagerlöf caught the Spirit of Swecon in the air and bottled it to be released on the next one. Let's hope our planet becomes a bit less dystopian, so we can have more of these things - before people forget that a real sf con isn't pixels on a screen...

An Evening With Sam J

Sam J Lundwall is Sweden's probably best known sciencefictionist, though he due to age hasn't been out much in the public in later years. But November 2 Stockholm fandom could enjoy a special evening with him, organised as a late 80th Birthday party (that day was really in February) or a slightly late release part for an anthology about Sam J, *Uppdrag Universum*, "Mission Universe" (which really came last spring).

According to the SF Bookstore's Maths Claesson who met up at the entrance to Cafe Källarbyn (31 Stora Nygatan in the Old Town, Stockholm) there were about 50 registered, but he thought some unregistered would arrive too so we probably became 50-60 there. The place was reasonably well-filled, just a one or two empty chairs here and there.

I arrived myself a little before 6 pm and joined a table with Tony & Jessica Elgenstierna, Tomas Cronholm (who I pressed for info on coming Swecon), Anders Hedenlund (Famous Fan from the

1970s). Among others I noted were Jörgen Jörälv who sat at a table and sold *Mission Universe*, people from SF-Bokhandeln, Anders Holmström (once known as the Man With Ties), Jonas Ellerström with company, Michael & Gunilla (who now work with part 3 of their horror book series, called Mauerfall), Jerry Määttä (alas, he informed me he'd continue to be behind with his fanzine research project, due to having other duties). The whole Lundwall family was also there, including wife Ingrid, Karin with children, her husband, the children's other grandmother. And then I probably missed some guys I should recognize. Years go by and people become less recognizable in gray beards and wrinkled skin. Imagine if we could all be 30 years younger, alert and sober ... no, not the last, for Roscoe's sake!

I went around and took a lot of pictures. I'm not - like Sam - a trained photographer, having had famous Christer Strömholm as teacher with trips to French chateaus and great wines on the side. Lacking that, have the tactics of taking lots of snaps, and hopefully just a few of them will be usable out of pure chance. There was strange lighting in these old underground vaults, with violet, sharp light from strong lamps placed near the floor, which the automatic adjustments of my mobile camera had problems with. The strange light tended to flow out in the picture and disturb it.

Maths walked around the old vaults, from 1742 (I learned) and threatened us with bubbly drinks so we could toast Sam J with. Mr Lundwall himself seemed quite alert, despite being 80 1/2 years old. In an inner room, a projector showed pictures of Sam and others - whose names I shouted out to the group watching. It's a tradition, we always did that for the Lars-Olov Strandberg slide shows. I especially remembered a picture of a very young Sam in a red-black cape in the early 1960s. I have read about that cape in some report from that time.

Shortly before seven, Maths gave us some brief welcome words. He told about how Sam J and his *Jules Verne Magasinet* was guilty of launching the young Claesson up into the skiffy skies, when he was confronted in the library with the cover of the magazine in the form of a cosmic egg (it should be #1/1972, the first issue after Askild & Känekull took over from Bertil Falk). Anders With the Ties then handed over a gift in the form of a bottle of Italian Grappa, but it was a little difficult to understand his talk about that bottle's more exact history and background. Anyway - sf demand these drinks! I remember Sam J himself exclaimed that when he invited me for some Grappa in his hotel room during the worldcon 1987.

Jonas Ellerström, publisher and base player in Blago Bung (see last *Intermission*) then took to the floor and told us about how *Mission Universe* came to be. Karin Lundwall, former book packer at Delta but now in the Bonniers publishing sphere, was the one who collected the different articles, over the topics: a daughter's memories from publisher upbringing, Delta's publishing, Sam J as musician, ditto as author, his ideas about utopias, some autobiographical notes, but perhaps most surprisingly - JH Holmberg about Sam as a fanzine publisher! JHH as Sam J's apocryphal "best friend in the whole world"? Well...

Then it was time for an interview with the main person of the evening, quite sloppily done by that person who...how to phrase it...is even sloppier in treating fan fund money and votes. The problem was lack of follow-up questions which meant all became very shallow and too short. And for some reason there were zero (0!) questions of things from after 1970.

Thus, we did not hear about how Sam came to the A&K publishing house, how JVM got started there and later Delta and Fakta & Fantasy, how he worked as a writer, how he became an early user



Sam J (left) chatting with Tomas Cronholm from Swecon and Lennart Uhlin from the SF Bookstore.

of word processors from the time when they used 8 inch floppies – nothing on all this! The only things from after 1970 was the fact that his publishing had scarce finances and that his wife had to reserve food money in an envelope, that Sam was ordered to keep his hands away from. Publishing was kept afloat by Sam translating like a little ferret. But nothing of this was new. We also did not hear the

background to any of Sam's novels or his daily routines as a writer, publisher and translator. That would have been interesting! When your SFJ ed interviews authors that's standard question is 1A. We got nothing about the start of Word SF, how Sam met Harry and Brian, how it organised his three 1970's cons at Hotel (S)Amaranten, the brawl with SFWA around the Gulf War - everything that came after 1970 was skipped.

This compares unfavourably to the famous, long interview in the SFJ early version *Vheckans Äfventyr* in 1979 (the name is a fannish variant of *Veckans Äfventyr*, alternative title for the 1940's *Jules Verne Magasinet*). Some of you may remember how we there really dug

deep in Sam's mind for his views on sf and the sf world, getting some very interesting results.

But now, however, some of what was discussed in this evening's interview, though Sam J Lundwall has done so incredibly much that a complete report would give us an acute info heart attack...

Some of his countless occupations: errand boy at LM Ericsson telecom company at the age of 14, later a company engineer ("started as a laboratory assistant to slowly work my way up to a draftsman, to an engineer with frequency equipment as a speciality and finally to a technical writer" he later stated - he fiddled with wire radio and experimented with high-current wire-radio transmission), photography school (also including some film education, more later on TV), author (lots of books and first genre Swede to get books out in English, via Wollheim on Ace later DAW), bibliographer and sf historian (books and articles, first sf history in Swedish 1969, later in English as *SF What's It All About*, etc.), translator (close to 4711 books in a quick estimate), magazine editor (eh... the "Jolly Venerable Margarine", and 4 protection issues of *Häpna!* published to tease his "best friend in the whole world", Mr Sedolin), fanzine publisher (eg *SF-Nytt*, at a time also done as a semiprozine), troubadour (appeared on the music barge Storken with Fred Åkerström, and both his LP *Songs In Our Time* and the EP *King Kong Blues* are worth hearing, the last made with the help of ABBA's Michael Tretow), organizer (World SF, (S)Amaranten cons, first Finnish con with King-Con in 1982).

He was also TV producer. This had an interesting and for me new background. At about 11 years old - it should be around 1952 - little Sam J wrote and got a short radio play on air! When TV2 was to start and they were looking for people, Sam wrote a job application. And it turned out that the person who back in the early 50's adopted his radio play had become some kind of boss on TV and thought "of course, we want this little boy!" (Google indicate it should have been one Lars Broberg who became TV2's entertainment director in 1968. The only conceivable person as he was also on the radio in the early 1950s, in the then school radio.)

Coming to Sveriges Radio, as TV was then called, Sam took a producer course and was included in the colour group, which would make programs for the colour TV introduction. Sam got a decent budget of 50,000 crowns, equivalent to just over half a million SEK today or € 50 000, and free hands



Sam J (middle) interviewed. Behind him Karin Lundwall, by the red lamp shade. (Notice that sharp, violet floor lamps...)

to do what he wanted with this. The little rascal decided to make a series of fact and fiction programs about ... science fiction, which went on the air in 1969. *Intermission* has reported a lot about this program series in earlier issues. A piece of news that emerged is that SVT seems to have kept much of the material in its archives. Among other things, Sam directed a made-for-TV movie "Jaktsäsong" ("Hunting Season") with several famous actors, and we should check the said archive for it. In the same vein, Sam tricked Sveriges Radio's publishing house into publishing his sf history, *SF - From the Beginning to Our Days* (later in the US published as *SF - What's It All About*, somewhat edited), a really good genre introduction, albeit it has of course today aged.

Filming was also part of the Fannish War, another topic that came up. For me as a fandom historian, nothing new came to light, and the story of how Sam J faked a nuclear bomb attack on military radio for Dénis Lindbohm wasn't brought up. For newcomers, it can be mentioned that The Fannish War was an imaginary war between Sam J, alias Lord Theo, dictator of Hyboria, and Dénis Lindbohm, a.k.a. The Autarch, ditto of The Autarchy. They pretended to be at war and exchanged letters, tape recordings, fanzine writings and even 8 mm short films about this for a few years in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Eventually, others formed their own fictional states and joined the war, including Ingvar Svensson, JH Holmberg, Acke Fröberg, Alvar Appeltofft. Sam described it as an sf version of Punch or The Onion with "night-black satire" - to quote a common phrase of Delta book blurs - over the Cold War.

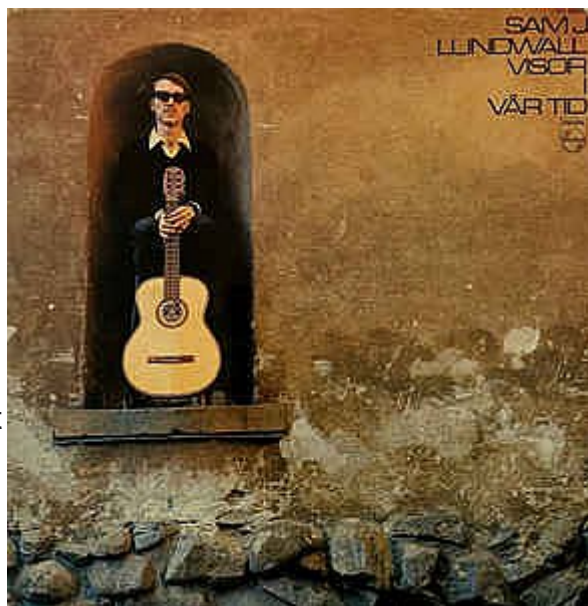
Another piece of news for me was the explanation why Sam stopped performing as a singer: he had stage fright! I have seen him on convention stages and such many times, and he has always seemed rather confident and everything. But fans are perhaps easier to stand... He said he as a singer felt a bit like Jacques Brel, "vomiting before and after". Nevertheless, it was at a gig in 1967 that he met his future wife Ingrid, and he has had his own Lundwall evening at the famous Storken music barge. Doing that meant you were in the top tier of those days!

We also heard about how it went when Sam and Harry (Harrison) were to collaborate on an SF novel. Harry had bought a farm in Cornwall, where Sam and his family spent many summers. Daughter Karin even got a place in the local village school. As an excuse to go there, they had the idea to write a book. It started in the mornings with Harry putting the bottle on the table, Sam said. And for lunch we drove around to all the pubs, he continued. (Well, I think England had a 0.8 parts/million limit so there was a certain margin.) Happy in the hat, they then picked up Karin at school. This meant not much was written, only about 1/3 of the novel. "We can drink without a book", the authors finally realised and the book project died.

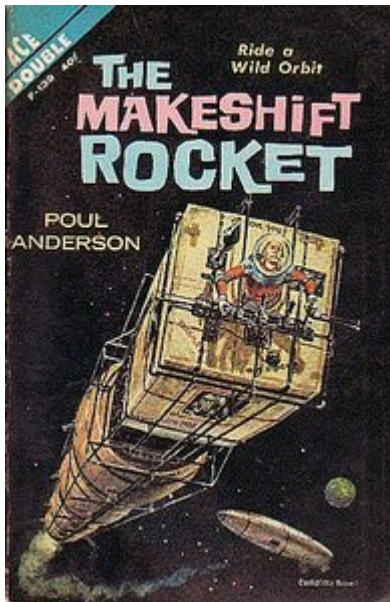
(Don't worry. Abhorring morality dictates, skiffy and certain liquids have always lived in symbiosis! Fans are by nature a bit mavericks and besides, without such inspiration, how could Poul Anderson otherwise design the bheer-powered spaceship in his *The Makeshift Rocket*! BTW, there is a huge stellar cloud of alcohol in space only 10,000 light years away:

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/51271/there-are-giant-clouds-alcohol-floating-space>.)

That was something that emerged from the, as said, unfortunately too limited and short interview. Strangely enough, we did not hear how Sam J spends his days nowadays. It's not much sf, but I know does some music. Your reporter earlier learnt he has spent at least part of his retirement driving



Sam J's LP from 1966, "Songs In Our Time".



model trains, the classic leisure activity for technology nerds. The first generation of hackers arose in MIT's model railway club, after all. Rail switches work almost equivalent to flip-flop gates in semiconductors. Once nuts and bolts always nuts and bolts. Author Jan Myrdal liked to construct things with his Meccano set. I read that Tom Hanks has collected 250 (!) typewriters.

After this Mr Lundwall was toasted and applauded by the audience, and selfie-makers and autograph hunters emerged. I stayed around for a while and chatted and hung in armchairs and dragged my feet away just before nine, when about half of the audience already had had the same idea. It was different in older days of fandom when everyone were students without family and responsibilities and schedules, and we would party until they threw us out, like on that Uppsala con where the convention chairman was found half-conscious under the table.

But an interesting and rewarding evening on the whole. The only thing missing was music! Lundwall music had been promised, but someone forgot to turn on the loudspeakers. I've heard Mr Troubadour, and have him on records and tapes, but it was a pity that Sam J Lundwall's sweet, half-hoarse voice was denied us tonight.

But let's have a few lines of his witty "Meeting in space", a pastiche of our grand singer-songwriter Evert Taube. Below in quick non-rhyming translation by Comet-John Benzene Jr, and here in full Swedish version of the song, not performed by Sam but a member of Club Cosmos in Gothenburg: <https://clubcosmos.net/video.php?id=2>.

*I escaped from Earth early as you know
because I wanted out on the ocean of space
Soon, I got a job on an old space rocket
The boss was a bastard, but he was alright
Twenty light-years from Earth, our engine malfunctioned
The animals in our cargo drank up our provisions
We had to keep alive on just beer and aspirin
It's hardly you can believe it's true
Yes it was tough years in space but I could cope
Oh, but eighty years, I'm still in full vigor ...*

The 40 Year Voyage...

If you travel at 10% of the speed of light - which may be just about conceivable with our present technology - you'll reach our nearest star Proxima Centauri in about 40 years. That's the also time it has taken the Swedish super group ABBA to produce their next album.

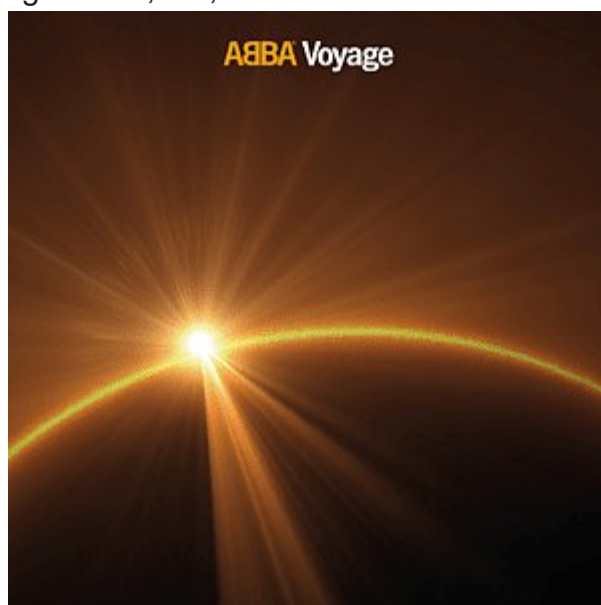
Are they on a Voyage to the stars? Voyage is the name of their sensational new album anyway, which has gone to No 1 in sales in scores of countries, including the UK, US, the old ABBAland of Australia and of course Sweden

I owe my readers comments to this album, as I two issues ago teased you with a lengthy analysis of just one of the tracks, "Don't Shut Me Down", then released as a single. It wasn't only a catchy tune but it also had interesting multi-layered lyrics, with at least four "stories". So here's my take on all the songs of the album, taken in the order they appear on it, with links so can enjoy the songs at the same time (and you should be able to activate them directly with click in your PDF reader):

1. I STILL HAVE FAITH IN YOU

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAzEY1MfXrQ>

In this song Frida Lyngstad asks "Do I Have it in me?" for doing a comeback. Yes, she and her band mates have! They turn to their world-wide fan base with an almost rhetorical question, underlined by how they mix in the roar of the fans from one of their concerts. (Probably Wembley, London, which was one of their best.)



Frida is 76 years old by now, her voice is a little bit lower but still wonderful. I notice that this track is the most played on Youtube, but it's not my favourite. I have a slight problem with ballads and I would have liked the song to be a bit faster. Still not bad at all, as it has been nominated for a Grammy as Best Single. It's actually ABBA's *first* Grammy nomination ever - believe it or not! That says a lot about how they earlier have been regarded in certain circles...

2. WHEN YOU DANCED WITH ME <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDJZIPTFol8>

As it often is, ABBA has a story to tell. Here Irish folk music tells about lost love, perhaps coming back? A woman encounters a lover who years ago left her home town for life in the big city, but now they meet again in a dance at the village fair. The Irish are going bananas for this! It's set in Kilkenny (which lyricist Björn Ulvaeus visited in the 1990's and fell in love with) and the music sounds very Celtic. It shows that this band has a very wide repertoire, everything from almost heavy metal (try "A Hole in the Soul") to folk music. Before ABBA, Björn was in the folk band Hootenanny Singers and Benny grew up with an accordion and folk music. This track reminds me a bit of "The Piper" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjgG8EfsB1M>) which was a medieval ballad by ABBA, almost right out of the Game of Thrones. I like it a lot.

3. LITTLE THINGS <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASvd0qRi03o>

Talking about dipping the toe into different genres! ABBA here does a 17th Century Menuet. Anyway, "menuet" was at least what Benny called the tune when he passed it to Björn for lyrics. With a text talking about the joy of little things in the stockings, it's ABBA's first Christmas song. It will probably be played a lot in the shopping malls and is very cute with a children's choir in the end. But for holiday songs, I think their old "Happy New Year" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Uo0JAUWijM>) is much better. Actually, that's one of my absolute ABBA favourites! This song may not be typical ABBA but more than OK.

4. DON'T SHUT ME DOWN <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWGWFa3jznI>

This is my favourite on the album! A good story, or rather four stories, as I outlined in *Intermission* #113 when it was released as a single. The story of a woman and her old lover, the story of ABBA themselves, the story of ABBA becoming digital, the story of the virus and lockdowns. Dance vibes, immaculate production, great singing by Agnetha. A hit on the same level as anything ABBA has done. (Try also young Emilia's talented cover of this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdCsMIRsyrq>)

5. JUST A NOTION <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy4bLOYDmsQ>

A second favourite! It is based on an unreleased song from 1978, where Agnetha's & Frida's singing track is kept and they are singing in unison in their unique sound, a "third voice" unmatched in pop history. But it has been given a new instrumentation. Björn calls this song "ridiculously happy" and that's true. It's about a girl having the "notion" that a man she sees might start flirting with her - which she wouldn't mind. To a degree it sounds like a typical Swedish "dansband" song, but way better.

6. I CAN BE THAT WOMAN https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3kxl6_ejh0

Another story-telling song, a bit country music influenced. A woman airs her frustration and pain from alcoholism, but gets comforts from her dog. She feels how her husband is suffering and now pledges to be a better woman. Has any pop band in history ever done a song on this theme? ABBA go their own way and don't give a damn about what is trendy. Odd but nice song.

7. KEEP AN EYE ON DAN <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LM0NEyZtEdE>

Yet another story-telling song on an odd theme! This is about a divorced couple whose child takes turns living with the parents. The mother urges the ex-husband to take good care of their son. Another catchy tune in a good production. A wink towards ABBA's "SOS" in the end. Nearly one of my favourites. But from where does Björn get the lyrics ideas? He always claims they are fiction, but was it like this when he and Agnetha divorced more than 40 years back?

8. BUMBLEBEE <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofOaQ2CHm5M>

A classical music inspired little ballad about caring for bumblebees and the other little critters that pollinate our flowers. I'm not inclined to care very much for environmentalism (the slight decline we've seen in bees is most likely caused by an insect virus, not pesticides or "pollution"). A sweet song in good production, though, but a bit too ingratiating.

9. NO DOUBT ABOUT IT <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zgHboLmonQ>

Another of my favourites. Very catchy tune, with lyrics about a woman who says she'll take responsibility for messing up things, starting a quarrels and such I presume. Pure ABBA, sweet, fast but with darker lyrics. Danceable and well sung by Frida on the lead. ABBA can do music...no doubt about it.

10. ODE TO FREEDOM <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtNJybve8j4>

A ballad for our time, when it seems freedom is threatened by politicians' uncontrollable opportunistic egos, going for inefficient lockdowns and immoral forced injections! The song goes like a Viennese Waltz (I get flashes of the space station docking scene of "2001") but it takes too long before the singing starts and maybe it's a little bit too soft to become the European Union's new anthem.

Overall, a good album. Not their best - that's perhaps *The Visitors* (1981) - but somewhere in the middle of their production. Tracks 1, 4 and 5 were really great, in my opinion, 1, 3, 7, 9 and 10 more than OK, while 8, the Bumblebee song perhaps didn't fly with me. What's notable is how this album goes through so many different genres: disco, pop, ballads, Irish folk, classical music, almost country... ABBA shows a great width in their music and most of all don't bother with today's trends! They do what they want and are true to themselves.

But it's something they didn't have to do. They are already billionaires, counted in Swedish crowns (SEK). They can lay back and put their boots on the desk and pour themselves a scotch. But somehow they felt an itch: it would be fun, so to the devil with it! (However, according to newspapers Las Vegas sites are gearing up to make them an offer they can't refuse for the ABBA^{Tar} show, perhaps worth a billion... The specially constructed Voyage arena is said to be modular so it can be taken apart and moved when the audience in London dries up (after a few years?).

Some statistics. The first week the Voyage physical album outsold all other top 40 on the UK album charts, according to newspapers. Sales were about 210 000 there, but remember people don't buy physical albums any more - except nostalgic ABBA fans perhaps. It is also claimed the Voyage vinyl is the best seller of the entire 21st Century in Britain for vinyls. There has also been significant sales of audio cassettes. Presumably, some still have cassette players in their cars.

At the time of writing, these ten songs together have ca 80 million views on Youtube, but it will be more when you read this. Songs 1. and 4. that were released as singles leads, and song 3. which will be released as a Christmas single will probably be on the rise.

Frida is lead singer on tracks 1, 2, 3, 8, 9. Agnetha leads on tracks 4, 6, 7. On 5 they sing in unison and on 10 it sounds like *all four* contribute to singing, as far as I can make out. Agnetha has always had most attention, but Frida is taking the lead here. I've always thought Frida with her larger range is a better singer, while Agnetha with her sensitivity is better in emotional depth. But together in chorus they make 1+1=3...

In total ABBA is said to have sold around 400 million records, being No 2 band in the world in sales after the Beatles. (Elvis or Michael Jackson aren't bands.)

An odd thing. Promoting their coming Christmas single - to be "Little Things" from the album - ABBA took the help of Ian McKellen, known from *Lord of the Rings*, and released short video of Björn



Björn and Ian knitting on an Xmas video!

and Ian sitting in a sofa knitting ABBA cardigans!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qH6o4zVWjKo>

And now the "Little Things" official video is just here, showing kids planning their own ABBATAR show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0qO04Y9Pwk>

Zeppelins in Sinful Stockholm

I saw this story https://www.insidehook.com/daily_brief/music/robert-plant-abba-members-sex-club

Robert Plant May Have Visited a Swedish Sex Club With Members of ABBA. Stockholm, 1978. Led Zeppelin are in town, recording what would become their final studio album, In Through the Out Door, at Polar Studios, owned by ABBA. And while you might not think that members of these two very different groups would get along, apparently they became fast friends. All of this led to a particularly notable - and possibly apocryphal - story involving Robert Plant, Jimmy Page and ABBA's Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus visiting a sex club. Plant gave an interview Plant gave in 2005 for Swedish television, where he described visiting clubs with his bandmate and the members of ABBA. "People seemed to want to go to sleep very early when we got to them, because they immediately got out a circular mattress with a zip down the middle," he recalled. "And ladies and men started going to sleep together, while we were having a drinkie-winkie with Benny and Bjorn."

I saw that interview, and while ABBA of course denies it though their press people, I wouldn't rule out that it's true. Such clubs were curbed to be less "explicit" by new legislation in 1982, but this was in the more free-wheeling 1970s. (I BTW know a fan who worked as a bouncer in one of the clubs in the early 1980's...) Besides, Mr Ulvaeus recently said: "We were mistaken for sex workers early in our career!"

<https://www.express.co.uk/entertainment/music/1521558/abba-bjorn-ulvaeus-voyage-interview-tour-frida>

Bjorn explained: "We sent tapes to record companies in the UK and US and other places and nothing came of it. The only ones who released any Abba music certainly before Waterloo was Playboy Records, who released a song called People Need Love."

The Playboy brand is best known for its adult magazine of the same name, which came into prominence in the 1980s.

However, being associated with Playboy Records came with its own issues, Bjorn revealed.

"On the label, it said Bjorn and Benny and Swedish girl. "It was in the soft-porn period and they assumed anything coming out of Sweden had to do with that." However humiliating this may have been for the band, they eventually had the last laugh.

Meanwhile a religious halfwit, Dr Eugene Tapley forwards the idea that the new ABBA song "Don't Shut Me Down" is all about the second coming of Jesus! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YriGZzUnvbU> ABBA's 40 years between albums is like the 40 years in the desert for the Israelites. The "tantrums" in the text is like when Jesus was "cleansing the Temple". As Agnetha sings "Will you let me enter" it's about S:t Peter at the gate to heaven.

What he's ignorant of is that the lyrics writer, Björn Ulvaeus, is a 100% atheist.



Before a law change in 1982 Stockholm had a number of sex clubs. A newspaper ad of the era. Today those are just topless clubs.

US Version of Eurovision Starts

It's here! Or rather, it's there - on the other side of the Pond: *The American Song Contest*. It'll start Febuary 21 on NBC. US states and territories will battle it out in this show modelled after the Eurovision Song Contest. <https://wiwibloggs.com/2021/11/12/american-song-contest-2022-launch-date-set-for-monday-february-21/267151/>

Time to light it up in red, white and blue! The American Song Contest premieres on NBC on Monday, February 21. It will debut with a two-hour primetime special. The multi-episode event will include three

qualifying rounds, semi-finals and a grand final that picks the Best Original Song... "Based on the Eurovision Song Contest, the biggest music competition in the world with a 65-year history and 200 million viewers per year, American Song Contest will feature live performances of original songs representing all 50 states, five U.S. territories and our nation's capital. Each original song will compete in a LIVE televised event series to win the country's vote for the Best Original Song.

As I've said here in *Intermission* earlier, this show needs to be a big hit from the start, because in today's entertainment landscape the competition is quite stiff. The original Eurovision Song Contest needed decades to really take off and had it easier, since it was spared competition from Internet, cable/satellite TV, games... There were only one or two TV channels in each country for the first 2-3 decades of the ESC. But I wish the team behind - including some experienced Swedish producers - the best of luck.



An observation: ASC will have a total of 56 contestants, while the ESC has "only" ca 40-42. Why stretch it and include US territories? French Guiana or the Falkland Islands aren't in the ESC. (Only Australia is - they'll never leave us alone!)

Meanwhile, UK used to be a Eurovision powerhouse but has in later decades reached rock bottom. They now hope Björn & Benny of ABBA will write them a Eurovision tune, so they once again may be walking in sunshine... It comes from from this interview: <https://www.nme.com/news/music/abba-write-dua-lipa-eurovision-song-contest-uk-song-interview-3088424>

It was announced last month that TaP Music...will collaborate with the BBC to choose a track and artist to represent the UK at the Song Contest next year. In response, Andersson said that the new approach was "good". Ulvaeus agreed: "Promising."...Asked if they would be up for penning a track to represent the UK, he said: "Oh, a UK entry? I don't know." Ulvaeus dismissed the idea, saying that "it would depend on the artist". Andersson replied: "But what's the risk? You can't be worse than last." After Ulvaeus said the participating singer or group needs to be "really good", his bandmate turned and suggested "Dua Lipa". "Yes."

Me? I'm sceptical.

Winners of The Fantastic Short Story Contest

Winners of the Swedish 22nd edition of *Fantastiknovelltävlingen* (roughly "The Fantastic Short Story Contests") was announced in October and were, with selected comments from the jury:

* 1st prize "Gro" ("Grow" or "Germinate") by Terese Säljö

Niklas Krog of the jury: "A very well-written story that managed to be both deeply unpleasant and personally warm. The storytellers everyday life in a isolated house with her son and daughter becomes alive and most around it is left to your imagination."

* 2nd prize "Mannen på åtta trappor" ("The Man on Eighth Stairs") by av Carl-Magnus Åsard

Karolina Bjällerstedt Mickos: "A good idea and an unexpected end is rocket fuel for a short story, and this has both. Bruno is a divorcee and cynical loner who one day visits a mysterious man on the eighth stairs. He has advertised after willing organ donors. Bruno strikes a deal with changes his life."

* 3rd prize: "Gratis flytt hjälp" ("Free Moving House Help") by Linnea Ronnholm

Pia Lindestrand: "A sad feeling balanced with light humour as the fantastic breaks into the everyday...the reader must decide who the old woman is, wanting help to move house in the night...mix of modern problems (your partner is deceased) and magic (a coffin with opinions and an



The diploma of the contest.

hourglass with special properties)."

It's for what is known oldest running contest of this kind in Sweden, organised through the sf writer's E-mail list SKRIVA. The three-person jury of authors Niklas, Karolina and Pia judged independently.

Winners shared prizes of around \$250. Honourable mentions went to Katarina Nyman, Elin Frykholm, Ambra Bolin Rojek, Björn Lestell, AR Yngve, Louise Sahlberg & John Wide. All received a diploma as a PDF to print out (who trusts snail mail today!) and proudly display on the wall.

Vikings Were in North America Precisely 1000 Years Ago

New research shows that Vikings were in North America, on Newfoundland, the year 1021 - exactly a Millennium ago. They should have been there other years also, but 1021 is a year there is absolute proof they were there. A study published in *Nature* says:

By analysing the imprint of a rare solar storm in tree rings from wood found at the Canadian site, scientists have decisively pinned down when Norse explorers were in Newfoundland: the year A.D. 1021, or exactly 1,000 years ago. See eg <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/20/science/vikings-newfoundland-age.html>

The scientists analysed three pieces of wood found at the Viking Settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows: *Each piece, originating from a different tree and still bearing its outer bark, had been cleanly cut with a metal tool, perhaps an axe. That's a giveaway this wood was cleaved by Vikings. Native Canadians didn't use metal tools.*

The carbon of the samples were isolated and they could analyse how the ratio of C12 and C14 had varied, which it does with radiation burst from space. The tree rings themselves count years as they change with the weather each year and by correlating with known years of higher space radiation (out of carbon analyses from other sites) the scientists prove that Vikings where on the spot in 1021.

The researchers found that their three pieces of wood all exhibited a pronounced increase in radiocarbon that began 28 rings before their outer bark. Ring 28 must correspond to the year A.D. 993, the team concluded. They ruled out earlier and later Miyake events based on the carbon 14 to carbon 12 ratios measured in the wood, which vary in known ways over centuries. With a date now pinned to an inner tree ring, "all you need to do is count to when you get to the cutting edge," Dr. Dee said. The three pieces of wood the team analysed were all felled in 1021, the researchers calculated.

When the Vikings first arrived isn't known, and not how long they stayed. They were there before 1021, because Leif Eriksson who was the Viking explorer finding America, is said to have died in 1020. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leif_Erikson

There are different theories on why the Norsemen left. It was a long voyage from Iceland or Greenland to start with, and it was difficult to uphold communications with the mother lands. And as they didn't find resources there, not available closer at hand, it wasn't worth the effort. Some speculate that the locals fought the newcomers and threw them out. The Vikings at least didn't like native Canadians and in the Sagas they are called "skrælingar", a word meaning approximately "loud-mouthed"... One wonders why they still celebrate Columbus Day. It's like saying Buzz Aldrin was the first man on the moon.



A reconstructed Viking house on Newfoundland, where foundations of such have been found.

Let's go Carl J Brandon! *

* Yes, I know the background of the original quote, but I only use it here as a fannish joke...

Fantasiprogram i radio blev chock för danskar

KÖPENHAMN, torsdag.

TT-RB. Många radiolyssnare som inte hört på ordentligt blev i nyårshelgen ordentligt uppskrämda av ett science fiction-program i danska radion. Programmet var utarbetat med H G Wells "Världarnas krig" som mall och både före och efter förklarades att det bara var fantasi. Många blev i alla fall lätt chockade och blockerade radions telefoner med ångsliga förfrågningar.

Försättningen i programmet var att invånarna på en annan planet hade lyckats bromsa jordens rotationshastighet. Hotet avvärjdes emellertid genom en gemensam raketinsats av USA och Sovjetunionen.

En rad kända parallellfall till det danska har inträffat under årens lopp: Några av dem:

• I ett svenskt radioprogram i januari 1955 — "Nu var det då" — medverkade bl a fru Ingrid Berglöf med sin välkända TT-röst och skildrade jordbävningen i Lissabon år 1755. Programmet vållade skräck bland lyssnare i hela Norden.

• I januari 1961 var det färdigt igen. Programmet "Man talade om freden — Åke Falck minns 1945" innehöll inspelade kommunikér från detta år. Många bestörta lyssnare hade fått uppfattningen att Sovjet förklarat Japan krig.

□ Det mest kända fallet av missuppfattning av radioprogram inträffade i New York 1938. Tusentals människor greps av panik när de hörde utsändningen av H G Wells "Världarnas krig", som skildrar Marsmänniskors angrepp på jorden. Det slutade med att CBC bad alla lyssnarna om ursäkt.

History Corner

It'll be a little of this and that in this History Corner. As you, it's all from the newspaper archive of the Royal Library in Stockholm which I could go through as it was "corona open" online last spring. Those who know Nordic lingos may be able to read the original stories in the illos, and for others I'll translate or summarise. Let's go ahead...

You know about how Orson Welles' scared the radio listeners in 1938 with invading Martians. But similar stories have occurred many times. Here from Denmark, with notes from other examples too, "Fantasy Program in Radio was a Shock for Danes", Dagens Nyheter Jan 3, 1964:

Many radio listeners who hadn't paid attention was thoroughly shaken during the New Year's weekend by an sf show in Danish radio. The program was produced with HG Wells' War of the Worlds as model and both before and afterwards it was explained it was just imagination. But many were somewhat shaken and blocked phone lines to the radio station with questions. The premise of the show was that inhabitants on another planet had managed to slow Earth's spin down. But the threat was met by a cooperative missile attack by the US and USSR. /Other radio scares:/ In a Swedish radio show January 1955...Mrs Ingrid Berglöf with her well-known radio voice presented the Earth quake in Lisboa 1755. The program cause terror among listeners in the whole Nordic region. /The AM wave lengths could at the time travel over much of the continent. Now, Jan 1961, the program:/ "They Talked About Peace — Åke Falck remembers 1945" had recorded communications from this year. Many distraught listeners had the impression that USSR had declared war on Japan. /The most well-known case by Orson Welles is then mentioned/

More radio, from the year 1953, when Sweden had only one (1) radio channel, and no TV, so everyone heard this. Dagens Nyheter's "Radio Column" Nov 28 that year reviewed a program on sf, a genre which at the time and just been discovered in our far-off corner of the world:

Ammonia-smelling men on Jupiter — can they be said the be a part of "science fiction", ie scientifically coloured entertainment. Torsten Jungstedt thought so, because he took it in without hesitation among the material from this modern literary field. A modern human who is conservative enough to count on his five senses and at least somewhat on something resembling logic in his conclusions, has more difficulties where the science is in a meeting between talking robots from Earth and beings of Jupiter. The only thing of science is knowing that Jupiter even exists. And if your definition of science is that narrow you can place almost anything under in this mystical category. Once upon a time Jungstedt was a co-worker you liked to hear on the BBC. /Jungstedt worked for BBC 1946-52/ But his program yesterday was rather failed. He had collected lots of stuff from literature which as he referred to it sounded rather strange. He went through the stuff as a slalom runner, who it was impossible to follow through the curves. He threw himself from one book to next, and their titles flew like fresh snow in all directions before you knew what it was all about. Now and then the race was interrupted by Olle Hilding who read short excerpts of the named writings. He by doing this tried to make his voice sound as ghost-like as possible and radio's echo tunnel thundered in the background with hollow sounds. Alas, how sweet for boys to be able to play around! The show became a continuation for a somewhat older audience on that series for the children on Fridays under

RADIOSPALTEN

Ammoniakdoftande karlar

på Jupiter — skall de sägas tillhöra "science fiction", dvs. vetenskapligt färgad underhållning? Det tyckte Torsten Jungstedt, ty han inrangerade dem utan vidare bland sitt material från detta moderna litterära område. En vanlig människas, som är nog konservativ att ännu i viss grad ta hänsyn till sina fem sinnen och åtminstone i stora drag räkna med något som liknar logik i sina slutedningar, har desto svårare att förstå var det vetenskapliga ligger i ett möte mellan talande robotar från jorden och varelser på Jupiter. Det enda som kan sägas ha med vetande att göra skulle vara kunskapen att planeten Jupiter över huvud taget existerar. Och nöjer man sig med en så snäv definition på begreppet science, så kan man ju placera nästan vad som helst under den mystiska rubriken.

Jungstedt var på sin tid en medarbetare som man gärna lyssnade till i BBC. Men hans program i går var skälfen misslyckat. Han hade samlat massor av stoff från diverse litteratur, som åtminstone i hans referat lät minst sagt kuffik. Det stoffet störtade han sig igenom som en slalomåkare, som det var stort omöjligt att följa i kurvorna. Han kastade sig från den ena boken till den andra, och titlarna flög som yrans åt alla håll innan man alla hunnit uppfatta vad det var frågan om. Då och då bröts leppet tvärt av Olle Hilding, som läste upp korta avsnitt ur de nämnda skrifterna. Därvid försökte han göra sin röst så spöklik som möjligt, och radions ekotunnel dånade dovt i bakgrunden med ihåliga ljud. Åck ja, det är skönt för gossar att få leka! Sändningen blev en direkt förstärkning för en något äldre publik på den serie för barn som på fredagarna knallar under titeln "Jesper Klints underliga resa".

En annan sak hade varit om hr Jungstedt valt ut ett eller annat verk skrivet med fantasi och satir. Då hade sändningen kommit upp i en helt annan standard. Och en och annan av åhörarna hade kanske till och med kunnat ana vad den rörde sig om.

Lars Madsen hade en tacksam uppgift då han efter de monstruösa vidundren fick föra fram helt alldagligt och rejält folk från målområdena i Lappland. Särskilt faste man sig vid en gammal arbetare som berättade om den rangskillnad som en gång i världen rådde mellan målmatstare och bovar. Det var först när maskinerna kom i bruk som kårandan upplöstes. Nu skratade han åt denna stid att vara förmer än andra på alla områden. Hur höjlig en sådan kylan är märks bäst när vi möter den på andra fält än vårt eget. Finns det någontans på denna jord eller på Jupiter eller annorstädes i universum något så uppkonstruerat och förljugt som människornas indelning i finhetsgrader? K. S—z

the title "Jesper Klint's Strange Journey". But it would have been an entirely other matter if Jungstedt had selected a piece or two written with imagination and satire. The show would then have reached a totally different standard. And a listener or two may even had an inkling of what it all was about. /Then followed notes on a report from the Lapland mines./ Is there anywhere on this Earth or on Jupiter or else in the universe anything so constructed and lying as dividing people into levels of fineness?

More radio. Swedish media had a reasonably good grasp of what happened in the skiffy world, which is evident from this radio program on the air May 18, 1960:

10.20 Nya kartor över helvetet — Kerstin Anér intervjuar Kingsley Amis om nyttan och nöjet att läsa science fiction.

New Maps of Hell - Kerstin Anér interviews Kingsley Amis about the usefulness and pleasure of reading science fiction

It was obviously about his new book, by the same title, just published. Mrs Anér was a high profile author and later Member of Parliament, so our genre was given some real attention. So it wasn't strange that a Frederic Pohl story could become school theatre, as in "Debate on Pocket Money?", Expressen April 4, 1964:

Claes von Retting is really mixed into the School Theatre's new play. He has translated and staged (from an sf story by the American Frederic Pohl) and directed the play. And written songs. What Stockholm schools now can watch is a musical niceness with a lot of thoughts. Pohl's story is named "The Midas Plague" and in Swedish becomes "Golden Times"; a common fate for intelligent foreign titles on export to the mountainous north. But alright, times are golden in the future society of the play. There is overproduction and the civic duty before anything else is: consume, consume more. The theme sounds a bit known. Happiness isn't, you're told, in a car and fur coat. The young charming couple of the plot Lena Granhagen and Bo Samuelson (picture) consumes and lives in a 26 room villa and dreams of a brilliant future, a three room apartment, one sandwich per day. But don't worry, it will be OK for them. Mille Schmidt and Olle Andersson and many others are funny men, robots click around, and with simple, straight effects the show turns its five quarters without squeaks. But afterwards you get a silent suspicion that the Parents' National Association could have ordered this piece to debate the question of pocket money.



Interesting that they did this as a play for the schools. I had the pleasure of meeting Fred Pohls on a couple of cons, but also on a special meeting in Stockholm in the mid 1980's, organised by Sam J Lundwall with the help of the local SFSF club. Pohl had come to Stockholm, invited by Sam (and it was probably around something around the World SF society that they championed) and we had a nice few hours in the Hartwicksa House. Pohl did a very interesting blog, The Way The Future Blogs, about sf and fandom history which I used to read (it seems to have been taken down, but check <https://amazingstories.com/2014/01/news-special-frederik-pohls-way-future-blogs/>).



From one thing to another, a letter from a reader in Expressen December 22, 1960, worrying about aliens, "The Small Green Men":

Last Sunday on P2 /radio/ they talked about a US author who in a new book jokes about the small green men, ie the crews of flying saucers. The author thinks the saucers crews could be so stupid they wouldn't realise that we humans had built up our civilisation. Such stupidity can't be assumed for beings intelligent enough to master interplanetary traffic. Has the person of today even learnt something from the times we live in, that you should never say never. The sf of the 1800s is reality today: submarines, TV, radio, airplanes. As late as 1916 a weekly paper showed how the "War of the Future" would be fought: guided missiles that can react on sound, light and heat, were launched at enemy airplanes to blow them up. Then — 1916 — they smiled at these wild fantasies and the pundits filled column metres with fun against the artists. Today, 1960, such missiles are a part of the standard armament of even small countries.

Another hight profile person was the Finland-Swede Jörn Donner (director, author, later boss of the Swedish Film Institute), who reviews an interesting sf film in Dagens Nyheter, January 30, 1962, "Start - Destination Venus":

Since the Russians began launching satellites and spacemen around Earth, sf hasn't been officially recognised in the East States. But the wind is changing. One of the results of this new orientation is this East German-Polish co-production., where an expedition to Venus in the 1970's gives an example of the benefits of living in peace. A viewer from the West finds it difficult to swallow the naivety of the film. It begins with a strange spoil found in the Gobi Desert. They note it can only come from Venus. The spaceship Kosmokartor is launched on an expedition. The crew is very international, and deserves to be described more closely. The leader onboard is of course the russian Arensjev, who in generosity has offered Americans the right to take part. An American arrives in good time. Technicians onboard is a Polish genius and a German engineer by the name Brinkmann. Other participants is a Chinese genius, one African and the Japanese doctor Sumiko, a victim from Hiroshima, the only woman. The octette is completed by an Indian language researcher. This peaceful gathering is thus living together out in space. I won't reveal what they find on Venus, but summarise the basic idea of the film. The Venusians have prepared attacking Earth, but have themselves been annihilated.

Deeply affected the spacefarers return with Kosmokrator, shake hands and will never be at war. It is of course a dream we all share. But I don't think Kurt Maetzig's film has brought us closer to this aim. They put a lot of money into the iflm. The technical devices are neat. Less neat is the technical work with directing and photo. The director find it difficult to get some drama into the events onboard Kosmokrator. The colour is fuzzy and redish, the picture not sharp. The actors represents many nationalities. The Chinese looks Chinese. That the film has become so amateurish regarding directing is in reality amazing, because Kurt Maetzig has a long and partly honourable career behind him. He began in the Nazi UFA, but after the World War he did som brilliant descriptions of the beaten Germany as he had already switched to his new belief, communism. This lead to that Maetzing got the task to make a film about the new communist leader Ernst Thälmann, a trilogy totalling nine hours. It was on all accounts a terrible film, the zenith of Maetzig's political career, the nadir of his artistic one. His contribution to space research hasn't become impressive, but has some single impressive details. The best film for the evening is the the /info reel/ prequel, a short and informing story on smoking tobacco. I became so nervous from the horror propaganda of that that I began longing for a cigarett. (Caption: China /a cinema/ has premier for a film with several nationalities. German Gunter Simon and Japanese Yoko Tani plays a part each.)

"Start. Destination Venus"



China hade premiär på en film av flera nationaliteter. Tyske Gunter Simon och japanskan Yoko Tani har var sin roll.

Ända tills ryssarna började sända satelliter och rymdmän runt jorden var science fiction inte officiellt omhuldat i öststaterna. Men vinden vände. Ett av resultaten av denna nyorientering är denna östtysk-polska samproduktion, där en expedition till Venus på 1970-talet får tjäna som lärorikt exempel på den fredliga samlevnadens förtjänster. En åskådare i väst har svårt att svälja filmens naivitet. Det börjar med att en sällsam spole hittas i Gobiöknen. Man konstaterar att föremålet bara kan härstamma från Venus. Rymdskeppet "Kosmokrator" sändes ut på en forskningsfärd. Besättningen är synnerligen internationell, och förtjänar att beskrivas närmare. Ledaren ombord är självfallet ryssen Arensjev, som generöst erbjudit amerikanerna rätten att delta. En amerikansk deltagare anländer i god tid. Teknikerna ombord är ett polskt geni och en tysk ingenjör som heter Brinkmann. Övriga deltagare är ett kinesiskt geni, ett afrikanskt och den japanske läkaren Sumiko, ett av offren från Hiroshima, enda kvinna ombord. Oktetten fullbordas med en indisk språkforskare.

Men jag tror inte att Kurt Maetzigs film har fört oss närmare målet. Man satsade mycket pengar på filmen. De tekniska apparaterna är prydliga. Mindre prydligt är det tekniska arbetet i regi och foto. Regissören har svårt att utveckla någon dramatik av händelserna ombord på "Kosmokrator". Färgen är grötig och rödaktig, bilden oskarp. Skådespelarna företräder många nationaliteter. Kinesen ser helt kinesisk ut. Att filmen blivit så amatörmässig vad instruktionen beträffar är egentligen förvånande, för Kurt Maetzig har en lång och tidvis ärofull bana bakom sig. Han började i det nazistiska Ufa, men gjorde efter världskriget några briljanta skildringar från det besegrade Tyskland. Då hade han redan gått över till sin nya tro, kommunismen. Detta ledde till att Maetzig fick i uppdrag att göra filmen om den kommunistiske ledaren Ernst Thälmann, en trilogi på sammanlagt ungefär nio timmar. Det var en i alla avseenden fruktansvärd film, höjdpunkten på Maetzigs politiska karriär, nollpunkten i hans konstnärliga. Hans bidrag till rymdforskningen har inte blivit imponerande, men har några enskildheter som är roande.

Kvällens bästa film är dock förspelet, en kort och upplysande historia om tobaksrökning. Jag blev så nervös av filmens skräckpropaganda att jag började längta efter en cigarett.

Jörn Donner

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Radio

Ett kusligt fenomen

tycks science-fiction (SF) vara, om man får tro fil. dr Elisabeth Tykesson — och det finns ingen anledning att vi inte skall kunna lita på hennes omvärdering. Hon gjorde i torsdagens programväva en briljant och dock analys av denna litterära, avart, Science betyder vetenskap, fiction betyder dikt eller lögn i SF mest lögn. Det var en amerikan, som skapade denna inkonsekventa rörelse, ty en rörelse har det blivit. Han skrev en roman om något slags rymdskepp år 1911, men först 1926 började han ge ut ett magasin, där endast SF-noveller publicerades. Denne första amerikanska figuren var helt i svart-vitt, tre typer, ständigt återkommande: en rymdkapten (ädel), en ondskfull vetenskapsman och hans lily-sweet och sköna dotter. År 1937 inträdde ett annat skepp med SF-mannen Campbell, som avskaffade de schabloniserade svart-vitt-typerna och gjorde SF socialt, han införde vanliga människor i SF-novellen, t. ex. husmödrar. Då kriget kom, verkade det som SF skulle dö; kriget var tillräckligt hemskt och spännande. Men efter 1945 har SF åter blomstrat upp och kommit in i atomperioden. Det betyder, att historien blivit än kusligare, att sadismen, som alltid varit en ingrediens i SF, blivit värre.

Det farliga med SF är inte, att den ligger ej någon litterär kvalitet utan att den vädrar till det hysteriska draget hos människor, att den skapar psykoser och uppmanar viss övermänniskofantasier. Den verkas som masspsykos och massneuros, säger moderna kritiker. Den ledande principen i all SF-rörelse är den ekonomiska: att tjäna pengar. Men det hindrar inte, att man sökt hitta utgångspunkt till SF i klassiska verk. Platon, Swift, Jules Verne och H. G. Wells är dock inga SF-män, hur man än försöker göra dem till det. Nej, förklarade dr Tykesson: science-fiction har inget annat stamträd, den har fötts ur den triviala romanen i slutet av 1700-talet.

Hur ställer sig då vetenskapen till SF? En tysk bok "Menschen zwischen den Planeten" gör rent hus med alla dessa falska rymd- och planetskepp, som seglar i SF-böckerna, och likaså de övermänniskor, som befolkar dem. Dr Tykessons själv var bekräftande att höra, bara nu de SF-frälsta hörde den!

Jörn Donner was into films already then, but he had his reservations against those with doping from DDR...

Finally, remember Elisabeth Tykesson who in 1954 made a cavallery charge against sf in the major literary journal BLM - a black matter that will live infamy! Four years later, she was still at it! And that in national radio, as we read in the review column in Svenska Dagbladet August 1, 1958, "A Scary Phenomenon":

...is what science fiction (sf) seem to be, if you are to believe PhD Elisabeth Tykesson — and there's no reason why we shouldn't trust her assessment. Last Thursday she did a brilliant and mean analysis of this literary misfit. Science means research, fiction means made-up or lie; in sf mostly lie. It was an American that began this profitable movement, because it has become a movement. He wrote a novel in 1911, but it took until 1926 before he started a magazine where only sf stories were published. The people by this early American where in black and white, three types, constantly returning: a space captain (noble), an evil scientist and his lily-sweet and beautiful daughter. In 1937 another shift took place with the sf man Campbell, who got rid of the black and white cliché characters and made sf more social, he introduced ordinary people in the sf story, eg the housewife. When war arrived, it seemed like sf would die; the war was terrible and exciting enough. But after 1945 sf has once again flourished and entered into the Atomic era. It means that the stories have become even scarier, that sadism, always a part of sf, has become worse. The dangerous thing with sf isn't that it lacks literary quality, but that it caters for the hysteria within people, that it creates psychoses and and promotes certain superhuman fantasies. It seems like mass psychosis and mass neurosis, modern critics say. The leading principle in all sf movement is the economic: to earn money. But that no obstacle to try to find the beginning of sf in classic works. But Plato, Swift, Jules Verne HG Wells aren't sf men, despite how much you try to make them that. No, Tykesson ensured us, sf has no nice pedigree, it was born from the trivial romances of the 18th Century. But what does science say about sf? A German book, Menschen zwischen den Planeten, disposes of all these false space and planet ships that sail in the sf books, and also the superhumans populating them. Dr Tykessons' broadside was liberating to hear, if only the sf enthusiast heard it.

Tykesson's earlier attack on the genre in *Bonniers Literary Magazine* wasn't an accident. It seems she hated the genre from the bottom of her dark heart! Greedy, commercial junk telling lies! Scary stories of sadism! Creating hysteria, psychoses and superhuman fantasies! The early American mentioned was of course Hugo Gernsback and the German book must be *Between Two Planets* by Kurd Lasswitz. I haven't heard that Lasswitz attacked space

stories or even disliked the genre. He probably liked what we came to know as sf, and a main German sf award is named after him. And Verne and Wells didn't write the stuff... Tykesson was nuts! End of story, and end of history for thish.

Mailing Comments

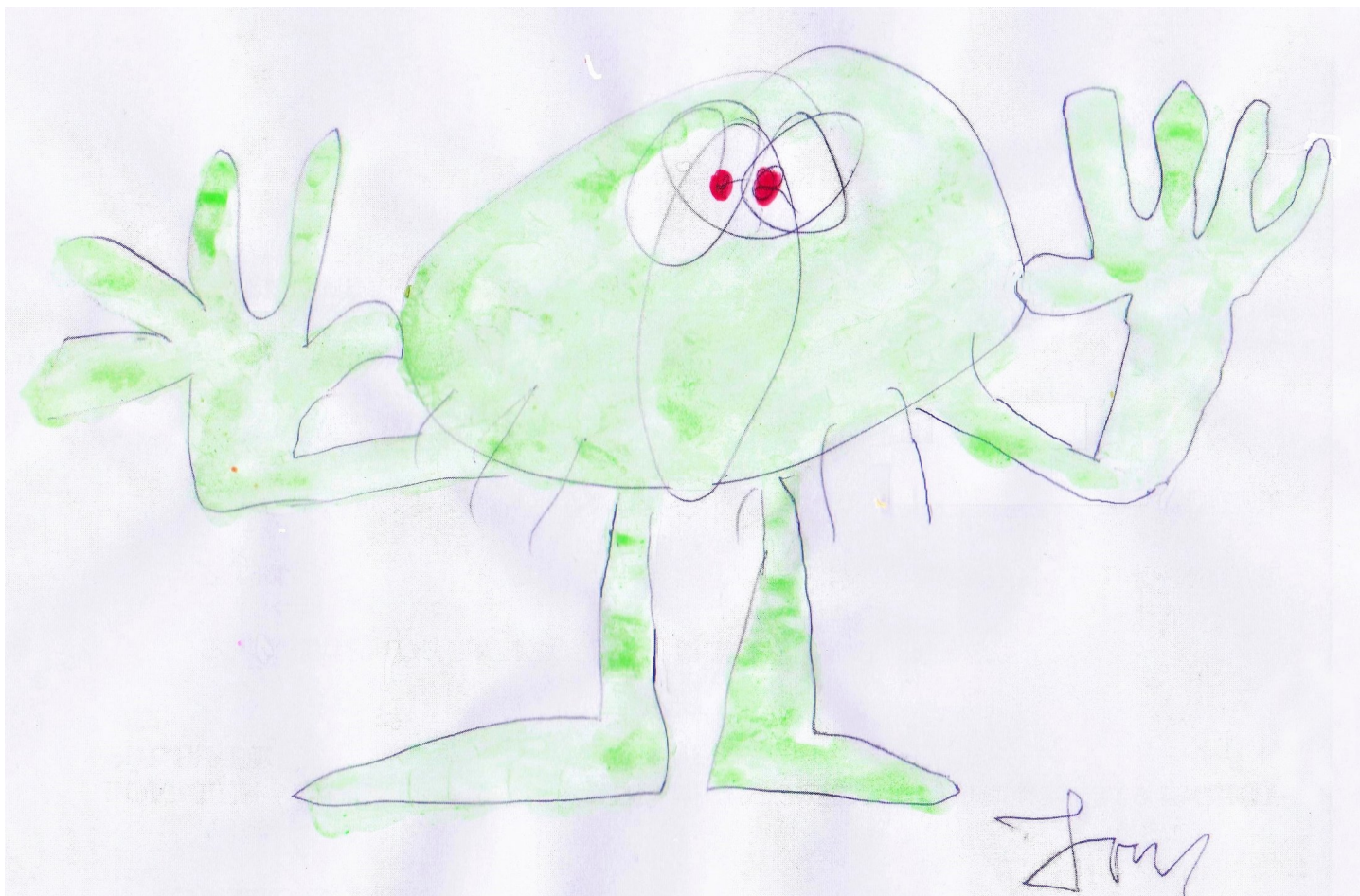
First comments to N'APA mailing #255 and then EAPA #211, with John Thiel in the middle. Skip if not interested, but why not consider joining? Fanzine publishing has always been the backbone of sf fandom, but is in dire straights right now. The world needs more fanzines — your fanzines! In our electronic world it's easy to crank out a PDF, and it doesn't cost anything! Do it! Please...?

Jefferson P Swycaffer: I have tried to cut down the size of *Intermission*. The zine began to get more pages in the spring 2020 as I got all these history clips to present. I'll try more in nextish, but for thish I was attacked by the Swecon, Lundwall, Vikings and ABBA's new album, which I had to cover. But later I hope to be able to reduce page count... Ideal would be 8-10 pages per issue and besides it takes me too much time to long issues! / Interesting note about planes and pilots. WWI: "Pilots were better than the planes". Jet era: "Planes were better than the plots." WWII: "Pilots and planes were on equal level." / I've never seen fiction having a certain date affixed being a problem. In many cases it's an advantage. I like fiction from the years around WWII, for instance - not because the war was nice, but because it was a lively historical period, especially regarding technical/scientific development. But old sf often has totally ridiculous years of the future mentioned. A 1940 story could talk about the first Mars landing in 1978 or a 1950 story could place the first desk-size "electronic brain" in the year 2037...

Will Mayo: You didn't realise that if trying to dig a hole to China, you'd first come to melting rocks thousands of degrees hot?

Samuel Lubell: "Restrictions" must be a balance between what is acceptable for civil rights and what limits *other* damage (economy, mental health, kids' education, crime, other health care, etc) on one hand, and what gives a reasonable protection from disease on the other hand. While the 50 caps as you note may have allowed the virus to "spread at weddings, church services, small concerts" - probably limited spreading - it limits *other* damages! *After all, corona isn't ebola!* If one infected comes to a 50 person gathering some may catch the bug, but something like 99.5% recovers. And statistically, bad cases would be someone aged 82 who'd be on the last stretch anyway, as figures of excess deaths indicate. Why is the "cautionary principle" only applied to this reasonably mild virus, and not to economy (inflation, unemployment, bankruptcies), crime, cancelled operations and treatments, education, mental health, damage to trust in authorities, police and law, etc? There are strong indications that lockdowns, mask, narrow caps on gatherings and such give very small benefits. Is it worth it to turn the whole society topsy turvy for such weak effects? Sweden has followed a light touch and has among the best curves, according news Europe's lowest infection figures (at this time of writing.) To cause a *lot of damage* getting only *small benefits* is just dumb! It may be that certain politicians just want to play for the gallery and by bossing people they opportunistically want to create a public image of being in charge, caring folks of action - all aimed at next election and future voters. / Nice that you too could get to a physical convention! (I was myself on Fantastika/Swecon now in November, as reported elsewhere.) / I'm sceptical to CRT. It looks very one-sided. That bad things has happened in history is of course true, but you can't because of that try to pin any guilt on people living *today* who are totally innocent. The concept of "original sin" is just irrelevant religion. / As a rule of thumb I'm against any censorship in schools or any library. (I would perhaps make an exception for, say, a chemistry textbook detailing easy ways to mix together drugs or powerful explosives...) Libraries should even have copies of A Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. It's such a stupid book that it can only deter people from becoming Nazis! Interesting side-note, in my school we had several skiffy books as required reading in class: Orwell, Huxley, Bradbury and Karin Boye (writing *Kallocain*)!

George Phillies: Magdalena Andersson was just as I write voted through as Prime Minister, again. But the results of last election still means she has weak support in the parliament - next election is in Sep 2022, in less than a year. More in my editorial column first / I don't think the corona policies will be up much in the election campaigns here, but they should in many other countries with more controversial virus actions. (People all over Europe demonstrate against lockdowns, forced vaccination and such.) / On latest Swecon, John-Henri Holmberg had a program item defending John W Campbell. That was good.



BOOH! Artist Lars "LON" Olsson's interpretation of our new honoured guest, a virus known as Omicron!

John Thiel: Interesting about monetary systems in sf. I believe Roddenberry tried to get rid of money in Star Trek, but eventually the show couldn't do without it, so "replicator units" were introduced as some sort of Erzats currency... Presently we have this craze around "crypto currencies", of which Bitcoin is the most well known. But more than 2000 (!) crypto currencies have been introduced, almost all of them failing! It was just attempts to lure people to invest in them, so the founder could take the money and run. Much crypto currencies are just a pyramid scheme. There are much that goes against crypto currencies: 1) If it they can be converted to dollars, pounds or crowns remains uncertain (small amounts may be OK, but what if you want to sell those Bitcoins you've accumulated since 2009 normally worth 1 billion?), 2) the value fluctuates wildly, 3) they may be outlawed (China has, for instance) whereupon the value drops to zero - and don't think governments can't do that! - 4) Crypto currencies needs a lot of energy to be "mined". And the energy the "mining" consumes is rising. It is claimed that the now active Bitcoin miners use as much energy as a medium-sized European country. To use energy to create uncertain mathematical currency tokens is stupid. / Yes, HP Lovecraft was active in (mundane) APAs early on and I find that fascinating. And through his correspondence was the centre of became now as the Lovecraft Circle, which had fannish connections. In a way HPL was a bit of the original fan and fanzine publisher! / The first atomic bomb was the test bomb Trinity in July 1945. There are lots of interesting stories about the 1940's atomic bomb research, of which I have covered some in *Intermission* earlier. We have for instance the Campbell/*Astounding* story, but the fact is that many others suspected something was going on in atomic energy for weapons. There were even articles in Swedish press before Trinity (July 1945) speculating about atomic bombs. / I took German for five years in school. I won't try to speak it - German grammar is a nightmare! - but I can so and so read through a German newspaper. Besides, ca 30% of the Swedish vocabulary is said to be loan words from German, which comes from medieval times when the Hanseatic League dominated trade in the Baltic and in the Swedish ports. / What? Was Fred Brown's *What Mad Universe* made into a movie? I find nothing on the 'Net about it. Tell us more.

William McCabe: I haven't yet seen "Foundation" for TV, but have very slim hopes it's any good. / Interesting to hear the history and news about the Brum group and Novacon.

Henry Grynsten: I have no idea how complex languages older than Latin are. But I guess the first languages, say 250 000 years ago, were very simple for obvious reasons. And *after* that complexity grew. And after complexity had *reached a top* and a language spread, complexity *shrunk again*... I'm not sure English can be said to have "16 tenses". Much of it would be just different *phrasings*, which is a matter of idioms and not grammar. Take expressing a future event: "will be", "going to be", "coming up is" or whatever, aren't "tenses" but different phrasings. I know no Chinese and can't comment that, but I'd be surprised if the communist dictators' attempt to make Mandarin cover all of China won't grind off some complexities. If grammar complexity (but not vocabulary, which grows) stay the same, how do you explain creole languages and pidgin English that has obvious grammar simplifications? / Coffee isn't to be seen as a drug. You don't have coffee to treat a disease. It may still have effects like drugs, but much, much milder! - but so have many food items. You get a tiny bit more alert from coffee, but not "high". Since many plants (you say 60) contain caffeine humanoids must have encountered them for millions of year, and evolution can of course work in that pace. / As I see it, there are three possible explanations for precognition: 1) A memory filer. We guess about the future all the time, but filter away the guesses that are wrong. We keep those that happens to be right and thus get an illusion that we re good at seeing the future. 2) The brain is a very complex machine for doing analyses. It constantly receives information and clues and is built to be able to draw fairly good conclusions from it, so we are to a degree able to "foresee" (or rather calculate) what will happen. 3) A very speculative idea is that time is just an illusion, according to some cosmological theories. The future actually exists now, together with the past and with every moment. By some unknown perhaps quantum physics processes it may be possible that this future "leaks" into the illusionary-psychological present. Truly Wild Ideas, but I'm not sure I believe much of it. Anyway, homo sapiens is "hard-wired" to always try to find explanations for things happening and project that into the future. This is how we 100 000 BC would study how Mammoths wandered and found the pass they must go through, and could make plans to throw boulders on them and think of how we could then use the skin and the tusks and... / I can very well believe that we pick up much more in an "unconscious" manner, than we are aware of.

Garth Spencer: On the next big con, we should fill tables with electronic and mechanical junk and tools and invite people to invent things! Let's call it The Gernsback Room. (BTW, I met Roger on the recent Swecon. Tried to encourage him to write something for EAPA. Let's see how it goes.)

Time to sign off. Sorry that this is so full of...content. I'll try to have less in nextish! (There I hope to have my traditional Xmas/NewYear special short story.) I may drop some off the list to next issue, but to avoid that send me a line. Comments are always welcome, to ahrvid@hotmail.com. Finally, vaccines are fine, a jab - if you want to. But it must be voluntary.

--Ahrvid Engholm, your local fanzine editor