

# COUNTERCLOCK

ISSUE # 7

January 2000

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An random fanzine produced by Wolf von Witting,  
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Cover photo by: Wolf von Witting 2000 /background: NASA

## THIS ISSUE:

”Why Science Fiction Matters”

by Michael Swanwick

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## INTRODUCTION🕒

...or “When the Time is Running Out.”

The first edition of this issue was stricken by 2 disasters. First, only half of the intended run of 250 copies were actually printed at SAAM. Secondly, before the second half of the first run could be printed, the guy who was supposed to do the printing mislaid the originals.

For most of the issue it wouldn't have been such a major issue, except for the 2 pages Marsipan cartoon. This was done on paper, so there was no back-up copy on the computer. Time went by and the option to print at SAAM for a reasonable price disappeared.

It was the beginning of the end, for CounterClock in its first incarnation.... (shouldn't it be incellulosication?)

My mother was struggling with cancer and for the summer I was running the national Swedish convention, Nasacon 2000. I just hoped my mother would live long enough for me to see her before her end. She did. The convention was held on July 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> and after it, I went to see my parents. At the end of July in the year 2000, I saw her for the last time. Still walking on her own two feet down to the mailbox. She was taken to hospital early in August and the doctors said she wouldn't survive until

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the end of the week. They said the same the following week. Then they shut up. She had a strong heart, so even though parts of her body already were dead, she didn't draw her last breath until October 21<sup>st</sup>.

My father held me updated by telephone about every grisly detail of her decay, from mid August until October. Call me a coward, if you like, but I had no desire to see her in that condition. She was anyway seldom fully conscious between the morphine shots. Somehow, my perspective on life never was quite the same afterwards.

Counterclock # 8 was mainly a translation of the program booklet for the convention. I had considerable difficulties in getting it printed. A few copies were made for the international guests at the convention. But after that...

I just ran out of creative energy... Not to mention the fact that every issue of CounterClock had cost me dearly in paper, print and postage.

My father lived nine more years. He died in February 2009, just about the time when I was working on CC#10. He also died of cancer, but his demise was a lot easier. He died when he got the first morphine shot. It was strange, I felt nothing at the time. We expected him to die much sooner. The first time we thought he might die was in 1966, when he was in hospital for a very serious case of ulcer. Eight years later, he got diagnosed with cancer and in 1974 people were practically dead, once the word *cancer* was mentioned. But the doctors removed a third of his intestines and with it, the tumor. Eight years later, he had a cardiac arrest. This was early in 1982. Again he was taken into hospital for a very difficult operation. They took out the heart from his chest and replaced some arteries, then put the heart back in its place. Everyone who had a similar operation at the time was dead before 1990. Not my dad. He was a medical miracle. Guess that's why I wrote the filk song *MY OLD MAN'S A CYBORG* in 1997. It was a time when I could still joke about such things.

My uncle, on my fathers side, died in the year 1999 or 2000, not sure. He went by bike to the pub in his home town of Recklinghausen (Ruhr-area) and ordered a beer. Before the glass was in front of him, he had already gone beyond the rim. I just wish he would have had time to finish his beer first. Otherwise... *that's* just how I wish I could depart from mundane affairs. Guess I have always been incapable to imagine a cruel way of dying. And then the worst unimaginable happened to my own mother.

Now... back to CounterClock # 7 and January 2000:

### The future is here and so am I!

I'm here, in the future. It is the year 2000, no less. I have eagerly been looking forward to it since 1969. Back then, at the fragile age of 10, I knew that I would see this day. And everyone told me: "You can't **know** it! Bad things can happen along the way... you can't really know that you will see the day." But I **knew** and I have never had the slightest doubt. This has affected my life at least in one respect - I have never since been suicidal. And time has proved me to be right about this one matter, after 30 years. Unfortunately no one who objected is around to hear me say: "I told you so!"

I have been careful not to put my life at stake lightheartedly. Perhaps my velocipedal detour in 1984

can be considered a rather bold and brave step away from my usual habit of playing it safe. I never went skiing downslope, so I didn't have to break a leg. I never bothered to take a drivers license. Spending time in a car used to be a bad idea statistically and rushing through life, being in a hurry, is an infallible way to invoke disaster. However...

In 30 years of existence, there are bound to happen accidents no matter how many safety precautions you take. And you can't be on your toes for 30 years straight anyhow. But I have always miraculously come through without any serious injury. I once got squashed between a locomotive and a platform (Dec'1985). Every other person gets their legs chopped off. Not me. I got the muscles on my thighs severely battered, two keys in my pocket were bent, one was broken, but my bones were intact and no blood was spilt. Four years later I was on a train that ran into a buffer. Seconds before the collision I got up and stood in the corridor, only to get swept off my feet and freely falling to the other end of the wagon. I was the only person on that train who didn't get hurt. There has been a number of other incidents. Sometimes it was sheer luck that I didn't come to harm, sometimes I just did the right thing instinctively and I never got around to be afraid (until after-wards). And so I made it - I'm still here... and I did tell you so! So, where do I go from here?

It is my intention to stay alive for at least another 25 years or so. But I no longer **know** the future the way I used to. For the first time in my life I feel that I am heading for the Undiscovered Country (the Future as in Star Trek and eventually for the Twilight Zone).

This autumn has been troublesome. My computer needed a refit and I was offline for a couple of weeks. Is there anyone who noticed? I have had serious backtrouble and I've been crawling on the floor for a week, even eating from the floor. (Okay, so I had a plate between the food and the floor!) But I always get back up again. It's just a matter of time.

Looking back at CoClock's first issue, one year ago, I feel I've come a long way since. From this issue on I have added a fanzine-column, which will return on a regular basis. Just as one needs to have a regular letter-col, no matter how *thin* it turns out. I'm going to look out for other fanzine-editors more than I have done in the past.

Have a good time!

### CounterClock # 6

was distributed at SWECON'99. The first batch anyway. I had some trouble getting the rest printed in the first place. By now that should have been done and perhaps you are among the unfortunate who had to wait. Perhaps you get issue 6 and 7 together right now.

*Back Issues of CounterClock # 1-6 were available from:*  
Wolf von Witting, 13341 Saltsjöbaden, Sweden

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Her ways are always with me, I wonder all the while  
But please you must forgive me I am old but still a child

All dead all dead, but I should not grieve  
In time it comes to ev'ryone, all dead all dead  
But in hope I breathe, of course I don't believe  
You're dead and gone, all dead and gone (Queen)

## Beware of the journalist!

### AN IMMINENT INTERVIEW

I got a call yesterday. I'm going to be interviewed, again. Having had dubious encounters in the past has left me more than wary. Not that I would mind talking about the affairs of the local Club Council or about the upcoming convention, but talking about my writing?! Oh, dear!!!

First of all I see before me the image of Gauls frantically beating up their bard with the words: "You're not going to sing! No, you're not going to sing!!!" But in this scenery I'm the Gaul and my words are: "You're not going to write about UFO's! No, you're not going to mention the bloody UFO's!" Let's talk about culture, let's talk about literature and nothing else! Some see the journalist as a savage predator. I see them as huge slobbish sausage-machines where you can put any kind of meat into the grinder. They will add their own spices and they will produce a sausage. Whatever you say will be mercilessly minced. The best way to get your point through is to write it yourself! Don't trust other people to write it for you. They will definitely spice it their own way. As you can see, I have something of a phobia here. What better to do now, than to face my fears?

Literature, *writing regarded as having permanent worth through its intrinsic excellence* or any kind of printed material... I am particularly into *phantastic* literature, which includes writers such as Stanislaw Lem and Franz Kafka (where I feel a narrative kinship). Our excursions beyond the familiar realm is based on the need to relate to cosmos (the higher order which is opposite to chaos). It is psychologically no different from the seeds to all ancient mythology. We can't help wondering about the future and the past, we can't help wondering about the infinite and the infinitesimal. Being here and now just isn't enough to some people. People like us.

Today I know virtually everyone who is into the business of science fiction and fantasy in Sweden and I have known them personally for 20 years, except for the people who entered the game later. We have grown up together. We have traded ideas and fanzines for decades. And what a meager business it is in Sweden! Who cares if *Richard Berghorn* in *Saltsjö-Boo* wrote a brilliant book? We prefer to check out *Schwanzwedlers* new movie. Not that I am much different. I would check out both. But the sad fact is that Swedish culture remains in the back yard. It doesn't have to be like that. Look at Russia where everyone is celebrating and reciting *Pushkin* these days. Sweden is a small country, yes. It is a pitiful excuse. We have (had) brilliant writers in Sweden too. Let me say *Selma Lagerlöf*, just to mention one.

But who can breathe in this atmosphere? No wonder if every talent Sweden has goes abroad or asphyxiates. (Just for the record: I do not see myself as a talent - I see myself as working very hard and determined for a goal.)

Swedish culture of today is struggling for survival. Then again. That is perhaps what this interview really is about. Trying to boost the remaining few or perhaps to give artificial respiration to a dying race. Who is to blame?

...certainly not the journalist who is goin' to see me in a couple of days. We are all individuals. You were also once an individual!

### JOURNALISM HAS A RESPONSIBILITY

*J'accusé journalistique suédois.*

I accuse the average journalist for

- lacking objectivity
- abundantly imposing their own opinion
- frequently jumping to conclusions
- publishing ill researched articles
- having impoverished our language
- underestimating the general population
- now that every word processor has spell-checking, they keep using the improper words or loosing them altogether instead leaving incomplete sentences (at worst).
- participating in summary executions
- leaving the truth out there

And when I say truth I don't talk about bloody UFO's, gremlins or any conspiracy theory. It goes for TV-journalism as well as for newspaper. And it is perhaps not a particular Swedish trait either.

## SweCon 99 in Upsala

ON OCTOBER 15<sup>th</sup> TO 17<sup>th</sup> WITH HUGO AWARDED **MICHAEL SWANWICK** AND GRANDFATHER OF SVERIFANDOM **LARS-OLOV STRANDBERG** as GOH.

Swedish cons are growing in numbers steadily. They are fun. And they're getting better every minute. The Upsala team have always succeeded in making entertaining conventions. The people behind it are Linnéa and Johan Anglemark, Magnus Eriksson, Karin Kruse, Sten Thaning, Jan Nyström, Andreas Gustafson, Mattias Palmér, Nils Segerdahl, Anna Åkesson, Björn X Öqvist Olle Östlund and Anders Wahlbom. This is more or less the core of fandom in Upsala. There are currently only three other places in Sweden with an equal concentration of sf-fans (being Stockholm, Linköping and Nacka-Saltsjöbaden). Cons in Upsala are popular. They will remain popular for as long as they keep doing such a good job.

It seems a considerable amount of *oldtimers* are returning. Some of them are even before my time. It was good to see Roger Sjö-lander again. He is one of the fans who have been gafia for some time and who is now returning to see what fandom is like today. Johan Frick, Jan Risheden and Karin Kruse provided us with a filkconcert. It was mostly Johan and Jan's successful old filksongs from way back, when they still used to go to conventions on a regular basis. I hope that the glimpse they got from today's sf-fandom will motivate them to write new songs. And to turn up at future conventions. It seems that *every* Swedish con now has a filk item. That's okay with me. All Swedish filkers can sing or play an instrument. This may change if filking gets too popular.

*For those who wonder why Upsala sometimes is spelled differently. In Swedish language it is always "Uppsala". In English it is most commonly spelled with a single P. The distinction would have been more obvious if the location had been Gothenburg - then it would have read "Göteborg". I don't see either way of spelling it as incorrect.*



Michael Swanwick in Uppsala 1999

Photo:WvW

## Why Science Fiction Matters

by  
Michael Swanwick

One of many reasons I'm happy to be here in Uppsala is that this is the old stomping grounds of Linnaeus, the inventor of binomial nomenclature and founder of systematics, and with the world and its works growing increasingly complex, I am more and more drawn to biological metaphors for the comprehension of anything. Linnaeus was a brilliant man, but still a creature of the eighteenth century, and so his systematics was tainted with Platonic idealism. He defined his taxons with an ideal type, and thus felt free to replace his samples of a species with superior examples. Which occasionally led to the logical absurdity of having a type represented by a specimen that later turned out to be that of another distinct species.

So his system was tweaked slightly. Nowadays a taxon is described from a type specimen, an individual organism which is carefully selected, harvested and preserved, and referred to whenever there's any question as to the taxon's attributes. Which is to say that in order for an organism to be defined, it must first be dead.

All of which is my roundabout way of explaining why my topic for this talk is not "Science Fiction, What It Is and Why It Matters" but "Why Science Fiction Matters." I can't possibly explain what science fiction is, because a living genre is a lot like any other organism. In order to be defined, it must first be . . . dead.

Come the day when SF produces nothing distinctly new, but only variants on stories and ideas that have been presented before, then it will be well and truly dead, and

a definition can be donkeyed up that will cover all possible cases. But not now, and, God willing, not for a while yet to come.

However, it is possible to address a related question that we in the field have been asking ourselves almost from the beginning, and that is, What is SF good for? Why does it matter? I don't know if it happens here, but when I went to college every year there would inevitably be at least one professor who would begin his first class by saying, for example, "Welcome to English Literature: From Beowulf to Virginia Wolfe. We'll be covering twelve centuries, three languages, and fourteen critical systems, does anybody have any questions?"

And of course everybody was too intimidated to say anything.

So then this gristly old pedant would lean forward on the podium and bare his teeth in a rictus of a grin and crack his mandatory joke-for-the-year and say, "Well, if nobody has any questions, I guess you know everything already and I don't have to teach this course!" And those who wanted a passing grade would pretend to laugh.

Years later, it finally occurred to me that I should have raised my hand and said, "Yes, I have a question. Why are we here? Why do we care to learn this material? What is it good for?"

But in all important things, we start out in total ignorance. I became a writer when I was seventeen years old. I had a summer job, working ten hours a day in the loading docks of a furniture factory in Roanoke, Virginia—and since I told you this story yesterday on a panel, I won't repeat it. Four-and-a-half years later, at age 22, having been very careful not to acquire any marketable skills in college, I found myself living off the charity of art students (think about that for a minute!), sleeping on a couch in their unheated livingroom, across the street from a flophouse for winos and next door to a hotel where rooms rented by the hour. I stuffed newspapers in the cracks of the windows to keep the winter wind out, sold my own blood, wrote term papers for a dollar a page, and stayed up late into the night listening to the whores screaming at their pimps and writing stories that I couldn't finish - not a one of them.

Obviously, this was not a good time to stop and ask myself what I was doing? If I'd had any sense at all, I'd've quit writing then and there. Because, looking back, I have to concede that there was no evidence at all that I had any talent whatsoever.

I finished and sold my first story at age 29, it was published when I was 30, and it's only now, when I'm almost at the half-century mark that I've felt secure enough to ask the questions I should have asked right at the beginning: Why write SF? Why read it? What useful function does it serve? Why does it matter?

I'm not the first one to raise these questions, and over the years there have been four provisional answers: That science fiction serves a  
Literary  
Educational  
Predictive  
or Inspirational function.

The Literary justification is the easiest to dispose of. First, many of the seminal works in our field *Asimov's Foundation Trilogy* being a good example are just not that well written. And even if they were, that wouldn't be

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enough. The world is full of books that are ever so well written. You could spend a lifetime catching up. Anyway, if this were just about good writing, science fiction wouldn't be a separate genre.

The Educational argument is that we popularize scientific ideas in an efficient manner. But I once met Will Jenkins, who, writing as Murray Leinster, invented the parallel universe story, the first contact story, and much more. He was also the inventor of many physical devices, including Leinster front-screen projection.

Will Jenkins told me that the way he worked was he'd come up with an idea for an invention, and he'd think about it. He'd look at it from all directions and in all aspects, until he either figured out how to make it work or figure out why it could never work. If it could work, he'd patent it. If it couldn't, he'd putty over the defects and write a science fiction story in which it did work.

So much for Education.

The Predictive argument *we came up with communications satellites and personal computers first, and all those guys in Houston and Silicon Valley and Japan had to do was connect the dots* has been pretty well demolished in the past, but I'll take another whack at it here. Robert Heinlein wrote a novel called *The Door Into Summer*, in which he took a jaunt up to the year 2000 and predicted Computer-Assisted Design, the downfall of Communism, computerized banking, metal detectors in airports, and Ticketron. It's an astonishing string of calls, and doubly so for those of us who remember what the world looked like in 1956, when it first came out.

But only the parts of the novel he got wrong are interesting today, where all his absolutely-correct predictions are dull as dishwater. Ray Bradbury, on the other hand, wrote *The Martian Chronicles*, in which all the science had been discredited long before he wrote *Word One* 'there are no canals on Mars and he knew it!' and yet it remains as lively and powerful today as it was in 1950, when the stories were first collected.

The final argument is Inspirational *that it inspired a generation of very bright kids to become engineers and scientists*. There's some truth to this. A lot of NASA people have stood up and gone to the front of the church to testify to it. Yet I suspect they would've had the same careers without SF. There was a lot of science popularization back in the post-WWII decades. I personally read very little science fiction back then. I picked up my love of science and technology from my father's stacks of *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics*, and from public relations handouts he brought home from his work at General Electric, from books about science, and educational toys, and futuristic dioramas at the New York World's Fair in 1963 - from a hundred sources that permeated the culture. In the 1940s an artist named Rudy Zallinger created a mural for the Peabody Museum of Natural History which showed "The Age of Reptiles" from the Devonian through the end of the Cretaceous. It was jam-packed with vivid, ferocious dinosaurs and when it was reproduced in *Life Magazine* in 1953, it created an entire generation of paleontologists and dinosaur artists. My wife picked up an old copy at age six and decided then and there to become a biologist. Inspiration is not hard to come by in this world.

So if that's our function, it seems to me a rather small one, and not worthy the sacrifices that so many of us have made.

Let me skip ahead now to 1985. I'd been published for five years, and I'd just had my first novel published in the revived *Ace Specials* line, edited by the late Terry Carr. That was a terrific line-up he put together, including first novels by Kim Stanley Robinson, Lucius Shepard, Howard Waldrop and *William Gibson*. And where the rest of us saw our novels received and reviewed simply as science fiction novels by new writers, the reception *Neuromancer* received was phenomenal. It was reviewed in periodicals that never reviewed science fiction. Bill was profiled in national magazines! He was put on their covers! His work was made into bad movies! It was as if there were a *Neuromancer*-shaped gap in the culture, and only Bill had had the sense to write the book that would match up with the proper neuro-receptors and fill that lack.

It was as if everybody recognized what he was doing.

When I was seven, I used to try to build rocketships out of discarded ladders, odd scraps of lumber, cardboard boxes, garbage-can lids, whatever my parents would let me saw apart and hammer nails into. I was just playing, of course. Deep down I knew they'd never get off the ground. But if the kid next door had built a rocketship and blasted right into orbit, I couldn't have been more astonished than I was now.

All of us starting out then were agog. What on Earth just happened? God knows what Bill, who was strapped to the nose cone of this phenomenon, must have been thinking.

A few years later, my son explained it all to me.

Sean was five at the time, and we were walking home from his day mom's, and he was explaining something about playing *Super Mario Brothers* that was vastly more important to him than it could ever be to me. "When I'm small..." he said.

Wham! In that instant, I saw it all. He was talking about an experience, and a very profound one, that I'd never had as a child. Video games were new then. Personal computers were new. People everywhere were encountering computers on a personal level for the first time, and they were experiencing something completely new, a new complex of mental and somatic sensations that they didn't have the words for.

*Neuromancer* gave them a word for it *cyberspace* and a myth that they could tell themselves about it. Something to enable them to think about and romanticize what they were experiencing, and so comprehend it better.

Ursula K. Le Guin wrote a novella called "The Word for World is Forest," in which the human race colonizes a planet with a native race that is almost infinitely exploitable because they are absolutely peaceful. But one day, a native named Selver who has been mistreated beyond endurance does something unthinkable, and attacks a human being. He flees into the forest, where his kind treat him with absolute respect and obedience, because he is a god. And he's a god because he's taught them a new word: murder.

Le Guin wrote:

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"If a god was a translator, what did he translate? ... Was [he] one who translated the language of dream and philosophy, the Men's Tongue, into the everyday speech? But all Dreamers could do that. Might he then be one who could translate into waking life the central experience of vision: one serving as a link between the two realities considered by the Athsheans as equal, the dream-time and the world-time, whose connections, though vital, are obscure. A link: one who could speak aloud the perceptions of the subconscious. To 'speak' that tongue is to act. To do a new thing. To change or to be changed, radically, from the root. For the root is the dream.

"And the translator is the god. Selver had brought a new word into the language of his people. He had done a new deed. The word, the deed, murder. Only a god could lead so great a newcomer as Death across the bridge between the worlds."

Bill Gibson wrote *Neuromancer*, and briefly he became a god, though not so powerful a one as the god of Death. Le Guin wrote *The Left Hand of Darkness*, and she too became a god. As did Joanna Russ with *The Female Man*, John Brunner with *Stand on Zanzibar*, Joe Haldeman with *The Forever War*, and any number of other authors to a greater or lesser degree. All of them became gods.

Maybe a better word would be shaman.

We do not so much invent these ideas as discover them. Or maybe it's the other way around. Concepts sieze us and inhabit us. I don't think it's a coincidence that Bill Gibson's second book involved voodoo loa who siezed and inhabited their human mounts. I think he was writing from experience.

Mainstream fiction also partakes in the shamanistic, but it has a different mandate. It has to report on the world as it is, rather than the world as it's in the process of becoming. Its focus is directed inward, at Kafka's "frozen ocean," where ours is directed outward, into the darkness where strange shapes move yearningly toward us with intentions difficult to know.

So it is a very strange enterprise that science fiction is engaged in, half rational and half transcendent. We offer ourselves up as bait and hope to become gods. We spin lies into webs with which we strive to catch a greater Truth. We do our very best to write like angels and think like scientists. But those are not always the qualities that an important work of science fiction requires.

Sometimes, at science fiction conventions, I'll find myself at one o'clock in the morning in a roomful of drunks, and in a sudden fit of clarity wonder: What am I doing here? Is this any kind of way for an adult to make a living? Wasn't I supposed to have a real job by now?

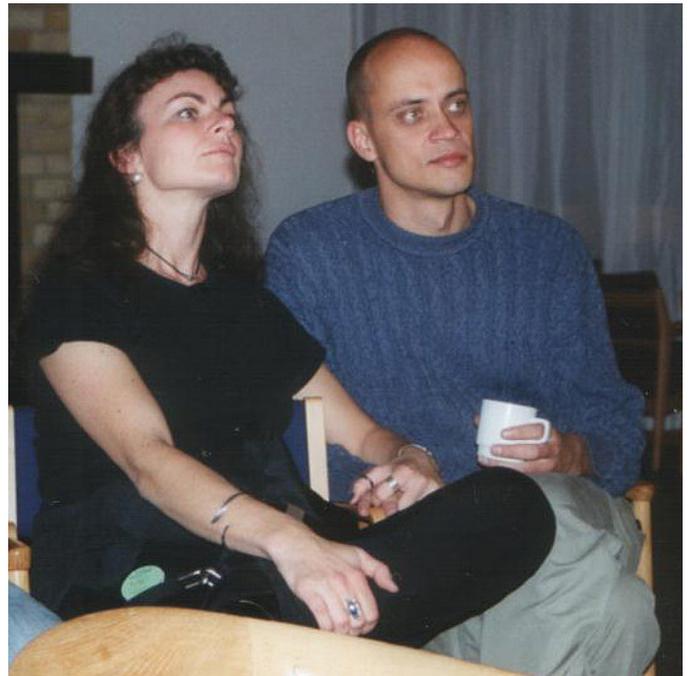
I didn't ask myself those questions more than half a lifetime ago, when I discovered science fiction - *or possibly when science fiction discovered me*. And I'm glad I didn't, and not only because SF has brought me here, to Uppsala, but because it's given me a life filled with possibility. One where every novel, every story, every new day brings with it the possibility of something rich and wondrous, the chance of writing something true, necessary, and absolutely new, something outside all prior systematics ... indeed, something better than I have any rational reason to believe I can create at all.

Whatever becomes of me, I'm grateful to have had that chance.

*WvW: I am of course grateful for getting to reprint this GoH speech which connects to the topic WRITING, beginning in CoClock#3 and which we occasionally will be getting back to.*



*Martin Andreasson, Michael Pargman and Tomas Cronholm at SweCon'99.*  
Photo: WvW



*Molle Kamnert-Sjölander & Roger Sjölander*

There were two choices for SweCon 2000, the Linköping team presenting a strong bid with Stephen Baxter as GoH versus Nasacon for Stockholm & Saltsjöbaden. While Nasacon settled for a mere presence at Swecon, the Confuse representatives were running a regular campaign and did virtually everything right. The voting on Saturday turned into a thriller. When Confuse was 15 to 5 ahead I thought it was *game over*. But the *Capital Bid* caught up to 20-20, at which point I didn't know on what side of the chair to sit. In the end there were only votes for Nasacon left and our bid won

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with 10 votes over Linköping. We had worthy opponents indeed and I dare to recommend both events.



Hans Persson for Confuse 2000



Anna Åkesson

Photo: WvW

### Infinitesimalcon 3

DECEMBER 4<sup>th</sup> IN SALTSJÖBADEN

WITH GOH: **ANNA ÅKESSON**, 156 cm.

Duration: 6 minutes 20 seconds, committee:

WvW & Åsa Anderbalk, tech: Patric Fors.

Guest: Andreas Gustafsson, members: Sten Thaning, Björn X Öqvist, Marie Engfors, Hilde Digernes, Karl-Johan Norén, Fredrik Lundh, Anni Häggström, Sandra Häggström, Morgan Gustavsson, Martin Ålenius, Ulrica Adler, Patrik Andrevstam, Marcus Lindeberg.

Perhaps the most remarkable program item at this ICon was Björn X Öqvist reading a poem in Klingon language. There was also a short panel about "Why Swedish fans like to make short conventions" moderated by Ante Gustafsson. Here the idea was raised to have several cons the same day. We're considering a quartet of cons for one day. It has not yet been decided where and when. But the cons should all have separate committees and separate GoH's, separate consites and the whole shabang that belongs to a regular con. Only the members will overlap. Åsa Anderbalk was in charge of the banquet. She prepared a 3 course meal for us. The profound moment was at the following Dead Fish Party when every-one gathered in a heap on the floor for thorough contemplation.

The shortest reoccurring convention has an average length of six minutes flat. ICon # 4 will be on Mercer's Day in the year 2000 (April 31<sup>st</sup> or May 1<sup>st</sup>, in mundane calenders). GoH: to be announced, location: Fisksätra in Saltsjöbaden.

### Domestic Excavation V:

#### BÄRCON 1980

The annual SFCD-convention in 1980 was the BÄRCON in Berlin. A major event - and proof that German fandom had fully recovered from their quarrels. The program had one quite unusual event. Electronic music of the sort that Klaus Schulze, Edgar Froese or Chris Franke and Tangerine Dream produced was very popular at the time. Accordingly the performance of Rolf Trostel at BÄRCON was highly appreciated and praised. It was the one and only time I ever attended a concert of electronic music. At this convention the complexity of German fandom became obvious in the fact that several non-SFCD-associations had a presence. One of the most noted at the time was the AGSF with people like Josh Schütte or its *opponent*, the SFKR with people like Ernie Siepmann and if I remember it right with fans such as Wolfgang Müller and Oliver Möller between the frontiers. It was a time of fandom-politics. And it was *everyone* against Schütte. No one can afford to be that popular.

#### THE FIRST VIRTUAL FANGATHERING

I have previously stated somewhere that the *Telefangathering* took place in the summer of 1982. A thorough rehash of the early years, has clearly revealed that it actually was in the summer of 1980 when Joachim Henke was visiting Sweden for the first time. I was working at Grand Hotel Saltsjöbaden and we had nothing going on what so ever. Hardly any guests and certainly no conferences going on. With nothing better to do I operated the Hotel switchboard. That's when I got the idea to call Ahrvid Engholm and Anders Bellis and

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connect them with each other. I had the phone ringing in both homes simultaneously. "Hello, this is Ahrvid!" in one end and "This is Bellis!" in the other. They were equally surprised, but immediately suspected that someone was joking with them. Joachim and I confirmed their suspicion. That's when Bellis got the idea to call more fans and connect them. So we called Roger Sjölander, Maths Claesson, Leif Carlsson and Marvyn de Vil. Soon we were a dozen and a half, talking on the same telephone line. The only thing missing was a Guest of Honour. So we called Sam J Lundwall. He wasn't in, but when his answering machine prompted us to leave a message, we all shouted and chattered like a herd of wild monkeys. That night as Sam came home his wife told him that he had got a call. "Who was it from?"

"I'm not sure, but... it sounded like a bunch of wild monkeys."

"Or sf-fans?"

"Exactly!"

### FANS EVERYWHERE

I did my military service from January to August in 1981. Unlikely, but none the less I had Anders Hedenlund in the same squad. He was also a sf-fan and has for many years frequently been seen at British Eastercons. When I produced my first oneshot in our barracks he asked me straight away "Are you by any chance Wolf von Witting?" I looked perhaps unnecessarily surprised (since I considered myself halfway famous already).

"Guilty as charged!" And military service didn't keep me from conrunning. With substantial aid and direction by Ahrvid Engholm we pulled off Nasacon II jr that summer. It was not much bigger than the first Nasacon, but it wasn't intended to be. With our modest ambitions for the second attempt, at least we achieved our goal. We had a good time. The building we used for this event was called *Villa Caprifol*. It was perfectly suited for minor relaxacons. Guest of Honour was Anders Palm who in a program item debated with me whether Perry Rhodan or Captain Future was the greatest space hero of all time.

Encouraged by our success, we made Nasacon III the following year and another one in 1983. We had Villa Caprifol for six years until the convention had become so popular that we finally outgrew the building and had to move for Nasacon VIII in 1987. Many for Swedish fandom now classical program-items were introduced at this convention. *The Great Peanut Race* being one of them, *Meteorball* another one (it was a game fairly similar to baseball, except that the ball was a meteor and that the players got disintegrated).

### DISCOVERING FANDOM IN FINLAND

During one of my long vacations from the military life I went to Helsinki with Ahrvid, to visit Tom Ölander. Tom was the best known Finnish fan. Long before there was any fandom in Finland worth speaking of, he represented Finland in fandom. But in 1980 there were already at least two fanzines. From Åbo/Turkku came the fanzine *SPIN* and in Helsinki another team produced *AIKAKONE*, the Time Machine. The oneshot we produced at this occasion was *Hufvudstads-fanzinet*. Since I am born in Finland and since *HSF* was made in Finland, we can claim to actually having produced an

early Finnish fanzine and perhaps the first Finnish oneshot. It was definitely the first Finnish-Swedish collaboration in fanzine production.

### RADIO SIGMA TC

Sigma TC had a monthly radio program that year. Radio Sigma TC actually managed to lure some new fans to attend our 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in December. We launched five large rockets. One for each year. And almost certainly we could see Lord Roscoe himself riding on the back of the fifth rocket. Radio Sigma TC kept going in 1982, but was eventually cancelled.

One of the best remembered programs was written by Ahrvid Engholm. It was a dark winter night in Gröndal, where Ahrvid lived. He had painted his room with a blue sky and with stars and planets orbiting our heads. Anders Carlsson did the voice of Captain Quark, while Ahrvid starred as Major Meson. I was the President of Earth in this short radio-play and we had a *fake* Bob Weber as narrator. Dan Eriksson provided some *special effects* like dropping a set of knives and forks into a metal bucket to illustrate how their rocket-mole drilled itself through the earth crust in order to access the great clockwork of Inner Earth. Of course, they successfully saved the planet.

### EUROCON 7 - "Festival der Phantastik"

In 1982 Ahrvid, Leif Carlsson (exception-ally talented fan-illustrator) and I went to MönchenGladbach for the seventh Eurocon. At a street corner was a young man with a map, looking as lost as a fan could be. He had the aura of an sf-fan, the looks of an sf-fan, he had to be an sf-fan. So we asked if he was in search for the consite. He was. It was the dutch fan Roelof Goudriaan and publisher of a fanzine, *SHARDS OF BABEL*.

Most of the program was in German language, except for the brilliant pantomime show by *Tommy Star*. Leif and I who were watching it together were virtually rolling on the floor with laughter. But most of the time at this Eurocon poor Leif had to be more or less bored.

### LUCILLE AND THE SEVEN SMOF, Part2:

CHRISTIAN WORCH and I never talked about politics. I never talked politics with anyone in fandom, as far as I can remember. I didn't care about politics or religion and I thought it didn't matter what conviction or persuasion a fan belonged to. I knew that Chris confessed himself to be a neo-nazi, but what I didn't know was that he was so far in *or out* to have become the right hand of Michael Kühnen (German Neonazi-leader at the time). Chris was certainly the second most interesting member of CAPA. For those who can read German I'd recommend the issue 136/137 of *ANDROMEDA* (available through the SFCD). On 172 pages the editors Klaus N Frick & Hermann Ritter deal with the issue just how close to fascism fantasy literature is and take a close look at Worch's role.

Last time I heard from Chris was on CNN. He had become the Neonazi-leader of Germany and with it he had also become slightly over-weight.

CAPA FLOURISHED: The number of Capai was increased to 8 with Karin Plewka, Willmar's cute (and clever) little sister. Jörg Litschke folded and made room

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for Klaudia Vidmar (aka *Djinnie a Sahbre*). For some time I was more eager to produce a certain amount of pages than actually writing anything of any significance. And we produced an awful lot of pages indeed. Because it was fun! And cheap.

**FANSPEAK RETURNS:** In December 1980 or January '81 Willmar Plewka launched his newszine *Fandhome Weekly*. It was usually 4-8 dittographed pages/issue and as the name implies a weekly appearing zine inspired by the Swedish *Vheckans Ävfentyr*. He and Joachim Henke, Klaus Marion and later Hans-Jürgen Mader kept it alive for many years. This fanzine was different from most German fanzines at the time in many ways. It was fannish, it used fanspeak and it was made by trufans (whatever that means). Klaus Marion (associated Capai) contributed to the wave of fannishness with one of the best fannish German fanzines of the early 80's. His dittographed zine *HOODOO* was made with a great sense of humour.

Hans-Jürgen Mader gave birth to a fannish APA, SUSAPA, and invited to a series of very fannish and entertaining relaxacons in his home in Orscholz. The ORCON's are still remem-bered with nostalgia by an impressive number of fans that turned up to these events. All of this could be called CAPA's *Fannish Front* - an idea we had *to make fandom fun*.

*Below "the seven SMOF" Willmar Plewka, Wolfgang Bolz, Joachim Henke, Wolf v W, Chris Worch, Nils Stickan and Hans-Jürgen Mader*

Until HEICON'70 German fandom still seems to have had good contact with US or UK fandom. Mainly through people like Thomas Schlück, Manfred Kage and perhaps also Waldemar Kuming. One could find Rotsler or Arthur Thompson (Atom) illos in German fanzines of the 60's. The following decade very few such crossovers can be found. The regenerating fandom of the late 70's appeared to have been mostly oblivious to fannish traditions and fanspeak. They had little or no connection with English speaking counterparts. Of course, they developed some fine tradition of their own. The SFCD was slowly "rebuilt" by people like Heinz-Jürgen Ehrig, Alfred Vejchar, Dieter Steinseifer, Rolf Heuter and Jürgen Mercker. But the young generation of sf-fans (a whole lot of them being Perry Rhodan-fans) regarded the SFCD as an *old people's home*. German fandom and SFCD were no longer one and the same. Its fanzines rarely used fannish language in the late 70's. They were all very *serious* and very *constructive*.

CAPA's *Fannish Front* of the early 80's was in extreme contrast to this dry German seriousness. The basic message was "making a fanzine should be *FUN!*" Fannish fanzines should also be *for free*. Many faneds had the most unfannish notion to **sell** their products in spite of the fact that they rarely had a quality to justify any price at all. Many zines were amateur productions of lesser value than the paper they were printed on. With amateurish stories and crude fillos. Fannish fanzines were not any less amateurish, but they were offered for free, in trade or for LoCs. Enough people picked up *the*



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*true Spirit of Fandom*, Austrian fan Klaudia Vidmar, Frank M Hoyer with his *DAUBS* and Marion Mader being some of them...

We were also sort of *slippery bastards*. The people who didn't like this fannish style were easily joked off. Criticism couldn't dissuade us from *having fun* with fanzines. Then again - I have to admit that we sometimes overdid it and carelessly produced true crud.

At the 1983 SFCD-Convention in Hannover I volunteered to edit *Andromeda* #112. However, Günther Derra who initially was supposed to edit #111 folded, so I got scheduled one issue earlier. Willmar Plewka volunteered for the next and Hans-Jürgen Mader got elected chairman of the SFCD. This was also the only time that as many as 7 Capai came together. Of course I could replace *Nils Stickan* with *Klaudia Vidmar* in the picture on the following pages (using Adobe Photoshop), but I only falsify photographs for fun.

### ANDROMEDA #111

In the summer of 1984 I went down to Orscholz by bicycle. 1,600 km (1,000 miles) covered in two weeks of which I had 4 days resting along the way. It was an interesting trip. Perhaps I'll even write about it some day. Upon arrival, we edited and finished our material for *Andromeda* # 111. It included a translation of the *Enchant-ed Duplicator*, which I had the privilege of illustrating. It is a project for the future to remake these illos and publish the *Enchanted Duplicator* again. I have a feeling that fandom needs a new edition now and then. Just as a reminder of what fandom really is about... With the recent death of Walt Willis, this is even more so a reason. I'm working on it!

1984 was a year of triumph for all the Capai.

The votes for best German fanzine of 1984 went to *Andromeda* issue 112, edited by Willmar Plewka in a narrow race with the 2<sup>nd</sup> best the *Andromeda* issue 111, edited by me. Our fannish activity had become a focal point and we were trendsetters of our time. At this point it's fair to say, we had German fandom *by the balls*.  
**TO BE CONCLUDED...**



Lars-Olov Strandberg, John-Henri Holmberg



### NASACON 2000, July 7<sup>th</sup> ~ 9<sup>th</sup> Science Fiction & Fantasy Festival The National Swedish Convention 2000

Writer GoH: Brian M Stableford,

Fan GoH: John-Henri Holmberg,

Guest: Minstrel & Patchwork

Location: Scandic Hotel Slussen/Stockholm

I don't know what interest **you** in particular. But if you ever felt inclined coming to Stockholm, this is a good opportunity. And if you do, make sure that you can stay for a couple of days before or after the convention. While you're here you may as well take a look around. The archipelago around the capital is one of the most beautiful sights to be seen in the summer-time. And since there also will be a fair number of other fans in town, you'll destined to have some fun. We will be happy to assist in finding suitable accomodation.

The convention itself will have a number of unusual events and a certain number of the usual *obligatory* events.

Among the unusual events is the Saturday Stage Show, including a *Masquerade Special*: a "**Miss Universe Competition**" with com-petitors from all over the Universe. Just imagine! "Miss Cardassia, Miss Gorx, Miss Blob..." While the members of the honoured jury try to decide who the winners will be, you will be entertained. Fan History Special: Meet **the Dinosaurs of Swedish Fandom!** It is our intention to gather as many as possible. Most sf-fans of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are still alive. This may be the best and last opportunity to gather them (including the ones who went gafia long time ago).

The programme will start in three different locations on Friday, July 7<sup>th</sup>: Swedish nostalgia: Gondolen, at 18:00 h  
International: Scandic Hotel, at 19:00 h  
Media: Biograf Focus/Hagsätra (cinema)

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This convention is produced by  
SIGMA TC & STOCKHOLM TREKKERS  
Chairs: Wolf von Witting, Peter Söderlund  
DCM/OPS: Jan Johansson  
Program: Karl-Johan Norén  
Media-program: Johan Tjäder  
Publication: Anders Reuterswärd  
Accommodations: Monica Ringheim  
Transport: Michael Wester  
Website: Patric Fors

Have a look at our website for monthly updates. You will also be able to look at and download pics from our previous Nasacons.  
<http://www.sigmatc.a.se>

## Nasacon 2000 - Members:

GH=GoH, G=Guest, S0 & SX=Staff, P=Press

GH1 - Brian M Stableford, UK

GH2 - John-Henri Holmberg

G01 - Jane Stableford, UK

G02 - Chris Malme, UK

G03 - Neil Chambers, UK

G04 - Andy Gordon-Kerr, UK

G05 - Martin Gordon-Kerr, UK

S01 - Wolf von Witting

S02 - Peter Söderlund

S03 - Janne Johansson (ops)

S04 - Patric Fors (web)

S05 - Anders Reuterswärd (souvenir book)

S06 - Monica Ringheim (accommodation)

S07 - Johan Tjäder (media-programme)

SX1 - Michael Ehrt (gopher), Germany

SX2 - Göran Hallmarken (filk)

SX3 - Stefan Kayat (filk)

SX4 - Michael Wester (driver)

SX5 - Leif Forsberg (driver)

SX6 - Camilla Zetterquist

SX7 - Matthias Pätzold, Germany

P01 - Ahrvid Engholm

M01 - Herman Ellingsen, Norway

M02 - Bjørn Tore Sund, Norway

M03 - Lars-Olov Strandberg

M04 - Karl-Johan Norén (programme)

M05 - Hans Persson, Linköping

M06 - George Bobjörk

M07 - Britt-Louise Viklund, Norrköping

M08 - Patrik Andrevstam

M09 - Carl-Mikael Zetterling

M10 - Tomas Cronholm

M11 - Johan Anglemark

M12 - Robert Brown

M13 - Jan Söderberg, Norway

M14 - Lars Olsson

M15 - Pam Fremon, USA

M16 - Åsa Anderbalk

M17 - Marie Engfors

M18 - Sten Thaning

M19 - Sven Holmström, Linköping

M20 - David Skogsberg, V.Frölunda

**Nasacon 2000** will be the big Swedish event of the year. In all its intentions it is more of a European convention than any previous con we made in recent years. We have also moved into a Hotel, which we hope can be the site of future Swedish cons of *major* proportions. This is not one of the *major* events... but one should be aware that a size 500 convention would qualify as major for Sweden. We have such a scarcely populated country, you know.

## European Con Sequence:

There are so many cons and there is so little money. Here's a list of the cons I'd like to attend this year. It's virtually every major con in Europe (*except pure media-events*) and a number of minor conventions. Of course it is out of the question to go to all of them. Here's one I'd like to go to, which is beyond my budget (unless I suddenly become filthy rich):

**Mecon 2000, March 11-12**, QUB, Belfast Northern Ireland's Annual SF convention, GoH: Harry Harrison  
Contact: Mecon 2000, 24 Malton Court, Upper Malone Road, Belfast, N.Ireland, BT9 6HB  
Web: [www.mecon.co.uk](http://www.mecon.co.uk)  
E-mail: [mecon2000@net.ntl.com](mailto:mecon2000@net.ntl.com)

**RECONAISSANCE**, the first BEC or Big European Convention set up as an alternative to Eurocon. SF/Fantasy Convention in Bergen (Norway) on **March 31<sup>st</sup> to April 2<sup>nd</sup>**.

Web: <http://bec.fandom.no>

E-mail: [ReConnaissance@fandom.no](mailto:ReConnaissance@fandom.no)

GoH: Iain Banks \* Willy Ustad and B.Andreas Bull-Hansen

When I first heard about **RECONAISSANCE**, the BEC, it sounded like a really good idea and I thought it would work. Since then, due to unfortunate circumstances, the con has lost momentum, and now I only hope that the committee will see it through alive. Being an agent of this BEC, I'm supposed to support it *no matter what*, which is an obligation I feel committed to. I think it goes with agenting. Right now it feels like the BEC will turn out to be a Big Norwegian Convention.

So far, I've only heard good things about Norwegian conventions and there is nothing to indicate that this event is going to turn out for the worse. It is just my impression that the BEC has failed to attract the Big European Community of Fandom. Perhaps one should keep in mind that this is **the first** of a series of BEC to be an alternative to the Eurocon. With a 25 years head start, no one should be surprised if the Eurocon turns out a *winner*.

If it doesn't work out for the BEC this year, the idea itself deserves a second and a third attempt. Perhaps we can work it out at the ESE in Darmstadt later on. So far I've heard little about next year. This very BEC has been announced 1998. Will there be *anything* at all going on in 2001?

## 2Kon

April 21-24 Central Hotel, Glasgow, Scotland. Eastercon with a theme: Celtic SF and Fantasy.

GoH: Guy Gavriel Kay, Katherine Kurtz, Deborah Turner

Attending: 25 UKP, Supporting: 15 UKP

Contact: 2Kon, 20 Woodburn Terrace, St.Andrews KY16 8BA, UK

Swedish Agent: Linnéa Anglemark

**2Kon** is one of the events this year, that I really would hate to miss. Eastercons can be more *European* events than Eurocon itself. This was the case in Manchester and I believe that Glasgow will attract as many cross-European fans.

**ESE** (the European Smoffing Event) July 28-30, Darmstadt, Germany. Con for people who run cons.

This is probably one of the most important events in the history of European fandom. The future of European fandom depends on what steps the Eurosmoffs will take. Big words for a small assembly. SMOF or no SMOF, there are some people who makes things happen... and

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a lot of them will be in Darmstadt. Question is - will they collaborate or dissipate? Add sugar to fertilizer and you have a bomb! It isn't just a marvellous opportunity to create the future, but also a great responsibility *not to blow it up*.

SF-fans are known to be strongheaded individuals. Will they really be able to *agree*? I do hope so. There are many who feel that *this is the time* for cross-European collaboration. The vision ahead is a Big European Convention as an alternative perhaps not only to Eurocon, but to the Worldcon as well. There are plenty of locations in Europe to host a Worldcon. But how are we *poor* Europeans (except Britain) expected to run a decent Worldcon if we can't even run a decent Eurocon/BEC/Whatever? And who in Europe has the guts to bid for a Worldcon (except for the people who already have done so in the past)?

\* \* \*

Be there!

**CONFUSE 2000**, 16-18 June, Linköping, GoH: Stephen Baxter  
Contact: Hans Persson, Domareg.8, 586 63 Linköping, Sweden

E-mail: [confuse@lysator.liu.se](mailto:confuse@lysator.liu.se)  
Web: [www.lysator.liu.se/confuse/](http://www.lysator.liu.se/confuse/)

**TRICITY - the EUROCON 2000**

August 2-6 in Gdansk, Poland  
Contact: Krzysztof Papierkowski  
Chlopska 7/107, 80-362 Gdansk-Przymorze, Poland  
E-mail: [mirek@thenut.eti.pg.gda.pl](mailto:mirek@thenut.eti.pg.gda.pl)  
Web: [www.netcom.com/~slawico](http://www.netcom.com/~slawico)

## HanseCon 15 in Lübeck

AT THE LOCAL *CVJM (YMCA) SLEEP INN* ON OCTOBER 29<sup>th</sup> TO NOVEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999. It's a rare thing in Europe, that anyone endures to run a convention for 15 consecutive years. But Eckhard Marwitz has done so and perhaps one could say that it is his foremost contribution to German fandom. It's one of the few truely fannish events. And he is not through with the making of his Hansecon just yet. There will be another next year. I visited this relaxacon first time in 1986, when it still was a very small con, 25 people came together. I remember it as a quite cozy event. Through the years Hansecon always spent a crouching existence. Usually they gathered between 40 and 100 fans every year until recently. For some reason (that may or may not be connected to the fact that EDM went to bid for a worldcon) the membership rate began to drop off. In 1998 there were merely a dozen fans who came together. HC was close to being cancelled. However, EDM concluded there had to be another one in 1999 and his on-site aid Christoph Lühr agreed with him. Christoph has been along all the way. I met him the first time in 1986. He chairs the SF-Club of Lübeck now.

I don't think anyone came into town with great expectation. But EDM's and Christoph's experience and imagination were notably sufficient to ensure that we all got a wonderful time. Who would have guessed? This is a kind of convention where one really gets to know people. I was very pleased to meet Heinrich R.Arenz for the first time. He really is a *Dinosaur* of German fandom, was already a member of the SFCD in 1955. Went gafia shortly before Heicon and has been gafia twice since. He's been to three Eastercons, but isn't really a fan of big events. Another present Dinosaur was the Lord of the Dragons himself, Dieter Steinseifer. I will return with a

few more comments on Hansecon 15 in the next issue of CoClock, when I have the pictures to jog my memory. I have not yet fully recovered from my financial deficit last year, so the pix are not yet developed. Further comments, with pix - next ish!

## CounterLoCs

<b>CoClock's LoC policy:</b> I prefer not to cut LoCs. I do not censor. LoCs can be written in any earthly language, and I will translate to the best of my ability and resource. LoCs can be short. Spelling errors and grammatical errors will be corrected as far as I am capable of detecting them. Send to: <a href="mailto:wolf@sigmatc.a.se">wolf@sigmatc.a.se</a>
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**Ralf Grosser**

Martinstr.52, D-64285 Darmstadt

Just had a look at CC4. The Perry Rhodan logo has always been quite amusing to me as a flight and spacetravelfan. Johannes Bruck, the PR illustrator, did it after a picture, of an american Bell X-1A Pilot from the 50's. (Bell testpilot Scott Crossfield, I believe, the first man to go past Mach 2!) Exept for the silly antenna, the helmet seems to be a two piece clamshelltyp K-1 helmet, like they used on the T-1 Partialpressure suit. This would be for high altitude flight only. Moonwalks would leave Perry feeling, a bit more then nippy .

Johnny Bruck also used the outline of a Sikorsky H-52 for the design of the PR Shift. Don't tell a PR fan what kind of unmention-ables a *Shift* also is, or that a *Topsider* is a US-Navy issue piece of footwear. We're also not going to enlighten everyone, what a Bully, an Overhead, or an Undertaker, and ect, etc, is, but you may guess why Ralf from Indiana, always has a craving for a Zippo, everytime he reads an old PR-Magazine.

You may not remember, that in 1987, when I visited you, we watched the movie "The Right Stuff". In it, there is a scene with Chuck Yeager, wearing the helmet and suit, piloting the X-1A. There also is some real footage in it where Yeager is congratulating Crossfield on his Mach 2 flight. The first breaking of the sound barrier, in level flight, was done wrong in *The Right Stuff*, Yeager wore an AP-Suit, and not an A-1 Jacket.

**Footnote**, on TRS, the Bartender at Ponchos is the real Lt.Col. Yeager. The Navy officer shaking hands with Tom Hanks, at the end of Apollo 13 is Lt.Com. James R.Lovell

**WvW:** Thank you, for this very interesting comment on CC4. I have read about Scott Crossfield before, so I was amused as well, and even somewhat surprised to hear this. I didn't know. But I do know that *Okefenokee* is a large wooded swamp in SE Georgia, that Wendayne Ackerman had a tough job trans-lating without making it completely silly and that one can spend all day finding errors in a *piece of writing* that is immeasurably more extensive than the Holy Bible.

**Jonas Bobjörk**

Fisksätra Torg 11,  
133 41 Saltsjöbaden, Sweden

I was reading CoClock#6 when I suddenly realized that my father and my bigger brother have been published in a fanzine, but I have not. And I also realized that the initials of your name, WvW, can be mistaken for a German car...

**WvW:** The car, VW, or Volkswagen is or was manufactured in Wolfsburg, no less. Could you think of anyone better suited for the job as manager?

Your brother has only been *mentioned*, your LoC has been *published*. So, young friend, as a matter of fact - you did beat him to it!

## Karl-Johan Norén

Sorög.101<sup>2tr</sup>, 164 47 Kista, Sweden

Having only read one Perry Rhodan (Man and Monster#36 by KH Scheer), I'm not sure I can understand the following they got, but then I read it at age 27, not 13. But I guess Rhodan suffers from the same problem as many other old sf stories do, that of ungraceful aging. Not much of the sf from the 30's or 40's I've read feels enthusing today, or interesting for that matter. I guess that's the test of time.

The domestic excavation reminded me of my first con. Not the Fantasycon in Stockholm 1995, but when I participated in the 1986 congress of Communist Youth. I can't say I met any authors there, but there were a lot of other similarities, including the staying awake for 40 hours. Not because I couldn't *find* a place to sleep, but because we didn't *have time* to sleep. It's funny how many similarities you run into, be they political, studenticose, fannish or other events. I guess it only makes the differences in details more startling, though.

II: About the basis of filking as you see it, that is putting new words to old songs, that is hardly unique for filking. The worker's movement of the late 1800's and early 1900's did it with gusto, especially based on songs from the Salvation Army and the like - and *they* probably stole the tunes from somewhere else. Another popular source were army marching songs - one of the more enduring songs of the Swedish and Finnish workers movement is written to the tune of a czarist march which also ended up as the official song of the Red Army. And I doubt the popular movements of the late 1800's were the ones to start putting new words to old tunes. In this way I filk is just another branch of an old, venerable tradition.

As for copying fanzines at SAAM (for the foreign readers, I might mention that SAAM is *Stiftelsen Alvar Appeltofts Minnesfond*, founded by the parents of Alvar Appeltoft, a legendary Swedish fan during the '50s to '70s, which does its best to support Swedish fandom by having a free-of-charge copying service for fanzines, giving an annual stipend to a worthy Swedish fan, supporting cons in need and so on. The annual stipend to a worthy fan is known as the Alvar and it is a great honour to receive it), I don't have troubles with it taking inordinate amounts of time - but then my fanzine fits on a single sheet of paper. But I guess SAAM could help Swedish fanzine fandom greatly by getting a larger and faster copying machine. Hm... the major part of this paragraph is between brackets, but then I can ramble in LoCs, it's space that I don't have in my zine.

**WvW:** You have been severely edited. Do not ramble again. However, thanks for filling the page!



**WAHF:** Murray Moore, Canada and  
from Klaus N Frick, Germany

## Fanzine Com:

WHAT EXACTLY MAKES A WINNER? (ava=available as) "2 is a couple and 3 is a crowd!"

**ANSIBLE** (ava E-zine) monthly newszine, edited by Dave Langford. This trufan is there at the *Tun*, every first thursday of the month, and hands out his thin pamphlet which everyone is so eager to read immediately. He has done so for ever, it seems. Everyone knows him, it seems. He knows everyone (of any significance). He is generous with it, successful and if you don't know him yet, then you should at least get acquainted with his fanzine, which creates so much fuzz. And now he won another HUGO. Come on! His writing may be excellent, but the two pages monthly are produced with ease, I expect. They should be anyway, for someone who has been at it for so long. I hate to think that he gets the HUGO just for being popular among fans (which he is, since he is a likeable person). Shouldn't there be some kind of limit to the number of awards one person can get? IMHO no winner should be nominated for a 4<sup>th</sup> HUGO. Why? Because after the third **everyone** is already aware that this fanzine, this writer or this artist is brilliant! And it would give others a chance. Let the third award be some kind of permanent/eternal HUGO. Then give another one to: **FILE 770**, bimonthly newszine, editor: Mike Glycer. Also a multiple HUGO-awarded fanwriter. And don't tell me that Dave or Mike keep publishing their fanzines just to collect yet another HUGO. A third forever-HUGO should of course be awarded to: **MIMOSA**, a fanhistory zine, 2 ish/year, editors: Nicki & Richard Lynch. This would give others a chance. Did **ATTITUDE** ever get a HUGO? I don't think so, but they surely deserved one. After reading **BANANA WINGS #14**, editors: Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer, I find other suitable candidates. The best and greatest honour **PLOKTA**, a humorous zine, (Steve Davies, Alison Scott & Mike Scott) and **EMERALD CITY** (E-zine), editor: Cheryl Morgan, ever can hope for is to be *HUGO-nominated*. Which is a great honour, of course. But what is it exactly that makes a winner? Is it quality, quantity or popularity, or is it infact a combination of the three? What about invested effort?

**Quality?** Ansible, Banana Wings, Emerald City, File 770, Mimosa and Plokta differs slightly in quality from issue to issue and often a distinction can only be made as a matter of opinion. There is *always* a lot of effort put into Mimosa. I rarely used to be in favour of anything American, but Mimosa and File 770 had me adjusting my opinion and attitude. While Ansible is a quality source of information, there is more satisfaction in reading an elaborated text. Even more so if it has literate quality.

**Quantity?** What has quantity got to do with anything? Well, if you make an excellent zine, but less than 100 people know about it, then you're unlikely to win anything. Dave OTOH has been around for ever and ever, distributed his fanzine at every major convention and it is also available as E-zine. I don't believe there is any other fanzine, which is (and has been) read by as many fans. And since it is 2 pages/ish, the production cost is moderate for any size of purse.

**Popularity?** In spite of any potential grandeur in writing, if you're a smeghead you're unlikely to win any awards. How do you know if you are a smeghead? This is quite difficult to recognize, since everyone always try to do their best and to do *the right thing*. It is likely that you are a smeghead if you are frequently contradicted or if you frequently have to contradict others. No one can go through life without a certain amount of conflict, but have a look at the mass of conflict you're involved in. The more conflict you have, the less popular you're likely to be. This does not work the other way around. Without any conflict at all, you're likely to be seen as mostly harmless or perhaps you're not seen at all. And then it also matters how a conflict is resolved...

So, in order to win a HUGO, you need to have some quality. You need to make a considerable investment, produce and distri-bute your fanzine to a couple of hundred people. Preferably to people who visit

# COUNTERCLOCK # 7

World-cons and vote for HUGO's. Since you don't know who votes and who doesn't, you'd have to make an educated guess (if you want to be efficient). You would have to be reasonably popular and it does help if you are pretty.

In Sweden we have a son of Hugo: the ALVAR, which is awarded to fans only. And fortunately you can only get it once. Otherwise Ahrvid Engholm would surely have collected his first dozen awards by now. An award should have the effect of encouraging people to excel. With *predetermined* winners as Dave, Mike, Nicki and Richard the award itself doesn't inspire anyone. It wouldn't surprise me if they share the awards for the next ten years ahead. They deserve it. You get no argument from me there. But now that paperfanzines have become more rare. Shouldn't there be some kind of award to encourage new young editors? Perhaps one ought to do something about that... I think BANANA WINGS was the best British zine of 1999. But who cares what I think? Perhaps Mark and Claire do. Stretch your backs. At least someone thought you were the best!

Previously mentioned PLOKTA appeared with four issues during the year 1999 x 14 pages A4 (Volume 4). The word PLOKTA is another nifty abbreviation. It is actually short for "Please, Let Our Kangaroo Travel Abroad" and contains an elaborate scheme to get a travel permit for Alison's pet kangaroo Steve, which she intended to bring along to Aussiecon. This gimmick would surely have helped to bring the HUGO back home, secured in his pouch. As it turned out, Dave greedily snatched the award from their trembling hands *and paws*.

Determined as they are, Steve will be on site next time, jump up and down, and crush him like a bug. That'll teach him! Steve, who isn't quite human as you may be aware of by now, has a control panel on his back. There is only one way to stop him. You'd have to press lots of keys to abort.

As you can see, in spite of the fact that Alison and Steve disguise their true intentions behind clever headers like "A Beginner's Guide to Selfmutilation" or "Dr Plokta and His Infeasibly Large Herpes" I have come to a clear understanding of exactly what this zine really is about. In their second phase, the three editors Alison, Mike and Steve will be rising to political authority with "Powerful Leadership of (a) Kangaroo (in) Tory Administration." And if you *really* want to know the truth, you'd have to submit the usual to:

Steve Davies, 52 Westbourne Terrace  
Reading, Berks, RG30 2RP  
United Kangaroodom

Alison Scott, 24 St Mary Road  
Walthamstow, London, E17 9RG, UK

Mike Scott, 2 Craithie Road  
Chester, CH3 5JL, UK

## What's up in Ireland?

*Blankspace*, Irish newszine, has been appearing monthly for most of 1999, editor: Dave Stewart, for Science Fiction Ireland. But coinciding with the death of Walt Willis and with OCTOCON, the organisational structure of SF Ireland appears to have fallen apart. What happened? It is unlikely that the problems of SFI have arisen *because* of Walt Willis' demise, but it marks even more so the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. I have already heard that OCTOCON wasn't quite what it used to be and that I don't need to be depressed any further for missing it.

The good news is that Dave Stewart has decided to go on with Blankspace. It has so far been a well edited and comprehensive news-letter, which so far has been able to shed a light on everything I wanted/needed to know about Irish fandom. Two conventions are

announced for Irish fandom in October this year. There will be another Octocon (I just assume it will be in October), more info about it later on. Or e-mail contact: james@lostcarpark.com

There will also be a media convention;  
A NEW BEGINNING on October 27-30 with Chase Masterson and Max Grodénchik (Leeta & Rom from ST-DS9). Contact: Neutral Zone Prod.Ltd. Po Box 7194, Ballbriggan, Co. Dublin, Eire.

I think this proves that Irish fandom isn't exactly dead, but rather in transition. Perhaps Blankspace will keep us up to date. The usual: Dave Stewart, 43 Eglinton Road, Dublin 4

## And Hello to Denmark!

Niels Dalgaard has sent *us* (maj.plur.) his fanzine **SØN OF TOHUBOHU**, which is in Danish language and is made in 50 copies. Could it be, that it is just about the size of Danish fandom? In that case Danish and French fandom would have to be just about the same size. It's been a long time... I haven't seen a Danish fanzine for almost 15 years. But it was nice to find a Counterclock-review in it.

From SØN OF TOHUBOHU we learn that the first Danish sf-convention was held in 1973, and that the club SF-cirklen was founded the year after. But Niels has found a trace of Danish interest in fandom as early as 1956. Logic dictates that *something* must have led to the first Danish convention in 1973. Are we going to find out? Niels also mentions that Klaus Johansen is *gafia* today. If you can read Danish: Niels Dalgaard, Bredahlsvej 15, 4 t.h., DK-2500 VALBY, Denmark.

## I Love Canadians!

What is this? Plain luck? So far I've had 100% response from Canada to CounterClock. That's 4 out of 4 readers who have answered to my hails. That's far better than any other fandom I've turned to. So I've had good number of responses from Brits, Swedes and Germans as well, but no where near 100%. It's gotta be luck!

Some Canadians are also responsible for a very entertaining and complex computer game: JAGGED ALLIANCE 2... Battle the forces of the Evil Queen Deidranna in the country of Arulco. There is a sci-fi element in the game... There are strange creatures living underground. They are called the *Crepitus*. But the giant *Bloodcats* also make you wonder if this really is set on the planet Earth. I have not had this much fun since *Baldur's Gate*.

## Covert Communications From Zeta Corvi#9

Edited and published by  
Andrew C Murdoch,  
508 - 6800 Westminster Highway  
Richmond, B.C. Canada, V7C 1C5  
E-mail: raven@wolf.spydernet.com

Available for the usual or 2\$ cash. From Zeta Corvi comes a **Big Fan Project Alert!** Andrew Murdoch once suggested that there should be a website extolling the virtues of paperbased fanzines. Now there is one. There's just a couple of things lacking... like a list of zines.

## COUNTERCLOCK # 7

So far, all there is on the site is a few basic pages. He is asking for more, especially if anyone more hearsed in the history of SF fanzines would care to tackle the site's History section. Most important, though, any zine editors who are interested in having their zine promo-ted in one big site on the web is asked to contact him: [raven@wolf.spydernet.com](mailto:raven@wolf.spydernet.com) He is also willing to host individual web pages about your zine as part of the site.

To see what there is up right now, aim your browser at:

<http://members.xoom.com/corvisraven/bfl/>

Feedback (and 'zine listings) welcome!

### FILE 770

edited by Mike Glycer, 705 Valley View Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016, USA, E-mail: [MGlycer@compuserve.com](mailto:MGlycer@compuserve.com)

Available for news, artwork, arranged trades, or by subscription (8 USD for 5 issues, 15 for 10 issues, mailed first class in North America or surface mail rates overseas). Bimonthly, US Letter format, usually 18-24 pages.

Covers global SF & fandom interests from an American point of view. Usually very well written articles. Excellent artwork. I wouldn't hesitate a second to subscribe, if I didn't trade already. Recommended!

### LJRF –

#### Lost Johnny's Radio Fanzine

c/o Dave Weingart, 17 Chapin Rd, Farmingdale, NY 11735, USA

I have here the summer is of 1999. There is a report from Lilith Fair on August 6 at Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh NY and another report from Concertino 1999, the filkcon in Westborough, Massachussets on July 9-11. Yes, Dave likes music. Let me quote the editor here: "LJRF is an occasional, sometimes irregular (but *never* boring) and utterly amateurish publication of the Farmingdale Extraterrestrial Base and Snackbar." Neat artwork.

A bit late, but the online version of Lost Johnny's Radio Fanzine, October 1999 ish, is now available. It is substantially the same as the text of the paper edition

LJRF (hardcopy) is available for the usual or by editorial whim (which means I need your snail address if I don't already have it) and is being mailed out even as you read this.

<http://www.liii.com/~phydeaux/ljrf/>

Email: [phydeaux@liii.com](mailto:phydeaux@liii.com)

### OPUNTIA

published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2E7. Available for \$ 3 cash (no cheques, no stamps) for a one-time sample copy, trade for your zine, or letter of comment.

Issue **44.1A** is 16 pages (folded American paper format, whatshamacallit? I believe we call it *8½ something*. Whatever!) and has a zine & APA listing. What is an opuntia? Well, apparently it is any cactaceous fleshy herb, shrubby plant, or tree of the genus *Opuntia*, having branches usually composed of flattened or globose joints, and having usually yellow flowers and pear-shaped or ovoid, often edible fruits.

(after *Opuntius* pertaining to *Opus* a town in Locris, Greece). Of course I looked it up in a dictionary. Now you don't have to.

**WIGGLE**, (ava E-zine) UK Filk newszine, monthly. Available from: Rafe Culpin

Wanna know what goes on in filkfandom? This is all you need. E-mail: [rafe@cix.co.uk](mailto:rafe@cix.co.uk)

Next Fanzine Com: "All You Need to Know About German Zines"

### Film & Video Com:

The **MATRIX** of videomarketing

**RELEASE:** It happens ever so often that the video with Swedish subtitles is available before the English version. Even the synchronized German version comes faster to the market. Infact, the Germans are the quickest to put the films on sale in Europe (I don't know about the Dutch, really). Why is that?

If you think about it for a minute... The Germans have to add a lot of work to every film. Translator, voice actors, sound director and sound editor. The Swedes only use a translator and someone who edits the *subtitle-machine* (I'm not really into that business to know the proper terminology). So why is it that the Germans release before the Swedes and the Swedes before the Brits? Isn't that just slightly odd?

The potential Swedish market is just about 10 million people (the poulation of Sweden + some people outside Sweden who can speak Swedish and use the Pal VHS-system. The potential German market is ten times bigger.

The potential English market would have to be just about 65 million people. So why are some cassettes 5 UKP cheaper in Sweden than in the UK (with Swedish subtitle) and why does the magnetic tape of a (UK) CIC video show an obvious picture degradation after less than ten years, while the Swedish tapes *only* have a slightly reduced sound quality? I can only come to think of one logical answer. "Greed!"

*So what about the film MATRIX? Well...it had really flashy sfx and so on. But if you get to choose between Matrix and Dark City, have a look at Dark City.*

**ULTRAVIOLET** is now available on VHS-video. 2 cassettes 155 minutes each, all six episodes. And, yes, I bought them - and yes, I've seen them by now. And yes, it was worthwhile. It is refreshing to see a British production now and then. A change of pace from all Star Trek and Babylon 5. I am also quite fond of short series (4 - 6 episodes). It doesn't hurt that ULTRAVIOLET has an intelligent script. I think it's a pity though, that the "Code 5 beings" are exposed on the cover of the cassette. While they carefully avoid to mention who and what **they** are in the series, some of the *surprise* is denied those who read the sleeve.

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The only reason people get lost in thought is because it's unfamiliar territory.

## LISTMANIA

Now that we're able to wrap up the years 1900-1999, I'd like to add one, which is about a topic that I really do care about. Televised SF. Before you ask the question, I think the overall best series so far has been ST-TNG. But I sincerely hope that we'll come up with something better in future. I hate to think that was **it**. Runner-Up is *the Prisoner*. Next I expect a lynchmob of B5-fans at my throat!

The *Olympic* 12 SF-TV-series  
(in alphabetical order):

BABYLON 5  
BLAKE'S 7  
COLD LAZARUS (1996)  
DR.WHO  
PRISONER, THE  
RAUMPATROUILLE (German)  
RED DWARF  
STAR TREK - DS9  
STAR TREK - TNG  
STAR TREK - TOS  
SURVIVORS  
WILD PALMS (1992)

The Runner-Ups:

ALF, DARK SKIES,  
HITCH-HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY  
OUTER LIMITS, THE (anthology)  
STARMAN, STAR TREK-VOYAGER  
TWILIGHT ZONE, THE (anthology)  
ULTRAVIOLET and the X-FILES

Not qualified in the top 12 (which means that I didn't just forget about them) or among the runner-ups. I have seen them all, have you?: ALIEN NATION, AMAZING STORIES, AVENGERS, BATMAN, BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, BIONIC WOMAN, BLINDPASSASJER (Norwegian), BUCK ROGERS, BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, CAP-TAIN VIDEO, CRUSADE, DEEPWATER BLACK, DEN 5:E GENERATIONEN (Swedish), DOOM-WATCH, EARTH 2, FANTASTIC JOURNEY, FENIX FIVE, THE FLASH, FLASH GORDON, GEMINI MAN, HIGHLANDER, INCREDIBLE HULK, THE INVADERS, INVASION EARTH, INVISIBLE MAN, JUPITER MOON, LAND OF THE GIANTS, LOGAN'S RUN, LOST IN SPACE, MORK & MINDY, MY FAVOURITE MARTIAN, 1990, OUTER LIMITS, PLANET OF THE APES, RAY BRADBURY THEATER, ROBOPOL, SEA QUEST, SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN, SOMETHING IS OUT THERE, SPACE 1999, SPACE ABOVE AND BEYOND, SPACE PRECINCT, SPACE RANGERS, STARGATE SG1, SUPERMAN, TEK WAR, THIRD FROM THE SUN, TIME TRAX, TIME TUNNEL, TOMORROW PEOPLE, UFO, V, VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA, VR5, WAR OF THE WORLDS. As you can see - it is pointless trying to make a top 100 out of this. Did I miss anything?



Camilla Zetterqvist, unmasked

Photo: WvW

## Filk CD Release:

Annie & Tim Walker are pleased to announce the release of their first CD as **Wilderwood - "Dreams Incarnate"**.

A 7 track CD-R release, including the following tracks: "**Oak Trees and Candlelight**"

"**Wilderwood**", inspired by "Mythago Wood" by Robert Holdstock. (With: Rika Koerte)

"**Shadow Within**"

"**Lady Green**" - It's loud, it's bouncy, it's a singalong, it's about Mother Nature!

"**Fairbourn Processional**", Sweet, hesitant little harp theme written for the Fairbourns on their wedding day.

"**Old Gods**", First hand experiences of Cthulhu Cultists (With: Phil and Lissa Allcock)

"**Ernest's Face**"

Cost is £6.50 if collected in person, or delivered at a suitable fannish event. Postage and packing added for mail delivery - contact for details: By telephone: 01474 352628, or email: Wilderwood@weyrd.org

## 1999 Special Thanks to:

(in backwards alphabetical order)

Dave Weingart

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SAAM

Lloyd Penney

Klaus N Frick

Janne Johansson

Patrik Andrevstam

CounterClock UK Agent:

Jonathan D Jones, 136 Kendal Way  
Chesterton, Cambridge CB4 1LT, UK

**JANUARY 7<sup>th</sup> - THE FINAL TOUCH:** I have to admit, this issue got edited in a bit of a hurry. My internal schedule demanded a release in January and a prompt distribution in order to make it available for the Tun in February. And both agents should be given some time...

It was me who *fumbled* in October and I was *out of commission* the following two months. I was aiming at 32 pages for this issue in spite of the thin LoCol, but my brain just ceased to function. In case of an emergency like this I had an outside Sweden previously unpublished toon left from November 1986 to throw in. This was actually the last one I did, before I killed off my reputation of being a car-toonist. 15 years ago I was asked ever so often to make drawings of Marsipans. I liked drawing these *little green men with antennas* just as much as I like being asked to sing at a convention today. In both cases I feel mediocre and I like to do *other things* as well. I don't feel mediocre in terms of versatility. I'm adapted for almost any kind of program-item. Well... enjoy "Honk & Toot vs P.Lhodan - the Hero of the Universe", page 21-22 and be sure I will not bother you with many cartoons in future issues.

My preliminary schedule for this year is #8 before BEC, #9 before 2Kon and #10 in time for Nasacon. That's as far as I plan ahead.

*...and the stars still shine as bright!*