

Russia is a gas station with a flag..running out of gas

INTERMISSION #143.5

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and we-know-who-you-are. Follow newstweets from @SFJournalen (updates very slow now, alas, too much to fix, too little time). This is a special # to focus on major Swefandom history research! If you like typos, you've come to the right palce! Late May 2024.

Editorially: Great Fanhistory News, Lousy Computer

I have bad news and good news. The good news are that I've got in touch with the publisher of Sweden's first fanzine 72 years ago! No one has done that before and I've done my best to try to extract from Åke Schwartz, now 89, how *Vår Rymd* (means "Our Space") came about. The History Corner will deal *exclusively* with it. It may be of most interest for Swedish readers, but hopefully others may also find at least something interesting in it. It is as if Ray Palmer and Walter Dennis popped up and talked about how they did *The Comet* back in 1930! [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Comet_\(fanzine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Comet_(fanzine)) 1952 is just a couple of decades later. They were actually a whole gang behind the fanzine, but Åke did the typing and appears frequently in the pages so he's a major force behind *Vår Rymd*.

But thish won't have much more. The reason is major computer troubles.

I'll make this a "half issue": #143.5. My laptop computer broke down before the not-far-from-finished #144 could be finished. It will come later, if/when the bloody computer problems are overcome. It was intended to come just before the *Eurovision Song Contest* in Malmö and had stuff about that...which now seems irrelevant, but I'll probably keep that material anyway. I write this on a spare laptop, which is a rather sorry machine, but most importantly doesn't have access to lots of files on the other computer needed for both *Intermission* and other things.

A day in late April my computer refused to start. Black screen and no LED light to indicate it even had power. I had guarantee left, so I turned it in to the shop. Nearly two weeks later I got it back and it seemed to work. For a few hours. I turned it in again, got it back three weeks later, and it seemed to work – this time for only five minutes! I turned it in for the rhird time, but the repair people now gave up. When testing it they encountered the same problem. It would sometimes work, but then suddenly stop. (They try to argue I have fiddled with it, but I will insist on either getting a similar replacement laptop or my money back...or I'll report them to the government's Consumer Agency.)

What I'll probably have to do is getting a similar machine replacing it, and take out the mass storage SSD device and simply move it to a the new machine. To make a backup of 500 GB of data and then copy it to a blank disk wouldn't be practical - the storage itself must be moved. (The machine is a Lenovo Thinkpad T480, in case you wonder. And yes, I have searched the 'Net for fixes. I've tried them. Unsuccessfully.)

Computers... You can't live with them, you can't live without them!

This *Intermission* will be thin. No event reports. Nothing about Putin's stupid Ukraine invasion - except bashing Russia above and "Glory to Ukraine" below. No mailing comments. I'm too frustrated and pressed for time. At the same time as shitty bytes have hit the computer fan, I've had the last weeks of a "Creating Worlds" writing course which has taken major bites out of available time. I've just finished our final assignment (and the computer problems have interfered with that too). And I'm late with starting this year's Fantastic Short Story Contest, now having it's 25th anniversary. I've been lagging behind with Twitter, SFJ and other stuff too. Shite!

I hope the summer will be good, because this spring has been lousy.

--Ahrvid Engholm



Artist Lars LON Olsson has also fought with computers.



The Comet, ed Ray Palmer & Walter Dennis, came in May 1930. It was first.

History Corner: First Faned Speaks!

The editor of Sweden's first fanzine from 1952 has been found, still alive and kicking at age 89. They were a little club behind it, but *Åke Schwartz* was the one who typed the stencils and contributed much of the material - and it was printed on his father's job - so he was a major force behind *Vår Rymd*. With a fanzine we must refer to the ones steaming from science fiction – not just any amateur mag – as sf fandom began this form of cultural expression (*The Comet*, 1930, LR Chauvenet coining the word "fanzine", 1940). Other fanzines came later (comics, games, TV/film etc), usually directly inspired by the pioneering fanzines from sf fans.

Your intrepid fandom historian has been in touch with Åke who today lives in Degerfors, in the province of Värmland in the west (through E-mail, I distrust phones). All thanks to Clas Svan from the Archive for the Unexplained - covered in this eminent publication last spring – as he put me in touch with Åke. Clas is as you probably know involved in UFO Sweden - remember the film, covered in this superior publication too - of which Åke Schwarz has been and probably still is a member.

It is as if Ray Palmer and Walter Dennis popped up and told how they published *The Comet*. Though both were active in sf circles and probably talked about their fanzine at the time, Mr Schwarz has been silent, or shall we say: unknown to others.

I had for a long time heard rumours that some schoolboys did some sort of astronomy newsletter in the early 1950's at Östra Real high school. I think I first heard it from Sam J Lundwall, but apparently neither he nor anyone did anything to check it. And nobody had even seen the publication. Our local fan folks knew nothing. In the 1950's it would have been very easy to check things. Just go to the school and ask around...and you'd learn it was faulty info.

In 2017 I happened to do some digging in the Royal Library and was idly clicking around in their search system, when *Vår Rymd* suddenly popped up. Someone had donated stuff to the library in the 1970 in which it was included. *Intermission* wrote about it then and I did a PDF of the seven publications (formally nine issues but two were double issues - just ask me for the PDF). I remember I did some half-hearted search attempts on the names of people involved, getting nowhere. In the back of my head I thought most had passed away.

I'll soon turn over to Mr Schwartz. I've asked him questions and he replied, and I had follow-ups he replied to, etc. It went that way 5-6 times. I have then put it all in some sort of logical order. The Östra Real school isn't mentioned at all. Several of the teenage publishing kids were however from another school, the *Beskowska High School*^{*}, in the same Östermalm District.



Åke Schwartz

^{*}Named after the politician Gustaf Emanuel Beskow who founded the school in 1867, https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beskowska_skolan. Not related to the famous children's fantasy author Elsa Beskow. BTW, I had Elsa's son Göran Beskow as physics teacher in the 1970s, in the Nya Elementar high school...

Now, below is what Åke Schwarz told me, slightly edited:

It began with that we went to sf-films, which we all liked. A good movie was Forbidden Planet. It talks about the speed of light, other planets and had a fun robot. I saw it in 1951 in the cinema "Lyran" on Svea Street and was afraid as I biked home. It was also fun to go to the cinema Bostock where they let you in even if you were below 15 years /age limit for tougher films/ You heard the tram from the street outside. It was the werewolf, Frankenstein, Dracula and Lon Chaney and Boris Karloff. When you walked home you went the last stretch in the middle of the road and was scared when you opened the door.

And we began to talk about forming a club and publish a magazine. We came to call ourselves the Andromeda Club, and it consisted of those who did the magazine. The club wasn't registered or anything.

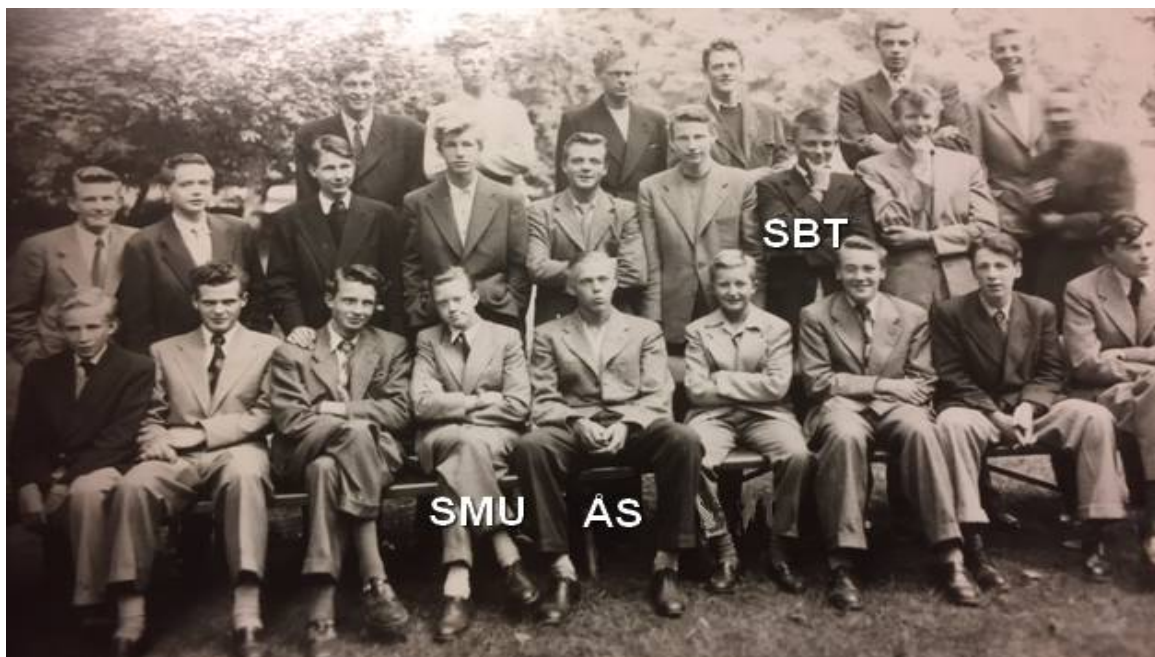


Me, Sven Miller-Uri and Lennart Henriksson attended the Beskowska high school. Brother Åke Henriksson went to Norra Real high school, Karl Bjelke to Bromma high school. Johan Asplund joined for a short while. Since we were two Åke i received the nickname Svartas ("Blackish"). Of these I'm the only one left, 89 this autumn, and Lennart, but he suffers from a stroke and is 86.

*We gathered after lunch in a big room at Åke Henriksson's on 13B Villa Street and produced it. It took a weekend. /For each issue./ I worked the typewriter. I put up the typewriter on a big dining table. It was a bit difficult to write on stencils. If there was a typo you had to smear some substance on it, wait and then type the correction. /Ed: I know... Corflu!/
The Beskowska School, 9-11 Engelbrekts Street*

We began with discussing what ideas each one had and if he had brought the material so it could be written. Then we decided the contents, Sven could draw what he wanted. He was a good artist. Then we began. A lot of milk and buns were consumed during the afternoon. We didn't drink beer at the time. The next day we took the stencils to dad's office at the company Gränges at Gustaf Adolf Square to print it.

There was no society, more like a little club. The fanzine was sold to relatives and friends. Everyone thought it was nice that we did a little magazine. Our teacher in Swedish mumbled and smiled but thought it was nice. But we had no



Beskowska class photo from around that time. ÅS=Åke Schwartz, SMU=Sven Miller-Uri, SBT=Sven Bertil Taube (but he didn't contribute to Vår Rymd)

contacts with other sf interested. There probably weren't any around.

We subscribed to Håpna and Galaxy /Ed: Later - Håpna came in 1954, Galaxy in 1958/ and had a fine space art book by Chesley Bonestell. We read Bradbury and Heinlein and others. We went to all the sf films, very exciting at the time but are now probably considered ridiculous. Sven and I had a lecture in school for the class about space and that rockets will be launched and so on. We suffered laughter and irony, but then the Sputnik came in 1957. And then it all progressed fast. How times have changed! It was a time of harmony those days when we were young.

The magazine just ceased. We continued to socialize. Had some parties and masquerades on Villa Street since they had a big apartment. In the early 1960's some began dating and withing a few years all were married. After that we didn't meet so much, a few times per year perhaps to play cards and talk about old times. We all had families and children and jobs. But in later years we've met with wives on 75 and 80 years birthdays. Now its only me and Lennart left. He had a milder stroke.

The Russian Ambassador lived below Henrikssons. Every day he went to the Russian embassy on Villa Street 17. Once we put explosives in his key hole. It was a fairly innocent mix called "blast dough". It was Karl who studied chemistry who made it. When he put the key in it exploded. The ambassador just laughed...



#3 had their first illustrated cover, three spaceships going to Earth seen from the Moon. Drawing probably by Sven M-U, who was the staff artist.

It was a fairly innocent mix called "blast dough".



The Soviet Embassy at the time, Villa Street. The "blast dough" bombed entrance is probably on other side, not shown.

Gee! They "bombed" the Soviet embassy! It could have become an international incident... You little rascals!

Trivia: Sven Bertil Taube later very famous actor and troubadour - was in their class. He probably knew about Vår Rymd. What would have happened...if he became



#6 has a nice cover of a spaceman fighting a robot. But it's obvious they didn't have proper stencil drawing equipment.

more involved? Imagine filling some of his records with space-related songs.

Mr Schwarz would later become a member of UFO Sweden. Remember that film! - its BTW available through

<https://www.svtplay.se/video/ja473nB/ufo-sweden> (foreigners may try a VPN or something).

Gränges is a big mining company, but left their office house in central Stockholm in 1995, when it was sold.

I get the impression the background for *Vår Rymd* is extremely typical! A bunch of guys who loved science fiction ganged together to express themselves. Sitting for a weekend at 13B Villagatan is what we call a "fangathering". I know how it goes. I've been on such sessions. You chat, drink - they were probably too young for beer, but soft drinks, tea and milk perhaps - tell stories and jokes and laugh, while ideas and material to publish pop up. Those were the days!

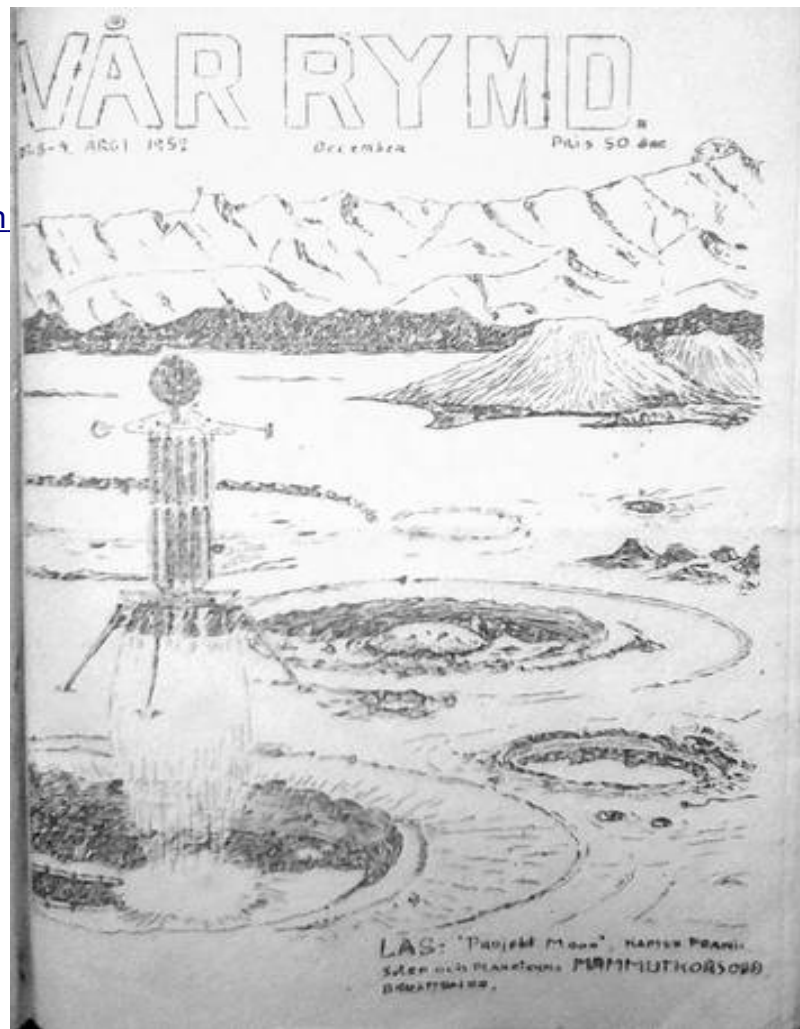
Here's a run-down of the issues, all from 1952 (some very minor things omitted):

#1 March 3 pages: *The Saturn Ring / Planets in Our Solar System / Crossword / "Mars Attacks Venus"* (short story by Åke Schwartz)

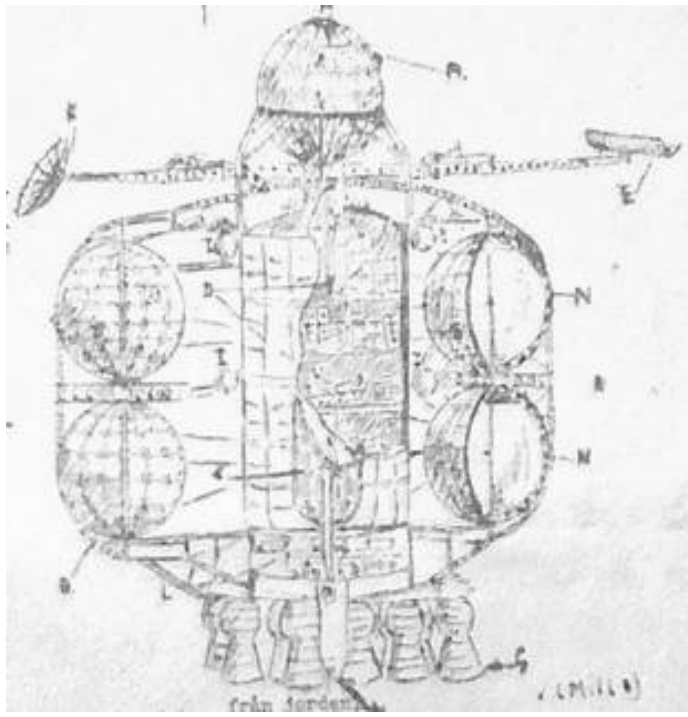
#2 April, 5 pages: *The Comets / Planets in Our Solar System / Crossword / Where the Planets Go and Shines in 1952 / Photo of Saturn from AKA's observatory (a photo glued in) / (Some jokes) / "The Adventures of Vic Torry"* short story by A Miller-Uri, to be continued in next issue / *A Visit to Stockholm's Observatory / "Captain Future as Saboteur on Mars"* short story by Åke Schwartz to be continued in next issue

#3 May 5 pages: *Flying Saucers Fantasy or real? / "Saboteur on Mars"* continued / *The Moon / Some Known Observatories / Moon Picture from the AKA observatory (clued in photo) / Crossword*

#4 June 12 pages (it should be #4-5): *Cover illo of spaceship orbiting the Moon / The Vic Torry story continued / Future Space Station Moon No 2 / "hat do you know about Astronomy, 15 Questions / Did You Know... / Moon Facts / The Planets in Our Solar System 3. Mars / The Asteroids, Small Planets or Planetoids / Martians on a Flight Plate / Second installment of the Uranium War (where was the 1st?) / Cap 2 Death in the Crater / Cap 5 Inside Asteroid 539 / Second installment of Saboteur on Mars / Flying Saucer was photographed in Rio de Janeiro / Green on Mars / Beware of Earth / Shall I See If There Is Life On Mars / The Spiral Nebulas / The Editors / The Rocket and Its History*



Spaceship landing on the Moon in the last issue.



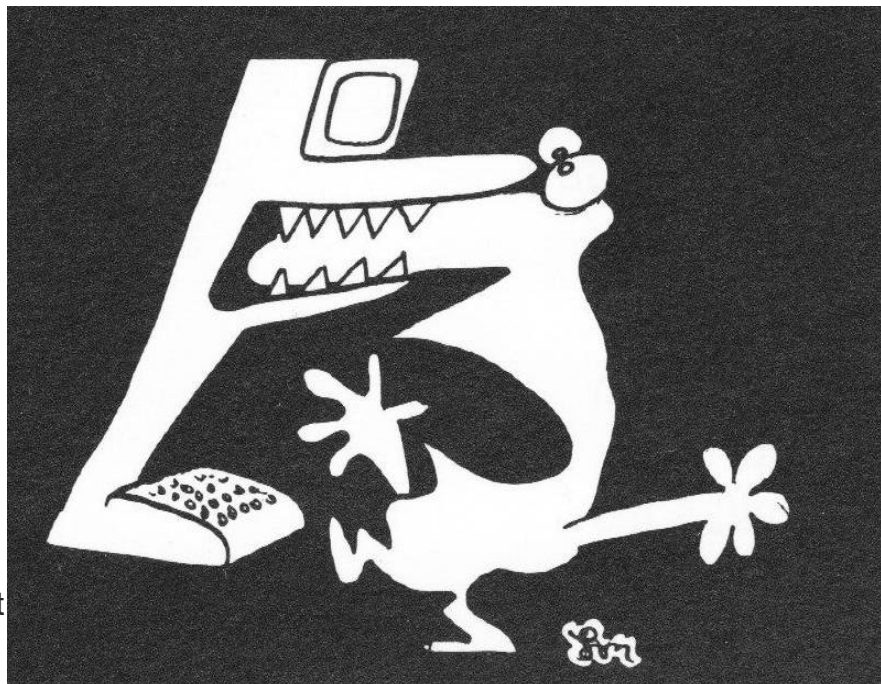
Drawing of a space station from the december issue.

#6 September (?) 6 pages: Cover with spaceman, spaceship and robot / The Planets in Our Solar System jupiter / The Sun Spots / The First Pictures of the Flying Saucers / An Unsolved Mystery / Here Some Who Have Seen teh Saucers What are the Flying Saucers? / Did You Know... / Agent to Sell Our Space Employed / Third Installment of "The Unranium War" / The Editors / "They Died on Mars" short story translated from English.

#7 (no month mentioned) 5 pages: Last Installment of "The Uranium Wars" / The Planets of Our Solar System Saturn / "The Deep Fried Giant Lizards" a Captain Future tale by Åke Schwartz / "Did you know that..."

8-9 December 13 pages: "Did you know that..." / Comparing the Solar System (and) the Comet of 1843 / Proturberances / The Telescope / Prize Contest / "2020" short story by Åke Schwartz / Doed the Moon Have an Iron Core? / The Planets and Their Satellites / Mammoth Crossword / Editorial Staff of Our Space / "The Downfall" short story by Enrique / The Planets of Our Solar System Uranus Neptune Pluto / About a Future Space Station / Does the Moon Have an Iron Core?

Editorial staff mentioned in #5: Åke and Lennart Henriksson, Åke Schwartz, Johan Asplund, Sven Miller-Uri (artist), Karl Bjelke (reporter). Publisher "Astronomical Club Andromeda", address c/o Å Henriksson, 13B Villa Street. Most of them used "signatures" for their material, also listed. It was a tradition in Swedish press at the time that articles were signed by a short, catchy "signature" name. The same editorial staff is listed in #6, #7 and #8-9.



Artist Lars LON Olsson has also had his encounters with computers.

I don't know how many copies were printed, but I doubt it could have been more than 50-100 copies. Some issues have glued in photographs (Saturn and other astronomy pictures) and it's complicated and expensive to do. The print run couldn't have been too big for this reason.

Earlier it has been assumed that a certain *Cosmos News* from Club Cosmos in Gothenburg was the first Swedish fanzine. But *Vår Rymd* was first, it had amateur short stories (incl with Capt Future), space stations, rockets and the editors were science fiction fans. It may not be the most advanced fanzine, some stuff in it looks silly, but it was first.

Слава Україні!