



## INTRODUCTION

Looking at the production of other people, I sometimes feel like everyone is doing a better job at this than I do. But then again, CounterClock is what it is. And even if flashy layout could make it seem more professional, it's ultimately the content which counts.

I believe the non-professionals are less intimidated by an easy concept. "Hey, I can do this!" you may think. And then you're absolutely right. Anyone can. That is part of the charm with fanzines. You never know what to expect. Science fiction-fans have published their own magazines for three quarters of a century. And the term *fanzine* was coined October 1940 by an American fan named Russ Chauvenet. I wasn't even born until 20 years later.

So, go ahead! Make your own fanzine, or better still... Write a Letter of Comment to this one!

I didn't get a whole lot of response to CoClock # 10 and 11, which I experienced as rather disappointing. So I was not in the best of moods when I made # 12. If I am writing effing boring, then why not do it properly? But two very recent dialogues have made me re-evaluate my writing. It seems I don't come across the way I want. Not at all. One dialogue, was with Theresa Derwin.

I said: *"I'm sorry you started with # 12. I was in a really bad mood when I made it. I'm happy though, being able to say that none of the other issues will give you any similar bad feelings. 11 times out of 12 I'm really more of an up-beat kinda person."*

And her only reply to this was: *"Ha!"* Never in my life before, I thought as much about a single "Ha!" as much as this one. Being a writer, she would be aware of all the different connotations a "ha" could entail and she possibly meant *all of them*. I am OTOH aware that from the things we say, only 10% are the words, 20% the voice and 70% our body-language.

In writing we have only the words themselves. I have too often taken it for granted that people understand what I say and how it is meant. As if I was speaking to you directly. I have been wrong. For a while I therefore considered to make this issue a totally humouristic one. But let's just hope that it at least will be a turning point. From here on, more up-beat. When possible.

The second dialogue which had me thinking a lot was with Anders Bellis. Face to face we always get along well. I consider us friends. More than mere FB-friends, since we have known each other for 34 years. We have had our shares of disagreements, but I feel we agree more often than we disagree. I also have to admit, that most of the time when we disagreed, he has ultimately been right about what he said.

The most recent disagreement was when I doubted Dave Camerons good intentions about British people. It upset me quite a bit, being called a *conspiracy theorist* because of this. Why? Because in my mind this means a person who doesn't care, or doesn't examine the given evidence properly and instead presume there to be *dark forces of conspiracy* behind all that goes wrong. Included earthquakes, hurricanes and other forces of nature.

Of course, that is a silly notion. If Cameron has or has not a personal agenda is politics and I am not going into politics here. Neither will I spend time with conspiracy theories. The idea that I do, may arise from CC # 12 in which I examined evidence from 9/11. Well... I know.

I know how hard it is to challenge what we believe in. It is impossible to convince a believer that the story of Jesus Christ was made up by the Greek when they got bored by their own religion. They found no gods on the Olympos. And the Gnostics were much more convincing. So they presented us with an update.

I still like the old Greek gods better. Infact, I love them. Six male and six female gods in the highest ranks made sure their society would reflect the same equal rights. And I am quite certain it did. For hundreds of years. Until the Greek were conquered by the Romans. And even though the Romans shared their mythology with the Greek, the Romans were not half as tolerant and not half as socially adept as the Greek. In turn (the Greek civilization being the more advanced, older and wiser, yet conquered by the strong), the Roman way of life had its heavy influence on the Greek. Out of it was born a new religion which may have had good intentions to set things right, socially, philosophically and so on. But it followed a thousand years and more of rather less enlightened ages. Women and poor were oppressed, while the church had all the power and a considerable amount of wealth. Yet, reading the book, one finds this was not at all its intention.

Anyway... back to my favourite Greek, Bellis. I know he is not an unreasonable man. In the past, I admit, I did

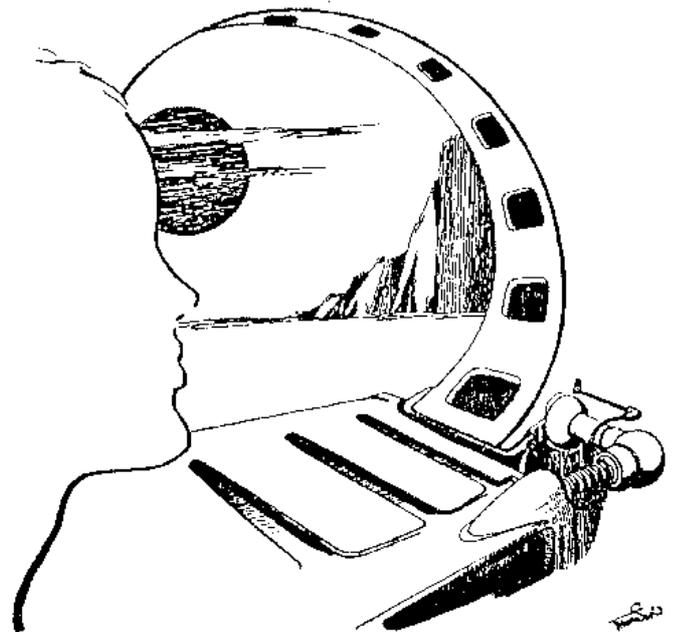


Illustration by ATOM: - Arthur Thomson 1927-1990

occasionally misjudge him. It caused unnecessary strife. Because the only way to get on *his wrong side*, is by having the wrong idea about something. So, if ones fact is valid, then one is presenting it the wrong way. That is my conclusion.

Actually, I have read literature on semantics, rhetoric and hermeneutics, just not the recommended one by Arne Naess. And reading it doesn't make me a whole lot better as a writer, or in debating. What I hope improves my writing is **A** the practice of writing and **B** the thoughts behind the words. Evaluation, re-evaluation, re-writing ad infinitum. For the future, we not only have to learn, but also re-learn and re-evaluate what we believe to be true. Or else, we will find it difficult to improve ourselves. I have more often improved, by discovering when I have been wrong, than by discovering something new. I hate to think, that I may stop learning something new and that what I know and believe is enough. It never is.

It is too late, to make any drastic changes to this particular issue. But up until now, I have always been able to sit down and assemble an issue from all the material I have had lying around. It became a lot through the years. I rid myself from most of my collections when I moved from Sweden to Italy. With it, a lost an invaluable reference library of fanzines, many books and a lot of random papers, which might or might not still have been of historical interest. No more domestic excavations. Not in a long, long time.

In future I will have to rely more on research. Trying to put together an issue without having made any research is like coming to a program item at a convention totally unprepared. I can do it. I can improvise. But it's better by far, to be prepared. So, what can I do next?

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE: A CLOSER LOOK AT GERMAN FANDOM from it's beginning until now.

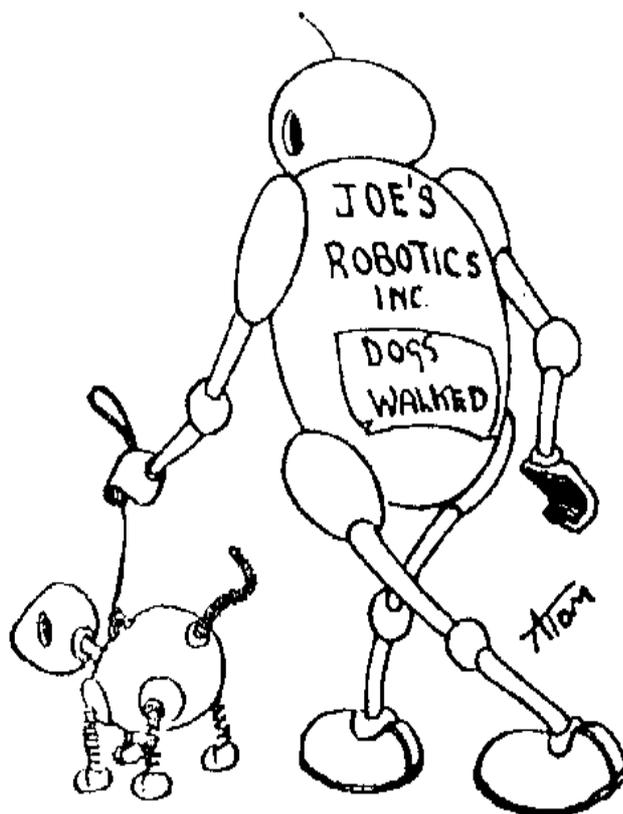
### ----- Tragedy or comedy?

BBC reports: Yahoo and Facebook have settled their patent row and formed an advertising alliance. Yahoo had sued the social network in March claiming 10 of its intellectual properties had been infringed.

Facebook subsequently bought 750 patents from IBM and counter-sued. It later bought hundreds more patents from Microsoft to strengthen its defence.

Next up to sue Facebook is a patent-holding company acting on behalf of a dead Dutch programmer called Joannes Jozef Everardus van Der Meer. Rembrandt Social Media said Facebook's success was based, in part, on using two of Mr Van Der Meer's patents without permission. Rembrandt now owns patents for technologies Mr Van Der Meer used to build a fledgling social network, called Surfbook, before his death in 2004. Mr Van Der Meer was granted the patents in 1998, five years before Facebook first appeared.

**WvW:** Clearly FACEBOOK has been too successful, so now the vultures turn up everywhere. And it appears the 750 patents from IBM and hundreds more from Microsoft, are not enough to be safe.



*If you had any doubts what so ever. THAT has also already been thought of and is most likely patented.*

### REMBRANDT AND THE ART OF MAKING MONEY

Who is Rembrandt Social Media and how come we never heard of them or their Surfbook before? And how does one best represent the interests of a dead man?

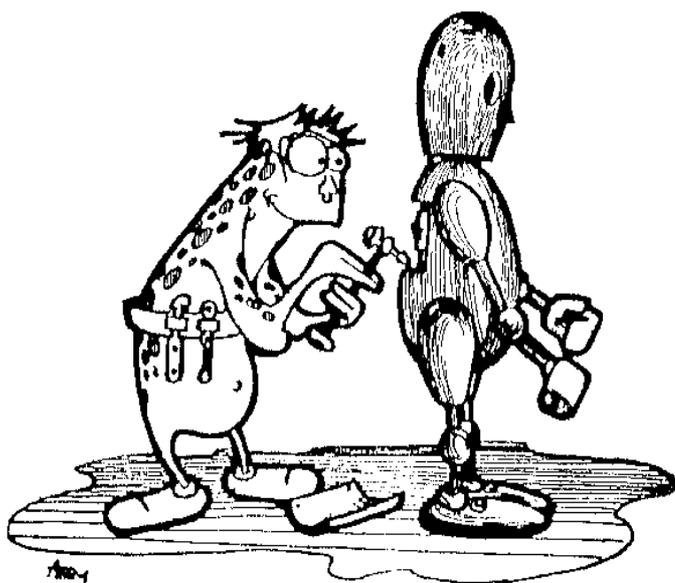
A bit of googling shows us, there actually is such a thing as a Surfbook. Surfbook is a book about surfing on water by authors Joel Tudor and Michael Halsband.

And Rembrandt is not a Dutch company, as one could suspect, but an American one. It appears they make their living off buying patents and then sue whoever happened to be successful. *"In 2009, Rembrandt Vision Technologies obtained a \$47 million judgment (for back damages) in a patent infringement case involving extended wear contact lenses. The matter subsequently settled, resolving all claims."*

In their own words: *"Rembrandt IP Solutions coordinates the identification of all opportunities. Our primary interests are acquiring patents or partnering with patent owners who believe they have early and important assets that are currently being infringed. These types of opportunities come from diverse sources such as law firms, companies, individual inventors, service providers, investors, and universities."*

These matters courts of today have to resolve. Now, why would I want to go any further outside than to the garbage containers? Beyond them is the madness of the world. In big and small. At home is peace and quiet.

I prepare another cup of coffee and sit at my computer thinking. Today is February 11th, the 42nd day of the year. The Pope has announced to resign. Very sensible of him, and I wish him well. The first pope to resign for 600 years. This will stir up things around here. It ought to be very big news for all Italians.



ATOM - Arthur Thomson (1927-1990) was a British artist and writer, a highly regarded member of British science fiction fandom from the 1950s onwards, both as a fanzine writer/editor and prolific artist (under the name "ATom"). Resident illustrator for the influential fanzine *Hyphen*, he won the TransAtlantic Fan Fund in 1964 and visited the United States (an event he wrote up for the following year's *ATom Abroad*. Thomson was nominated five times for the Hugo Award for Best Fan Artist, but never won. (Wikipedia)

## VHECKANS ÄVFENTYR / FANYTT

[THE WHEEKLY ADFENTURES / FANEWS] 1978-1986

VÄ was a Swedish news-fanzine, published every week by Ahrvid Engholm and Anders Bellis. In these years it was printed on a mimeograph. When the team Bellis and Engholm split up by the end of 1980, Bellis continued to publish VÄ alone until issue 102 in 1981, while Engholm changed the name of VÄ to FANYTT and continued it from there until these days, but has since then changed its name one more time, to SF-Journalen and of course, it is not exactly coming every week, but appears to consist mostly of tweets on twitter. Last printed ish I laid eyes on, if memory serves, was # 196. He must have passed # 200 by now.

Chris Schander attempted to continue VÄ in 1981 with some assistance by Bellis (his consent) and me, but only produced a number of questionable issues until he quit after # 110. Other VÄ issues were published by me # 54, by Chris Schander and John S Pettersson and various people who created bad dittographed issues of the # 89.

It was VÄ which first introduced me to the art of ATOM. The illustrations were copied from various American fanzines. In this issue I bring you a selection of ATOM illos which were kindly provided through Margaret Austin by handing me a copy of *THE MILLENNIUM ATOM* (First edition, copy 27 of 80) and *ATOM 2000* (2nd edition, 31 of 30! - no doubt a rarity).

Not very long ago I considered giving away my collection of VÄ 1978-1986 (note that VÄ existed as

Fanytt after 1986 and as SF-Journalen until this day). The reason for giving them away was that they are in Swedish and I live in Italy. Should I croak in this part of the world, VÄ might end up as paper for recycling. I feel, it would be terrible IF this should come to pass.

There was a time when a complete set of VÄ, like this could have rendered a considerable amount of money at an auktion. Not that a fannish fanzine ever can be priced. But in my eyes VÄ is still a treasure. Maybe because I know what I can find in it. But... to my surprise this potential gift did not raise any particular interest. Not even with a fan who evidently was reading a lot and who evidently was interested in fan-history. He himself (not mentioning his name) was thinking about how to rid himself of his own fanzine collection (not even containing any complete VÄ however).

Once upon a time I rid myself of a vast number of Perry Rhodan-magazines. It hurted. But they were in German language and I was living in Sweden. No one would have been seriously interested. The difference was that Perry Rhodan had been published by the thousands in several editions and VÄ between 50 and 100 in only one edition. I still find it hard to cope with the fact that the best fannish writing of its time (1979-1980 - with substantial information on these years and with a more sparse, but still excellent covering of the years 1981-86) is being shrugged off and raises absolutely zero enthusiasm. Not even for free.

Okay, so I approached the wrong person about this. But if he was not interested, who in these days **can be**? And I am flabbergasted how fundamentally computers have changed people's minds. If it is not digital, it does not exist. Everyone older and wiser than I knows it is not so. Of course. And perhaps there is still someone out there who would give his right arm for this collection? If so, then I can assure you, you don't have to. All you have to do, is to come down to Italy and pick them up. I take your coming as evidence of your sincerity. The only other qualification you need, is that you need to be able to speak and read Swedish. Accomodation and food for the duration of your stay is also for free. You can bring +1 person with you. This offer is valid until someone takes it. Do fan-history a favour and save VÄ 78-86 from being recycled as old paper. Sniff the mimeographed pages and while inhaling savour the bittersweet sympathies of fannish tragedy.

WOLF

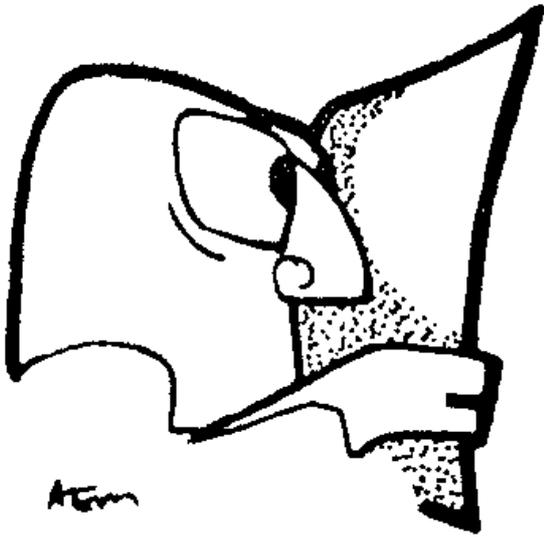
## STARING AT LESS THAN A QUARTER OF A PAGE

...not knowing what to do with it. Can't very well leave it blank, now can I? My head is empty, what I had to say this time has been spilled over these 16 pages. I feel less satisfied than ever, nearing its completion.

I feel like I have been ranting too much. Have I? No wonder if it gets scarce with comments. I really ought to do something about it. Research. I do a lot of it, but it is all over the place and not restricted to one topic. I just like to know things, so I absorb some of this and some of that and in the end my head is like a closet full of random papers. Every now and then something useful does come together of it. Bear with me. I strive to improve.

# INFORMATION INFLATION

*Everybody's talkin' at me, I don't hear a word they're sayin'  
Only the echoes of my mind  
People stop and stare, I can't see their faces  
Only the shadows of their eyes* (Fred Neil, 1966)



What have you read today? Your Facebook updates? I was just now interrupted by TED TALKS, while writing. Not that it is one of the most annoying ways to be interrupted by. It can be very interesting to listen to TED, now and then. But it renders it impossible for me to have any constructive thoughts of my own. BECAUSE what they say on TED TALKS makes sense. I can't help but listening.

Yesterday I was interrupted by the phone. When I picked up, a recorded message advertised something which I didn't care to listen to. Whenever such a call comes in, I just put down the receiver immediately. What are they thinking, to let machines do the calling now??? The answering machine was a good idea once, but now they also have calling machines! I should get a new answering machine and let it handle all such calls. Let the machines talk to each other. My machine will have specific instructions not to buy anything. Besides I would not buy anything over the phone anyway. Ever. Not even when a human makes the advertising.

Advertising is a waste of money. On me. But it must have some effect, or else they wouldn't be doing it. It's just that the advertisers have become more and more invasive. Wherever I turn, they try to be in my face. I am not sure if I ought to share my personal devices how to stay out of advertisements way. It might give them crazy ideas they haven't had yet, if they read this. They are not short of crazy ideas, mind you. Google "crazy ideas of advertising" and you'll be stuck reading for a while.

But it is not only advertisements which bugs me. I try to read a book now and then. It doesn't come as easy as it used to because my eye sight does not grant me the privilege of reading without glasses anymore. And I have not yet become friend with this new required piece of equipment. I don't need it in front of the computer. It is a whole lot easier to read pdf than print. But I love books.

# THE FLOOD of WORDS

Publishing used to be a lucrative business. When people still were reading a lot. When cable and satellite TV was introduced, the numbers of sales already started going down. With the age of the internet, sales have been plummeting. Publishers of books and magazines have to struggle for survival. The small press in particular. No small publisher can make their living off publishing. Instead they're more likely having to pay for their work. And every year, there are thousands of new titles published. Thousands. Think about it for a moment!

Take a language like German, for example. They have a potential readership of almost 100 million people (including Austria and Switzerland among others). Yet a science fiction novel is considered to sell well, if it sells 10.000 copies. This is not one per cent, it is not even one per mille. It means you have to find one buyer among 10.000 persons in average. Think about it!

And every year new titles are added to the flood. Our little world revolves around science fiction, but then you also have the stronger genre fantasy, detective stories, romance, thriller... And everyone is hoping to write that one Harry Potter.

I had THE PHOENIX SOLUTION by Alan E Alford with me to Bucharest. It's a 720 page brick from 1998 in which the first part (the good one) is about the pyramids at Giza. I expected to have the time for reading the entire book while in Romania and could even have finished the book, had its author not plunged into Egyptian mythology the way he did. I agree that myths often hide a lot more than what meets the eye, but the level and the amount of speculation in this brick got too much for me, eventually tossing the whole volume into a dusty corner (after 372 pages).

So I picked up WRITING A SCREENPLAY by John Costello instead. 162 pages concisely written. In it, John laments having restrict himself to the limited amount of space provided. *"Five hundred pages would have been a cinch; just over a hundred and fifty has been a nightmare; not dissimilar to the screenwriting process itself."* No, really. Sometimes we better limit ourselves. I have deleted several paragraphs, when I realized I was on a ramble to no ones interest. Not even my own. And if I bore myself, how bored would someone else not be, having to read it?

# RANDOM THOUGHTS

SMS, FB, phone (I refuse to use mobile phone), email, snail mail (with publicitá in Italian, so I just toss it). At least I *can* close my mind from picking up random talk going on around me. To understand Italian I have to listen to what people say. I have to pay attention. When people speak Swedish, the words invade my mind if I listen to them or not.

I was sitting in a pub in Stockholm, minding my own business. I did not listen to what people were talking about, wrapped up in my own thoughts. But suddenly I could hear someone saying; *"Ah, you know, this actress. I don't remember her name now..."* And the name *Julia Roberts* popped into my head, so I turned and said her

name. He thanked me and confirmed; "Yes, exactly! Julia Roberts!" Meanwhile, I had no idea what he was talking about. And his conversation disappeared again into the general jumble of voices around me. How could I have had the right thought at the right time if I wasn't listening? A subconscious part of me must have been listening.

I wanted to shut out involuntary invasion of my mind. Words I don't want to hear seeping into my head. This is another reason why I left Sweden. Their realm of thought was already too well imprinted on my mind. It is not only the language but also the main swarm of words which are commonly used around you, which have an effect on your thoughts.

I have been trying to figure out why I like my new environment so much. What is different from Stockholm in this particular part of Italy? One thing I noticed, is that people seem to compare less around here.

How big you are does not matter as much as how well you do what you do. And stop by for a cup of coffee while you do it. Being social rates high as a quality here. But then again, this is the countryside. Not a city.

The Romans were the most powerful empire for a very long time. Maybe that makes an Italian more relaxed? Perhaps they subconsciously all think "been there, done that" and "not going there again". Because, what would it serve? The average Italian already has a very good life.

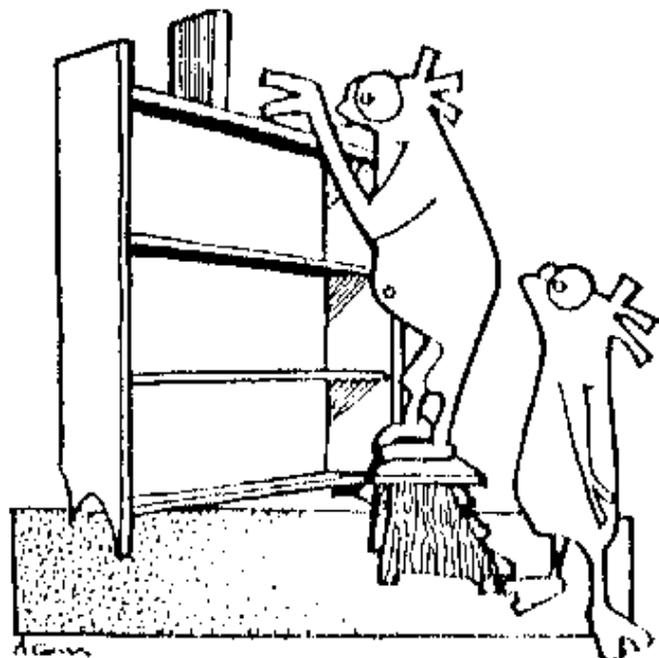
In fact, the Swedish which more and more desperately appear to be seeking *something* at which their country is best (my impression from Swedish media), appear to find less and less cause for cheers. Sweden used to be a forerunner in many social advances. The impression the country has made on the rest of Europe, is that things are all well up there in the North. That is history. Yes, it used to be great, living in Sweden. Now...

Italy has its kinks. It has a crappy corrupt, bureaucratic machine. But everyone appears to be aware of it. Italians have anarchy in their blood. What legislation lacks, foolishness and sometimes even common sense corrects.

Only in Italy I have seen one car occupying three parking spots and get away with it. Half the people I know here, wouldn't have their driving license any more, were they driving the same way in Stockholm. I guess the rate of accidents is an indication, that people apply foolishness more often than common sense. It is odd. The law seems further away from here. Sometimes legislation inconveniences life in the countryside, but most of the time, we don't even notice when a new law is passed. Could be, because many laws were created to fit only the personal circumstances of Berlusconi. With Monti in charge, less idiocy has come to our attention.

We have all these different languages in the world and all these hobbies, special interests; golf, tennis, formula one racing, football, sailing, boxing, trains, veteran cars, collecting stamps, chess, music, aviation, photography, pc, travelling, cooking, dating, astronomy, philosophy and more. We got books and magazines on everything.

Science fiction is such a small world in all of this, that most newspaper stands have next to nothing on it here in Italy. Couldn't find anything in the kiosks in Sweden either, btw. We're way too much fringe people.



## 🕒 MOST TRANSLATED

According to Wikipedia: The worlds most translated book, which has no connection to any religion is Carlo Collodi's 1883 novel for children; *Pinocchio*. It has been translated into more than 260 languages. It's right there, second after the Bible. Number 6 on the same list is *The Little Prince* (1943), by Antoine de Saint Exupéry, which has been translated into more than 180 languages.

- # 7 - H.C. Andersen's Fairy Tales (1835-1852)
- # 8 - Jules Verne (1870) 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea  
Andersen exists in 153 and Verne in 147 languages.
- # 11 - Asterix & Obelix can be read in 112 languages.
- # 14 - Lewis Carroll - Alice in Wonderland (1865)
- # 15 - The Adventures of Tintin (96 languages)
- # 18 - is shared by Paulo Coelho's The Alchemist with J.K.Rowlings Harry Potter (67 languages)
- # 20 - Astrid Lindgren's (1945) Pippi Longstocking

To come high up on this list, you should write a book for either Jehovah's Witnesses or for children.

## 📚 BEST SELLING BOOKS EVER

Perry Rhodan would perhaps be top of the book-series list, had they chosen paperback format in Germany, instead of that magazine format. Well... it is a magazine with text only and very few pictures. Some translations, such as the ones into English appeared in paperback format and thereby qualified as books. Well... the total amount of Perry Rhodan sold is over 1 billion.

In numbers: >1.000.000.000.000 Most of them sold to Germans, of course (I had over 1.000 of them myself once).

But since Perry Rhodan doesn't count, the winner according to wikipedia appears to be: [...drumroll...] Ta-daa! With already more than a total of 450 million copies of its seven installments sold.... yes, you guessed it! J.K.Rowlings nerdy little peck Harry Potter (doesn't he look just a little bit like Billy Gates when he was young?). It is a mad world indeed!

My personal favourite, Eiji Yoshikawa's *Musashi*, which also exists in 7 installments (written 1935-1939) comes in shared 16th place with only 120 million copies sold. Among the book series sharing this position, is the other 7 books installments series about Narnia by C.S.Lewis

#### List of best-selling single-volume books:

- 01 Charles Dickens - *A Tale of Two Cities* - 200 million
- 02 J.R.R.Tolkien - *The Lord of the Rings* - 150 million
- 03 Antoine Saint-Exupéry's *Little Prince* - 140 million
- 04 J.R.R.Tolkien - *The Hobbit* - 100 million
- 05 Cao Xueqin - *Hong lou meng* - 100 million

Actually... chances are good that this list will become obsolete very quickly. As soon as we get more information about what is going on in China. With a population of more than 1.4 billion people united not by the spoken language which differs from province to province, but by their written language which remains the same (even though the logogram is pronounced in a very different way. Chinese people can always communicate with each other by writing notes. Even if they speak a different language).

## BUCHAREST 21/12-2012 UNTIL 6/1-2013

Providence placed me in the capital of Romania over the period of Midwinter festivities and until dawn of the new year. Being there, I said to myself, I might as well do something vaguely useful. Like meeting Romanian sf-fans.

Next year in the merry month of May a Euroconference will be held in Bucharest and I intend to go. Meeting sf-fans from the east is interesting, because they have absorbed an entirely different body of work than someone from the west. By default their input on any given topic is other than mine and therefore more enlightening.

Running into *Eugen Lenghel* after midwinter saved the first half of my stay. We had a very intense discussion on Quantum Reality Projection, which I may return to later on. He arranged a meeting of sf-fans and I eventually met the hard core of Bucharest's fandom. I'm sorry the time wasn't enough to learn and memorize the names of all present, but I am confident we will meet again next year.

One memorable discussion, which continued after the meeting was with *Lucian Cristian Oancea*, who best can be described as a dealer. His *office* at home smells of old pulp magazines. I love that smell! It reminds me of the good old days in which I was reading at least two Perry Rhodan magazines every week (1973-1977). He is more specialized in console games though, if I didn't misunderstand. As an sf-fan he is still full of enterprise. A true dreamer. The kind of dreamer the world needs some more of. When I looked at him, I saw myself 15-20 years ago. I was having very similar dreams. But I am sad having to say, reality crushed them all.

I don't believe *Lucian* is easily crushed though. Behind the dreams lurks a drive to accomplish something. When or if an opportunity comes along, he is the kind of person who would grab it with both hands. Time will tell.

Even if life doesn't turn out the way we dreamed, this strive for change is by far better than a strive for constancy. The latter is an impossibility in itself. All in life changes. We better be prepared for the changes ahead.



THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY  
Dir: Peter Jackson (2012) 169 min

I could not possibly endure *The Hobbit* in an Italian speaking version. No more than an Italian could endure to drink synthetic wine. So instead I went to see it with Romanian subtitles. But since the movie was in 3D, the subtitles were floating in the cinema above the heads of the people in front of me and I could easily see everything going on behind these alien words, which also became very easy to ignore.

I believe Peter Jackson succeeded in giving everyone exactly what they expected. No matter what. I was not sure what I expected, but my non-present expectations were most certainly fulfilled. I've read the book some 3 or four times (once in Swedish). And I recently re-read the parts which make up the first film.

What can I say, people? I liked it. In spite of all the bashing and crashing and beating and running. I liked it because it was different from the book, but not too much different and well connecting to the *Lord of the Rings*. Well done there, Peter & co!

Usually I hate something when it becomes too popular unless I liked it *before* it became popular. I avoided to see any *Harry Potter* or read any of the books until the dvd's came on sale. And I still don't like *Harry Potter*. I am a two-faced effing bigot, to say the least. Tolkien, yes and Rowlings, no, nay, never (except the author herself, who is adorable by her looks, isn't she?). But I read my old uncle Tolkiens books in the 70's, including *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, *Tree and Leaf* and the nearly incomprehensible *Silmarillion*.

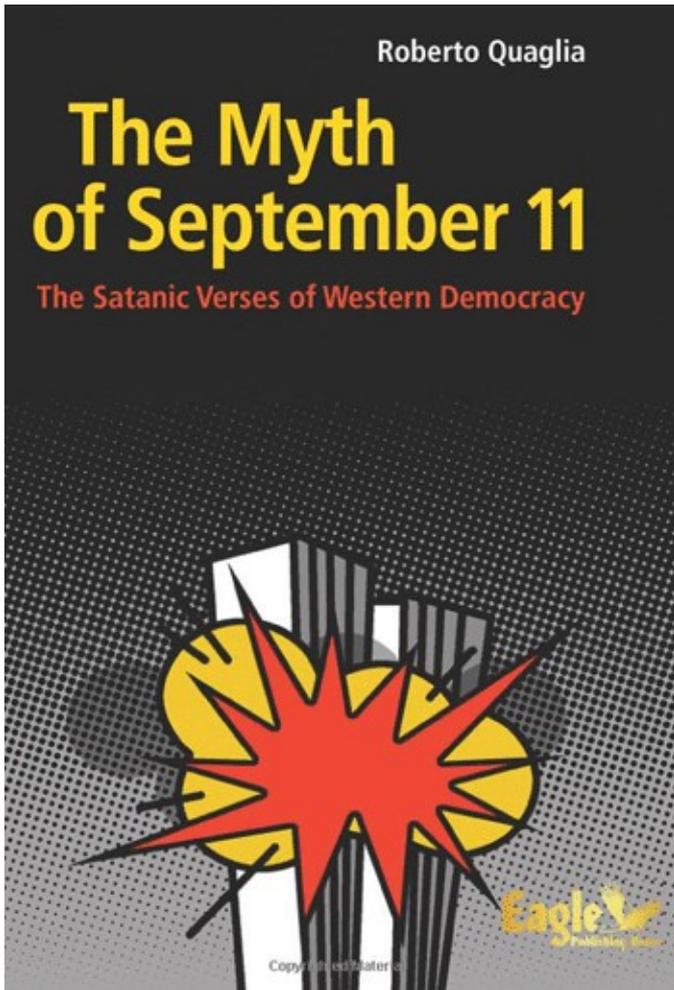
I expect the next installment of this saga to be an even greater amount of bashing and crashing, beating and running, yelling and burning... What else? Surprise me!

The sales of Tolkien's books can be expected to keep up their popularity for a while longer. And who knows? Perhaps it may even bring people to read *Voluspá* of the poetic Edda. If nothing else, then just to know which names can't be copyright protected.

## ROBERTO QUAGLIA

Early in 2013, Roberto returned to Bucharest. His book about 9/11 has now been translated into Romanian and English. It is available over Amazon. We didn't talk a whole lot about it this time. I guess what needs to be said has already been said.

Roberto commented though on the extinction of species. This is something which has been going on all over planet Earth since before humankind. Species have come and gone. Perhaps we should not lament the ones who go *because of us*. Maybe it was their time anyway. We may have speeded up the process, but nothing has ever been lasting forever.



Hearing him re-account for his very early fandom experiences and his time with Robert Sheckley and other big names in sf and fandom is always entertaining. If he could capture half of the experience in writing, it would most certainly be worthwhile reading. And fun. So I was quick to suggest a column in CounterClock.

If this becomes reality remains to be seen. Roberto, like many other writers, have a problem with deadlines. He also loves the swishing sound they make, as they pass by. For me, setting a deadline is whipping myself into activity. The closer I come to a deadline, the harder I work. I still hate to cross them. Even when I set the deadline myself. But deadlines can only be set if there is someone who is expected to actually *read* what has been written. If not the public, then at least a few selected friends. Or sf-fans.



*Eugen Lenghel, Wolf von Witting & Roberto Quaglia in "The Bucharest Conspiracy, January 2013. Photo: F.A.Marin"*

I really dislike how the word '*conspiracy*' appears to be married to the word '*theory*' in this millennium. We throw it at everything we don't want to believe in. But I can assure you; it is not a theory that we made plans.

Not as a result of these plans, but by happenstance, as this particular deadline came closer, I checked in with Roberto and he now appears to be in Tehran, the capital of Iran. He reports on his FB page *"having being invited to speak at a conference about "Hollywoodism" and in several local universities. Persian hospitality is unforgettable and this country and beautiful culture is largely unknown in the West. If you have the habit of following Western media, all what you know about Iran is probably wrong."*

I already knew this. I had several colleagues from Iran, when I worked at the railway in Stockholm. Yes, one and the same which made sensational world news mid-January by crashing into a home with no driver and a frightened cleaning lady aboard. She accidentally set it off. I sincerely hope she recovers from the ordeal.



In retrospect it might be easy to say she should have pulled the emergency brake. That's what it is for. But in a panic it is not as easy to keep in mind.

Two people can be expected to be reprimanded for the event. The traffic controller who went off duty before the accident and left the point (switch) at the depot in a position to allow the train to exit the station and the shunter/mechanic who left the keys inside. But neither can be entirely blamed. Shit always happens!

## NOVACON 2012 by Theresa Derwin



Novacon 2012, held 9th to 11th Nov 2012, took place again at The Park Inn, Nottingham. As usual, this was a fun filled event, with a varied programme and this year, boasted a spectacular Guest of Honour in the form of Jaine Fenn.

So what is Novacon all about? Well, it is a smallish convention in comparison to events such as Eastercon, (2012 hit 260 attendees). Novacon is the UK's longest-established regional science fiction convention, held every autumn since 1971. It's built around a single-stream programme mixing both literary items and more informal events, with deliberate emphasis on social contact between SF fans and genre professionals. You can find out more on the link, <http://www.novacon.org.uk/>



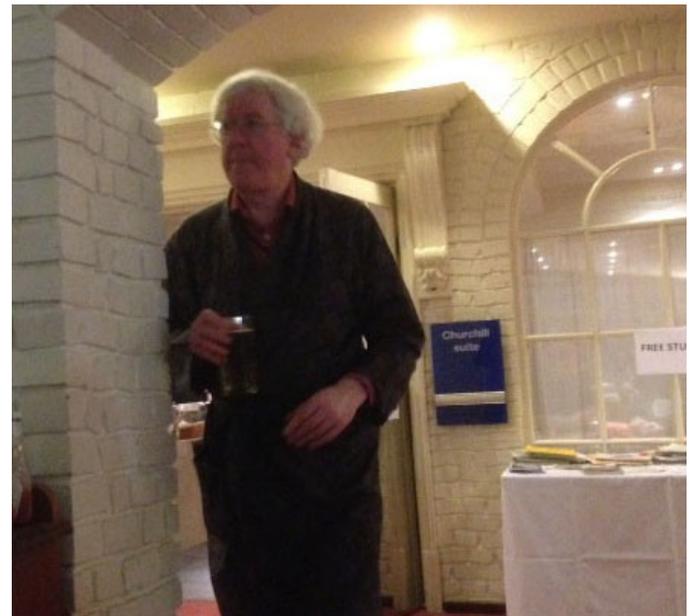
Theresa Derwin and "the Sheriff" Bellis in Nottingham, 2011.

As their site puts it, at Novacon you won't find people dressed up as a Dalek or Darth Vader but you will find:

- 🕒 SF authors, many of whom have come up through the ranks of SF fandom.
- 🕒 A dealers room where you can find a wide selection of new fiction, second hand books and collectable books, books about SF and even graphic novels.
- 🕒 A bar filled with like minded people happy to chat for hours about anything under the sun even Science Fiction.
- 🕒 Serious science talks from professionals who know what they are talking about.
- 🕒 An Art Show featuring original work by both professional and amateur artists. Many of the works shown are available to buy

The programme as I've said, was varied and interesting, and I even got involved in two panels, one as guest and one as moderator. The one in which I was moderating, 'In Her Image' involved a discussion about the images on book covers in relation to gender, which brings me neatly to the Programme Book itself. Whilst I applaud the artist's talent who designed the cover of this book, I was quite disturbed to see that the cover image, representing an 'Angel' from Fenn's work, was, well, naked: showing off her lady parts. Now this, I have a problem with. Having read Fenn's work, I see no viable reason other than titillation or error, as to why the Angel had to be naked. Must try harder! However, the content of the book itself was very informative.

As for the programme, I particularly enjoy Dave Lally's sideshow, the Sat night casual book auction (Rog's auctioneer style is worth buying a book for alone) and the book launches, as well as the science panels, which truthfully, went over my head. All together, a good solid mix of panels.



Dave Langford belongs to British conventions like Waldemar Kumming to German conventions and Lars-Olov Strandberg to the Swedish. Grand old men we wish could live forever.

Now, the thing that I love about Novacon is the local feel; the feeling that you are hanging around with your friends, sharing good conversation, meeting new friends and building a community. It's not just about the programmed events - it's about the beer! Yes, really, a big part of most conventions is the bar, where you mingle with these new and old friends, but at Novacon, beer comes to the fore with the final night. After the 'closing' ceremony, let's face it, Novacon never *really* closes, fans gather in one of the main conference rooms of the hotel, where the GoH has chosen a themed buffet and you can take part in a beer tasting session. The buffet last year cost £11.50 pp and was well worth it, whilst the beer tasting costs either £5.00 or three bottles of decent quality beer.

However, when I came to the last night, things got even more exciting, as George Ternent turned up with some Belgian chocolates (he resides during his working days in Brussels) and there began, what I can only describe as *Chocgasms*. Picture it; John Meaney's mouth drooling, open, gaping, squirming, savouring the flavour of the exquisite chocolate, then Steve Lawson, equally enamoured and Jaine Fenn, all of them enraptured in their chocgasms. It was a beautiful sight! And there, my dears, is an image to finish my report with!

Theresa Derwin



Steve Lawson and John Meaney in chocgasms.

## TAFF, DUFF and GUFF

It would benefit all of fandom, if more sf-fans outside of the UK took interest in some of the existing fan-funds: TAFF, DUFF and GUFF, being the Trans-Atlantic-, the Down-Under- and the Get-Up- and-over Fan Funds.

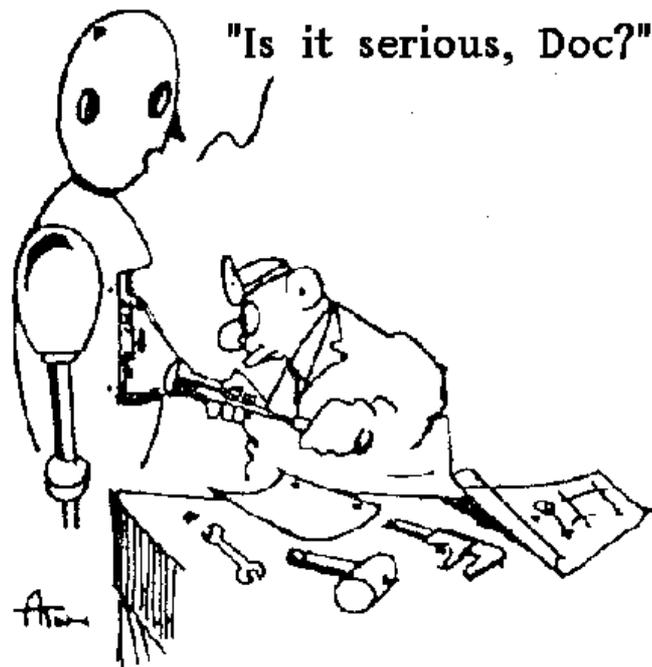
In the 2013 GUFF race Mihaela Marija Perkovic from Croatia proved again, that this is not a *UK only* club. She is well deserved of the honour. We met first time at the Eurocon 2009 in Fiuggi and she already then convinced me that Croatian fandom is getting interesting.

Next race up for voting in is TAFF: <http://taff.org.uk/>  
The candidates 2013 are:

**Theresa Derwin and Jim Mowatt**

Votes in this race must reach the administrators by **23:59 on Friday 19th April 2013**

eFANZINES - <http://www.efanzines.com/>



## EUROPEAN FANDOM DEATHS 2010-2012

I have always had difficulty in facing deaths. After all these years I still suck at it. What is there to say? I met...

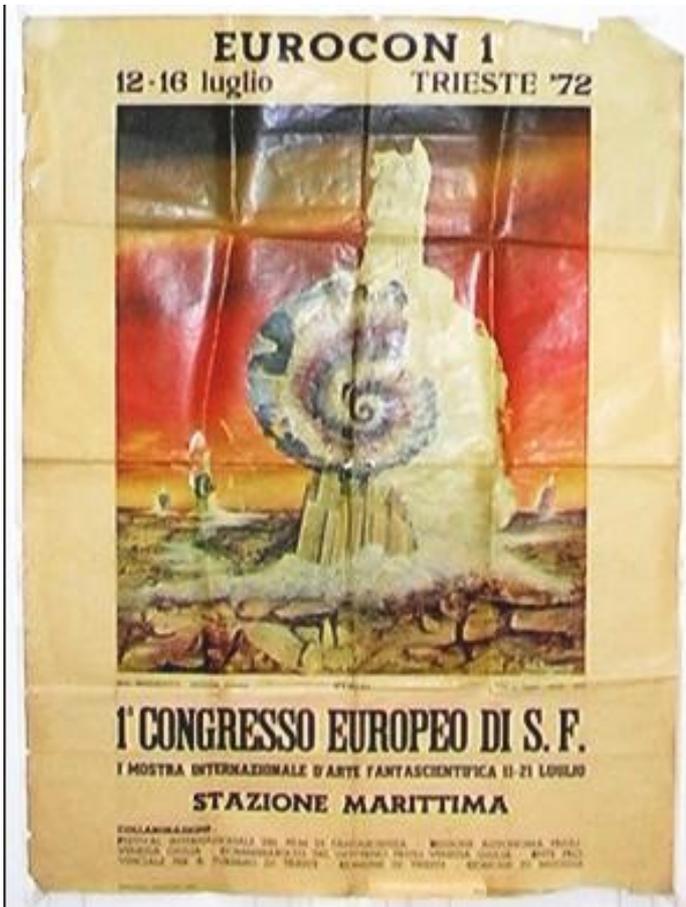
**Alain Le Bussy**, Belgien (1947 – October 14, 2010)  
first time at the Eurocon 1999 in Dortmund. He had already collected several awards, yet he felt it meant so little. No one outside the French speaking realm appear to have heard of him. He made me think about it.

**Anders Åkerlind**, Sweden (1960 - February 11, 2011)  
He created SFF, which is the longest living Swedish APA. In June 2010 it was last seen with its mailing # 158. He was also a good friend of mine in the early days. In 2009 or 2010 we found each other again over FB. Then suddenly he is no more.

**Joachim Henke**, Germany (Apr 23, 1963 - May 22, 2011)  
Was my best friend in German fandom. We had intense contact 1978-1987, but then somehow and slowly drifted apart. We found each other twice again... Once over Hattrick (online football manager game) and later over FB. His death was the 2nd greatest shock to me after the death of my mother (Oct 2000). More about him in future issues of CounterClock.

**Hans Kneifel**, Germany (July 11 1936 - March 7, 2012)  
Was a member of Sigma TC / PRC Terra Corps for a couple of years. The 7 first of his novels about the crew of the spaceship ORION were translated into Swedish. But we never met.

**Roland Wagner**, France (Sept 6, 1960 – Aug 5, 2012)  
Another devastating blow to reality. Not because he was very close, but because his sudden departure from the world reminded me that anyone can be up next. He was one of the few French who sincerely took interest in what was going on outside the borders of France. So I will not meet him at the Utopiales in Nantes. But he would still be one of the reasons that I go.



## The first Eurocon was NOT the first European convention.

Before the ESFS and the EUROCON a number of European conventions were held. The first European convention was held two years after Loncon 1.

Behind the first generation of European conventions was EUROTOPIA, which was heavily dominated by the German speaking fans. No wonder. Apart from small groups in the Netherlands and fans scattered all over the map in Scandinavia, Europe had not much of a fandom to speak of. *The History of SFCD*, compiled 1982 by Rolf Heuter contains little information about Eurotopia, its rise and decline.

But on the 22nd of August in 1959 a two day European convention was held in Zurich, Switzerland. It appears to have led to the formation of EUROTOPIA, because the 2nd European Convention was held in Vienna (Austria) over 3 days beginning with August 13th, 1960.

3rd in Bad Homburg (Germany), June 1-4th, 1961  
 4th in Unterwössen (Germany), August 24-3rd 1962  
 5th in Marquartstein (Germany) July 31st, 1964 (4 days)  
 6th (?) Vienna (Austria) August 5-7th, 1966  
 7th (??) Heidelberg (Germany) August 2-5th, 1968

It is not clear if the conventions 1966 and 1968 still had anything to do with Eurotopia, but it is clear that these events were given special attention from the side of fandom with an 75-80% increase in attending members compared to *regular* SFCD-conventions.

Further research is recommended and it would be very nice to hear from anyone who actually was there. At any of these events. Please, if you were there. Let me know!

## WHO WANTS TO KILL JESSIE?

Kdo chce zabít Jessii? (1966 - Czechoslovakia)  
 Dir: Václav Vorlíček, 80 min

This hilarious comedy of medical science fiction has managed to stay off the radar for many serious collectors of sci-fi film. It was originally made for children, but apart from being an excellent comedy its broad implications makes this black/white film deserving a wider audience.

Fortunately it has found some distribution on the Italian dvd-market (with english subtitles included). Recommended viewing!

An "American remake of this film was discussed with Jack Lemmon and Shirley MacLaine in the roles of Jirí Sovák and Dana Medrická.

Juraj Visny, Karel Effa and Olga Schoberová who played Superman, the gunfighter and Jessie in the original version were asked to repeat their roles. The project broke down after the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968." (IMDb-Trivia)



## AN EXCURSION INTO FANTASY

I've been thinking about writing some fantasy. Just for the heck of it. Not expecting anything.

Wikipedia informs us: "Fantasy is a genre of fiction that commonly uses magic and other supernatural phenomena as a primary element of plot, theme, or setting."

I heard writer Piers Anthony once got the question why he quit writing science fiction and started writing fantasy instead. His answer was clear enough: "Half the work, twice the money!"

### CREATING GOTHANY

Creating a fantasy world is not as easy as you may think. Well, I have to admit, I have absolutely no idea what you think, but let us take a look at the creation of an imagined world. For me, it did contain a lot of thinking and a lot of work. Some may begin with drawing a map and splatter forest, mountains, rivers and places with weird names all over it. Now, there you have the first problem.

I have decided not to draw a map (yet). Instead I decided to just say that my fantasy country Gothany has the shape of a particular leaf. The leaf of a maple, which is a tree or a shrub. A tree or a shrub? As you may know, a shrub distinguishes itself from a tree by branching off closer to the ground, or even by having multiple stems. And growing in a fantasy world, it may not even be any maple of the family of acers we have in our world. We just call it a maple, because its leaves are shaped in a

similar fashion as we are used to know from the Canadian flag. But since this shrub-tree also grows nuts similar to acorn, it can't very well be a maple. Never mind, before we lose ourselves in non-essentials... The leaf...

In Gothany it is also called a map leaf, because it is vaguely shaped like the country itself. And it can be used as a map. Let its stalk point north-east. It means up and



Created some fashionable Coat of Arms for various places in my little fantasy-world.

tilted to the right. Surely you are aware that north always is up on a map. With the winds, it can be different.

We take it for granted that there are four winds. One for each direction. But what if we had decided that there are six different basic directions? In this world there are. But to prevent confusion I will call the other directions up-and down-west, down- and up-east. And everyone will

understand. From the stalk and along the up-western side of the mapleaf, Gothany borders on Angria.

Along the midrib of the leaf, we have mountains from the center of the leaf and up to the stalk. Along the rib to the south flows the river Odicon. It springs from a well near the highland village of Hibernau and flows all the way down to Marl, the capital of Gothany up-east of the peninsula between Beholder Bay and Halberd Bay.

My house, if you come to visit, is in Sevenmarl. As one can guess from the name, Sevenmarl lies seven miles up-west of Marl. That's where it got its name from. From here I undertake most of my journeys into other worlds of the imagination. I have been to Xanth, where I had immensely fun, but also to Narnia and Fantastica where I listened to the Neverending Story for quite a while.

Of course, one can not fail to mention Middle-Earth. Perhaps the most famous of all. Been there! Two or three years ago, I spent several months in Anthon and most recently I returned from Estalia and Araby where Brian Craig took me with his Warhammer journals (aka Brian Stableford). I spent two years in Faerûn (1989-1990) when I first had to solve the mystery with the *Pool of Radiance*, Hillsfar and then the *Curse of the Azure Bonds*. That was when I got hooked on fantasy. Or, to be more precise, on strategy games based on *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* rules. Could hardly wait to get my hands on the *Secret of the Silver Blades*. After a brief detour to Krynn, I returned to Faerûn and finally visited Waterdeep. When upgrading my instrument of travels from Commodore 64 to Amiga, the fantasy world became graphically considerably more pleasing.

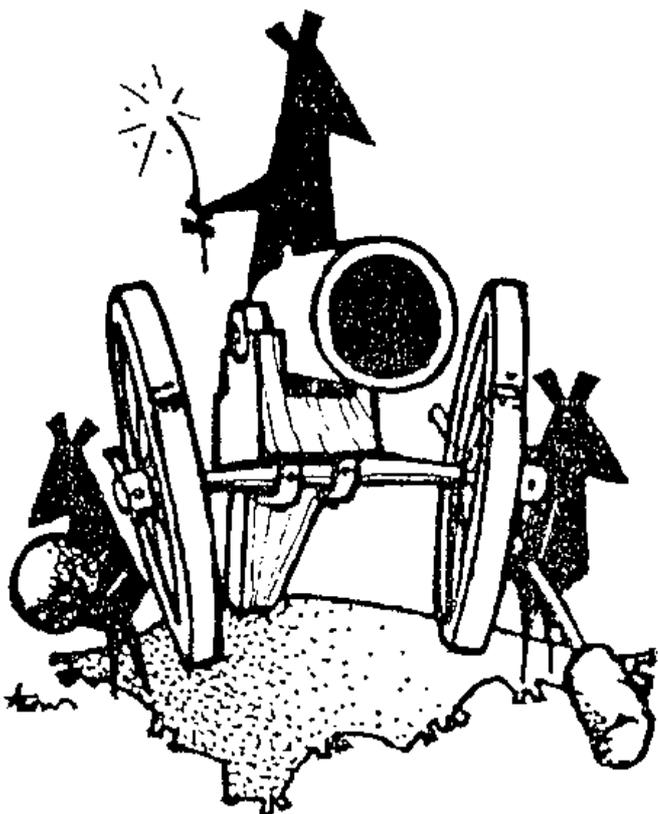


Black Crypt, Dungeon Master and Eye of the Beholder were some of the most memorable adventures. But then, like most other people I finally ended up with a PC. It resulted in further adventures in Faerûn and the Forgotten Realms. *Baldur's Gate*, *Planescape Torment*, *Icwind Dale* and *Neverwinter Nights*. Some of these, and in particular the first two mentioned, had almost the quality of reading a book instead.

A few serious thoughts came to mind while playing. One of them came up when I virtually exterminated kobolds. No matter how many I killed, the species will be in no danger of extinction. We just imagine some more.

A notion which holds me back from writing fantasy is the fact that, while all the classic works are good, I have yet to read a novel set in one of those AD&D worlds which has been any good. When on a quest, such as *Baldur's Gate*, it seems incredibly exciting. But when reading the book, it plain sucks. Shouldn't the Wizards of the Coast be able to afford some better writers? Such an epic saga as *Baldur's Gate* deserves a better treatment.

And just once I'd like to do some payback. Assemble a party of various beings, a kobold, hobgoblin, drow, orc, duergar, goblin, ogre and maybe a troll. And then I would go hunting adventurers and heroes. Kill them all and take their magic items.



12-14 years ago I invented Grendeline. She was my adventuring character in an online text adventure called THE DARK GRIMOIRE. As her name implies, she's not all good (in fact she is *true neutral*, in AD&D terms) and has a dark secret hidden inside.

#### POPULATION AND ANIMAL LIFE

I would include a lot of classical Greek mythology as well as classical Norse. Maybe mingle them a bit and

add a few ideas of my own. The Squonk would be there (not my own) and of course the Halluciraptor.

Why does it seem so difficult to come up with new creatures? It's a fantasy world. There ought to be loads of creatures we never heard of before. Yet we have to stick with the same old (boring) myths. I find vampires particularly boring. On one hand, they are supposed to live forever. Long life has never been the guarantee for wisdom, but of course it helps. But other than Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu*, I never saw or read about any very wise vampire. Which there ought to be a lot of. But all they seem able to think of is... food.

I would avoid far-east and medieval middle-east designs in my world creation. Not because I dislike them, but because I respect them and want to avoid a concoction of bland stereotypes. I greatly respect the way of the samurai and feel it absolutely fits best in its own environment. Besides, I wouldn't want my heroes to kill themselves when they fail. I want them to get up and get back into the game. And if they did, they wouldn't be worthy of the Katana. They'd just have to spill their guts in true bushido spirit.

And I have to complain a little about Tolkien. He didn't do troll-kind a service with his epic saga about the Lord of the Rings. In Norse folklore, trolls are not all big and bad. Some troll look almost like hobbits, except they have a tail and hobbits do not.

When I was a kid, my first acquaintance with troll-kind was through the artwork of John Bauer (1882-1918). His astounding pictures create an everlasting impact.

*The visual look of the motion picture The Dark Crystal, by Jim Henson and Frank Oz, was developed by primary concept artist and chief creature designer, Brian Froud, who in turn was inspired by the art of John Bauer. (Wikipedia)*

#### MAGIC

Magic is perhaps one of the most important tools of fantasy. Because you don't have to explain how it works. The wizard Catweazle was absolutely speechless when he encountered the magic of capturing the sun in a bottle. We call it a light bulb. He called it an electric trick. Harnessing fire in a small wooden stick was another wonder of our time. We call them matches.

As a magician I have not been very successful in real life. The fireball spell has always been my favourite assault weapon in AD&D. Now I can't throw a fireball IRL, but I can throw all the other three elements and I can do it simultaneously. It brings a whole new dimension to the throwing of dirt, which is the Earth element. All I have to do, is to unbutton my trousers, take a leak and break wind at the same time.

In creating a magic item, the cloak of water resistance has so far been my greatest success. You may want to know how is it different from a raincoat? It isn't.

Magic is what we don't understand. If / when we learn how it works, we call it science instead. But isn't it just as wondrous. really? You put ice cold, frozen food in a box, turn a dial and after a few minutes it is steaming hot, while the plate is cold. I'd call it magic, because even though I do get the scientific explanation, it is as close to magic as we get in our daily life. I don't think it is entirely impossible to come up with something which behaves and works just like a fireball.

All set! Now, what's missing are the stories. I had one, somewhere in the back of my head. It was set near the village of Hibernau where the pegases graze on the highlands. However, unlike the winged horses you are familiar with, these ones do not fly. At least, no one in Gothany had yet seen any of them fly.

## FLIGHT 🕒 OF THE PEGASE

There was a steep ravine near their pastures, where the river Odicon was floating through a valley below. One could suspect the pegases had chosen these particular meadows not only because of their altitude, but because there always was the possibility to make the jump, spread their wings and start gliding through the air.

It's just that none of them had ever had the courage to attempt it. Yet.

Gostak from the village of Hibernau was a young man who often came to the pastures of the pegases. He and his younger friend, Doshe, were convinced they could fly. And they were convinced they could be tamed. Again and again they walked among the pegases until the winged horses took no more notice of them. Some even let themselves be patted and caressed by the two young humans.

A huge white stallion was galloping across the vast meadow, spreading his wings and flapping. It was almost ready to take off. Clearly he was practising for take-off.

- All we need to do, is to give him a little push! Gostak said, admiring the huge animal.

- What if he can't fly!?! answered Doshe, always unsure about the outcome of Gostak's ideas.

- Of course he will fly! insisted Gostak.

The word science, was not known to either one of the two young friends, but the method of study and rationally to observe and learn was a universal principle. One can not know for certain, without trying.



To see what is in the box, one has to open the box. And most certainly, boxes always contained surprises!

For Gostak and Doshe, there have never been any really bad surprises. So far.

In retrospect, one could say it was very foolish to lead the stallion to the edge of the ravine. They should have paid attention to the animals increased apprehension. But they didn't.

- On three!?! said Gostak. Doshe just nodded, remaining silent. He had been distimmed too many times by his friend Gostak to raise any objections. It was no use. When Gostak had made up his mind, he had made up his mind. And that was it.

- Please, Ghu! Let this work! Doshe mumbled silently to himself.

- One... Gostak started counting out loud. He let a few seconds pass between every count.

- Two... he released the stallion as it was bending its head down to chew on some grass.

- Three! Both of them thrust their full weight against the flank of the pegase which barely was moved by the attempt. But it got frightened and distracted by the perilous experiment of the two men and rose on its hind legs spreading his wings. He shouldn't have done that, because by chance a freakish and sudden gush of wind made him take one step too many closer to the edge of the ravine. With is right hoof no more finding any solid ground under it, the pegase suddenly began flapping its wings desperately. The wind did the rest.

For a second, it appeared as if the experiment had been successful. Then the pegase disappeared out of sight in a cloud of feathers left behind accompanied by its terrified whinnying as it plunged towards the deep.

The two young men remained petrified in terror as stricken by the actual flesh to stone spell itself. Too late, they realized the gravity of what they had done. Gostak, as he should, felt chiefly responsible for the disaster. It was several minutes before either of them moved again. They sat down at the edge of the ravine in silence, pondering upon the error of their way.

Doshe realized, that remaining silent not always is the commendable course of action. Against folly one must protest, he vowed secretly to himself. They sat for a long, long time, while the other pegases merely neighed a bit to each other as the Big One disappeared, but otherwise didn't seem to grasp the ramifications of the event. One of them even approached the edge in sheer curiosity, as if to assert to himself that the Big One really didn't fly.

He was careful however, not to come too close to the brooding young pair. It was hours later that anyone of the two said anything.

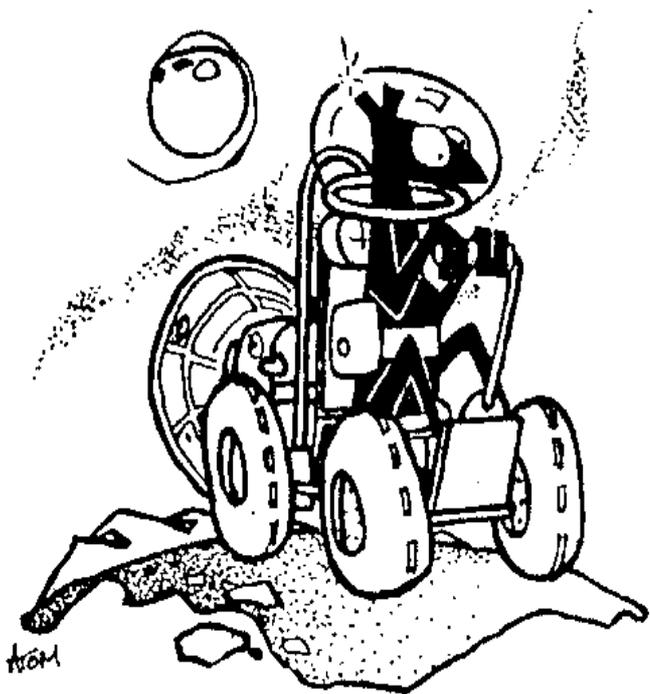
- Maybe we should have tried with a younger one. It was Gostak who finally spoke. Doshe abruptly got up and stared at him furiously.

- Are you crazy? You want to push over a foal as well???

They headed for home, before the sun began setting. A morose couple, the two of them. Behind them the pegases kept grazing and the curious young one stood looking down the ravine. Neither Gostak, nor Doshe saw when he gathered his courage unfolded his wings and jumped. He didn't flap much, but was gliding through the air. He flew for the first time.

Somebody just had to fail first...

## LETTERS OF COMMENT



**Lloyd Penney**  
1706-24 Eva Rd  
Etobicoke, ON, CANADA M9C 2B2

Dear Wolf

Many thanks for the latest CounterClock, issue 12, and the issue you've been working on all this time, issue 8. Every issue deserves some response, and 12 years isn't that long ago, so I will start off with...

#8...Living in a multilingual country, I understand the importance of a correct translation from another language, say French in my case, into English, but I also know that different people will translate in different ways, and they must agree to disagree. It is difficult to do in any case. A promised re-translation never delivered is a pain, but a fanzine editor always has other items to publish, or he just makes the letter column a little longer...

Yvonne and I have retired from convention-running after a 30-year career. There's bickering, personal opinions that clash, sometimes personal attacks you have to endure, and lots of good times and complements that show that you are doing the right thing, and making the good times happen. You do have to work hard to make those good times happen, and there are often loud critics who like to hear themselves rant, while having little or no convention-running experience to back up their complaints. Putting together a budget for a new convention is tough, and we always put it together with a worst-case scenario...what if everyone paid

for their memberships at the earliest rate? What if you only got 300 people or so? Build your budget from a minimum projected revenue, and you won't lose money.

In Canada, telling the press about the convention is one thing...having them come to the convention is another. They've long-ago lost their objectivity, and they tend to fall back on old and tired clichés, and some will even try to disrupt things or push people around. Even if they are well-behaved at the convention, the stories after will usually be about the Trekkies in town (even if you are a literary group), or a nerd festival, or the space cadets have beamed down, etc. I've used newspapers to list the event, but the press needs an iron hand if they come to the con. Ah, looks like you went through all of that, too. Doing everything right at a convention, no screw-ups...and then comes the Apocalypse.

The Alvar Award? Well done. I won an Aurora Award for a convention I'd chaired, Ad Astra 13, in 1994. I find that many GoHs are more than understanding because they've been to conventions that had far more screw-ups than yours did, or even the fact that they've run conventions in their own fannish past, and they know what you're going through.

Coming back to the present day...there now seems to be a serious Worldcon bid for the later 20-teens in Helsinki. But, you also sound like a retired con-runner. Wonder if this is something you'd come out of retirement for? Another European Worldcon is a great idea, and there are so many great cities to have it in. I look forward to the London Worldcon, Loncon 3, in 2014, and hope I can save enough money to go. Things are looking better, though...I start a new editorial job literally tomorrow morning.

The 2003 Worldcon, Torcon III...I don't remember much about it, to be honest. Most know the details...we were forced from the committee by the chairman of the board of directors, who was himself forced from his office. We were told our presence was not required, so we signed up with the LA in 2006 bid as their Canadian agents. We also assisted with their room parties at Torcon III, so we were very busy there. It seemed poorly run, mostly because the directors pushed out anyone with any experience, so Torcon III may have been the first Worldcon staged by a committee with little or no convention-running experience, let alone Worldcon-running experience, and it showed.

There are fewer and fewer fannish fans, those who know the history of SF fandom, because few newer fans suspect that fandom has a history. They don't think of the past, they only know the present. The chase for money is degrading, but it also, as stated above, makes the good times happen. It's a necessary evil you must deal with, unless you've won the lottery.

#12...I was born in 1959, too. I think the earth is already past the point of no return, that there's little we can do to repair it or bring it back to where it was in the 50s. I think we will have massive deaths in our population as we continue to build upon arable land, and reduce our potential food supply. We are ruining our Arctic and Antarctic regions, and making sea level rise, which will flood many cities on the land's edge. We are disrupting our weather, which means part of the world may become too cold or too hot to live in. We are slowly killing off other species, disrupting established natural relationships and chains, and generally overrunning the planet. We are an infestation upon its surface, and we would do well to reduce our numbers, religion notwithstanding. I can imagine an advanced species studying us, and thinking, "How stupid can you be?"

The USA will never pay their debts because the money is spent to sustain their high standard of living, and finance their military, which now has an annual budget of over a trillion dollars. Paying off the debts and reducing military spending are two sure-fire ways to ensure you are not re-elected, so politicians will never embrace either of those ideas. We will probably never learn the full truth about 9/11, for the US government is still embarrassed by this ultimate breach of US security. I don't think there's any conspiracy, though.

The Jane Standley BBC report was an error in reporting, I believe. The rest... I just don't know, especially about the collapse of WTC7, which most people forget. It was demolished by debris from the other two towers? When we don't know all the facts, we tend to incorporate the strangest ideas and assumptions into the holes in our knowledge. If this was an inside job, there would have to be a total lapse of ethics and conscience on the part of thousands of people, and I can't see that happening, at least with so many people all at once.

Now that we have explored our genome and have mapped it, we still have to find out what various combinations of genes can and will do. So many diseases can be caused or cured by the right gene manipulations, but horrific things may happen

if we are not careful. The human genome can be the site of true miracles and horrors. Dr. Moreau would be proud of us...

Both issues are done, and I am caught up. Many thanks, take care, have a great autumn.  
Yours, Lloyd Penney.

**WvW:** *Where would I be without your input? Certainly not outside. A look through the window reveals... snow falling (melting away immediately). But I wouldn't be con-running either. Apparently I have quit as well.*

*I wasn't always interested in fan-history. I think this particular interest grew on me with years, as I slowly became part of history myself. We rarely see ourselves as part of history. But we lived in it. And if we tell it from our point of view, the future may see something other than wars, regents and natural disasters. A reason for all of us, to tell our story.*

*Jane Standley's error in reporting... Yes, it was an error alright. But a remarkable one, because it was exactly that building which collapsed 45 minutes later (WTC7). Under very strange circumstances.*



**Jim Mowatt @ FACEBOOK**  
LoC on Counterclock #11

Hiya Wolf

Goodness, I think the review of the 2011 Eurocon in Stockholm is the third review I have seen of that con. If I gaze back through fannish reading of recent years I see very few reviews of Scandinavian cons and yet now, like buses in the rain, 3 come along all at once. Is this a sign? Is this a renaissance? Is it (more likely) a coincidence?

Planet of the Apes was a political movie but abstract enough that it can be twisted and changed in all sorts of directions. Its main message was that we're all a bunch of loonies who seem to spend a lot of time dead set on killing each other. You go on from the mention of Planet of the Apes though to talk about our society moving away from a time when invisible values such as truth, honour, compassion, generosity, valour and kindness were the most important thing in life. I don't think there's much evidence for this ever having been the case but I agree it would be nice if it actually was. I think we have moved from the struggle for survival (food, shelter, clothing) to a state where large groups of us already have those things and so carry on in the same vein. I think Douglas Adams summed it up best:

"The History of every major Galactic Civilization tends to pass through three distinct and recognizable phases, those of Survival, Inquiry and Sophistication, otherwise known as the How, Why, and Where phases. For instance, the first phase is characterized by the question 'How can we eat?' the second by the question 'Why do we eat?' and the third by the question 'Where shall we have lunch?'"

So we are in sophistication where we have figured out how to cope with the world and are enjoying its benefits. Of course this existence becomes rather less sophisticated when all the resources are exhausted.

**WvW:** *No, I felt the Eurocon 2011 in Stockholm did inaugurate a renaissance for Swedish fandom. They have come a long way since 1994 (when 2 conventions were planned (CONFUSE in Linköping and Fantastika in Stockholm and both got cancelled).*

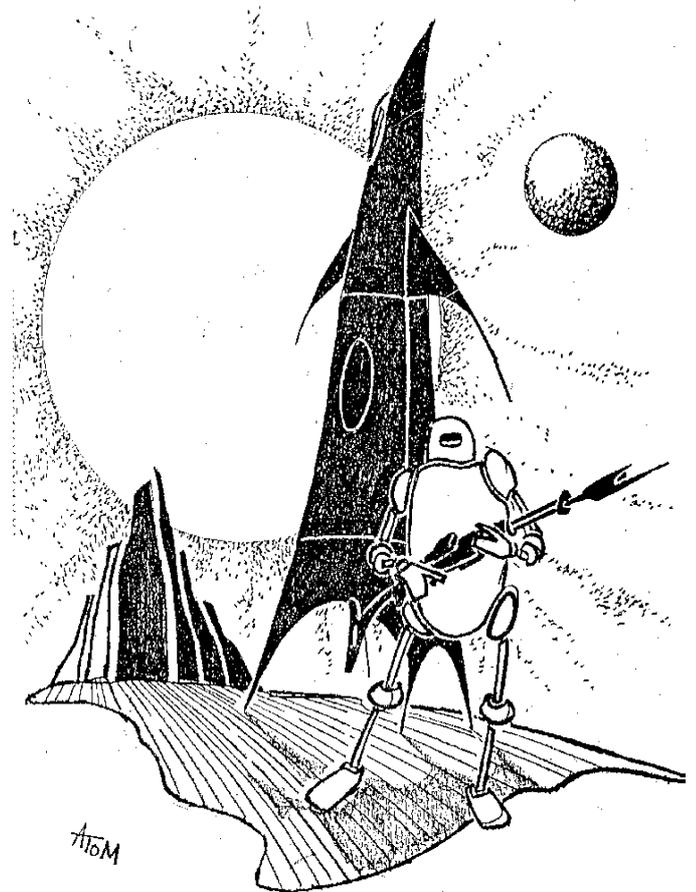
*When it comes to honour, compassion, valour and such things... It kinda depends how you look at it. The medieval knights had a code of chivalry and as far as into WWI the knights of the air were still acting and displaying behaviour by codes of chivalry. If you look at the general population, this may not have been the case. I can agree with you there. But are these values not something we like to see in the strong (and educated)?*

*And would it not benefit all, if we put such values in first place in education?*

**Theresa Derwin @ FACEBOOK**

Hi, Just read No 12 and very impressed. What a depressing state of affairs you start your zine with however! Overpopulation verse endangered species is scary! The stats you also quote are increasingly frightening. Although I admire your fanzine, blimey it left me feeling low! And your stuff on the genome? "Yehaa!! Now we can give you wings! Or an extra eye. A mouth in your arm pit perhaps?" Witty but to the point. And although there was a lot of data to assimilate, I enjoyed reading your zine. Well done!

**WvW:** *I'm sorry, I really am! Like I already said, I was feeling low myself, when I made it. Your comment made me think though. In this issue I am still in my old boots, not much has changed yet. It is not as depressing as the previous issue, but to soon to see any real change. For making a real change I have to begin working on an issue sooner, with a lot more time before deadline. The deadline itself has a tendency to wipe the smiles off my face. And that's already an awkward start.*



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**WAHF:** Sam J Lundwall, Fredric von Witting  
(Do as Jim & Theresa - deliver your LoC on FB!!)