

# INTERMISSION #55

Small E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com) for EAPA. In Twitter, follow my newstweets from Nordic sf/fantasy/horror/fandom on @SFJournalen, and my private account @ahrvid. Typos due to autumn arriving, leaves and letters flying about... Early October 2016.

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**I'll send this issue around a bit, hoping to recruit members to EAPA, fandom's oldest electronic APA. EAPA really needs you, so please consider joining! Minac is only 1 page - as a PDF – every second month.**

**Ask me for details: [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com)**

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## Edit-2-rially

This *Intermission* is for EAPA's traditional open October mailing, so I'll do it in the form of a mini-anthology with the best (or least worst...) from previous *Intermissions*, November last year and on.

Please note the message above! EAPA needs /m/o/r/e new blood. (Also a new Official Editor, as the old one is resigning after doing his duty for a long time.) An electronic APA is a good idea, so one should exist. Instead of at a later stage reinventing the wheel, why not use the wheel that already exist! EAPA is a wheel that has rolled for 150 mailings, so let's try to keep it going.

Membership doesn't really require much. You write something every second month (or every month if you wish) and press the command for "export as PDF" in your word processor. (If your WP lacks this feature there are simple and free shareware packages to do the job.) You can write about your life, science fiction, fandom, comment previous mailing, say how much you //o/a/t/h/e love *Intermission* or anything.

The best I can do for EAPA is to try to make interesting issues of this zine. If there is interesting stuff to read, that should help. And by this collection of stuff from this past year, I hope you'll realise how much you have missed if you're not an EAPAn...

I'll sometimes only reproduce a picture (with a caption) from a longer story in a previous issue. And I'll probably shorten some of the texts a bit (or possibly add interesting bits sometimes). I've done a lot the past month, I'll save that for next *Intermissin*, which you'll get through EAP (but mailings are closed and password-protected). You'll get perhaps the story of the spaceship Aniara on Sweden's smallest gallery, a report about Russian dystopian fiction, meet an interesting Italian author of fantastic literature, a piece about the Swedish pirate radio stations that challenged the state monopoly (I have that story on Swedish – perhaps I'll translate/summarise it) and other hot stuff.

--Ahrvid Engholm

## From *Intermission* #44:

### Inside the Nobel Literature Prize

The member of the Swedish Academy Per Wästberg has written an article about the work behind the Nobel Prize in literature. It was in the daily Svenska Dagbladet Oct 4th, "The Prize that is Dynamite for Culture", and the Swedish original piece is here: <http://www.svd.se/priset-som-ar-kulturell-dynamit>. But I thought I should give you a few snippets and some info from his article:

"Geography is not our subject." The Academy does not try to spread the grace between countries, languages and continents. After Saramaago he says they "could have given the prize three years in a row to Portugal, if it had been motivated".

He admits that the Academy may have difficulties to get into "cultural spheres" that are too alien and far away, but they try

They look for "originality...work free from stereotypes...author-ships which has had the power raise people from the comfy chair...especially to something that reveals unknown domains and make us rejoice."

There are no fixed norms, and the words in Alfred Nobel's will affects them little. (Note: Nobel's wording in the will is difficult to interpret. The literary prize should go to a work in "idealisk" direction. The word means approx "ideal", something perfect, but it is likely he meant "idealistisk", "idealistic". It seems the Academy don't give a damn and solve his by simply giving the prize to someone they think is good.)

Wästberg regrets Joyce never got the prize. Tolstoy never received it, because he wasn't nominated! Ezra Pound became impossible because of his fascist agitation, Doris Lessing got the prize too late (but she did get it!) and Pearl Buck was an improvised mistake. After that they made a rule that an author must have been on the shortlist at least two years before receiving the prize. Graham Greene isn't mentioned.

About politics. The Academy was accused of being leftist with giving it to Harold Pinter, and right wing when Mario Vargas Llosa was the winner. "We separate political intention and political effect. So: Can an author be awarded despite his political colour? Of course. Can he get it because of this? Never!" Wästberg does mention that "struggle for human values" has importance.'

About the procedures. About 400 invitations for nominations are mailed yearly to literary academies, literature departments of universities, author organisations, PEN clubs and earlier laureates. By deadline Feb 1st there are ca 220 answers. The list is supplemented with biographies and the Academy members' own notes of preferences and is cut down to a half-long list of ca 20. The chair of the Nobel committee (a body of five) presents these to the Academy and a shortlist of five is distilled to May. The Academy reads the work by those five during summer, using books "with false covers", code words when they talk about the authors (to prevent leaks) and write summaries of their opinion. Then during the first Academy meetings after summer, in September, they start discussing the candidates and finally they vote and strict majority wins. They may vote several times eliminating candidates with the fewest votes each time.

"Sometimes we get nominations where someone suggests himself



*Sara Danius is the first female "Constant Secretary" (as the title goes) of the Academy, and its most powerful member. The secretary runs everything and announces the Nobel Prize.*

and includes his collected works, in one case the longest poem in the world of 12 000 pages, in another an epic which with the permission of the /Danish/ Queen had been placed in the National Library in Copenhagen, both from India, a country where they often try not very subtle corruption and promise much attention if an Academy member would come to a visit". I have visited the Swedish Academy and their beautiful main hall a few of times, when have open lectures and seminars.



*The insignia of the Swedish Academy, founded in 1786 by king Gustaf III. Their motto, "Snille och smak", means "Wit and taste".*

*From a conference about Swedish space projects (everything from launching satellites from Kiruna in northern Sweden to making small "cubesats"). The Swedish astronaut Christer Fuglesang (pictured) opened it. The conference was in a beautiful, new wooden and glass "dome", called Dome of Visions, on the campus of the Royal Institute of Technology.*





*"Those people who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do."*

*--Isaac Asimov*

*The fans Carl Mikael Zetterling (left, former editor of the SFSF memberzine, now working with space electronics) and Janne Wallenius (right, former faned, no professor in nuclear physics) attended the space conference too. Janne talked about using nuclear power to power spaceships and space probes. He also works with creating small nuclear reactors (of new, safer construction) for the Canadian Arctic.*



*"The future is not google-able."  
--William Gibson*

*The Stockholm Culture House had an HP Lovecraft Festival in mid-October 2015. I only attended it briefly, eg here when a HPL comics artist drew his art live, to improvised music. The festival had films, panels, readings, book tables, performances, exhibitions and even an official "pub crawl". (I'm more interested in HPL's fascinating life than his heavy, often boring prose.)*



*"Those who believe in telekinetics, raise my hand."  
--Kurt Vonnegut*

*Jean-Claude Mézières, creator of the "Valérian and Laureline" (with Pierre Christin, who writes the stories) comic book series visited Stockholm and the SF Bookstore October 16th. They are space opera comics books, very popular in Sweden. He talked about eg how hard he had to struggle early in his career. Mézières and Christin have been GoHs on an earlier Swecon, sometime about 15 years ago, if I remember correctly.*



**"I DON'T BELIEVE  
IN ASTROLOGY;  
I'M A  
SAGITTARIUS  
AND WE'RE  
SKEPTICAL."  
--ARTHUR C  
CLARKE**

*In the evening the same day I went to the Söderbokhandeln bookstore. Historian Fredrik Charpentier (right, in the sofa) talked about his new book *Den långa medeltiden* (*The Long Middle Ages*) with Petter Ljunggren. Interesting to hear eg how medieval Swedish kings were elected. The royal commissioner (or how to translate) in each shire selected 12 trustworthy men. These gathered at the Mora Rocks (north of Stockholm) and cast their votes. (It wasn't until after king Gustav I, elected 1523, the kingdom became hereditary. The reason was to stop power struggles and minor civil wars fighting for the throne.)*



**"PROGRESS ISN'T MADE BY EARLY  
RISERS. IT'S MADE BY LAZY MEN  
TRYING TO FIND EASIER WAYS  
TO DO SOMETHING."  
--ROBERT A HEINLEIN**

*The American fantasy author Leigh Bardugo (right, me left) visited the local Tranströmer Library (named after the poet and Nobel laureate). She's of Russian-Jewish descent. "But I'm not particularly fond of Russia," she said. "They've not been kind to Jews. My family emigrated and never looked back."*

### **From *Intermission* #45:**

#### **RIP: Johan Frick 1965-2015**

Long-time fan, BNF, writer, translator, musician, bookseller Johan Frick passed away November 14th, from a brain tumour. He was also a friend of mine, though we usually only met on cons or when he visited the SF Bookstore in Stockholm. He lived 500 km away in Gothenburg, where he was one of the managers of the SF Bookstore local branch.

I came to know him in the early 1980's when he became of the most active fanzine publishers (often together with Johan Kugelberg - now gallerist, music producer, living in NYC; the two Johans were known as Nolaskogsfandom). He was also a very talented musician, doing two singles with his band called Captain Future and the Zapguns. (Yes, the name was from Edmond Hamilton's 1940's pulp

hero Cpt Future, known over here as "Kapten Frank" in the popular 1940's magazine Jules Verne Magasinet.)

Johan often played on sf cons, together with eg Jan Risheden, filksongs of his own composition or any of the classic ones earlier made by David



Nessle and Erik Andersson. He was a very talented musician and later together with other fans forme the band Johan Fricks Kapell.

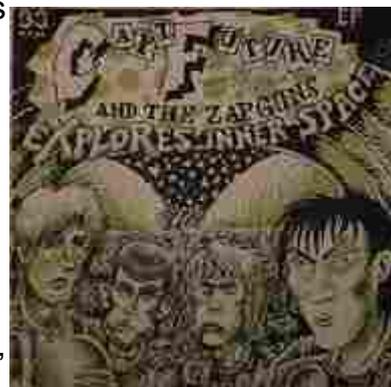
In the 1990's he became a prolific translator, translating demaning writers like Philip K Dick, Gene Wolfe and Douglas Coupland.

Late in his years he decided to become a iction writer and had three novelettes, a sort of poetic space operas, published by Mix

Förlag as E-books. A fourth story was finished just before his death and will be published now in December. All these stories will also be collected into a paper book next spring, it is said.

Another of his interests was Lindy Hop dancing. A couple of years ago he told me, with much enthusiasm, about how he has been going to the Herräng Dance Camp, where thousands of people from around the world gather every summer to do the Lindy Hop. I've seen TV programs about that camp which is supposed to be world famous (see [www.herrang.com](http://www.herrang.com)).

A friendly, modest, multi-talented guy. Johan Frick will be very much missed. You can also read about him in File770: <http://file770.com/?p=26015>



*The cover of Captain Future and the Zappguns is made by fan David Nessel, later becoming a famous comics artist.*

## **The Stieg Larsson Prize & the Strange Game of Bandy**

The Stieg Larsson Prize was founded in 2009 in memory of this journalist and author of the successful Millennium series. The prize is worth 200 000 Swedish crowns (just over €20 000). The 2015 prize went to the Chinese author and journalist Yang Jisheng, with the jury motivation:

Author and journalist Yang Jisheng is awarded the Stieg Larsson Prize 2015 for his determined and courageous investigative journalism. For several years, Yang Jisheng mapped the impact of the widespread famine, caused by the the Chinese Cultural Revolution and which led to the death of thirty-six million people. His research is presented in the ground-breaking book Tombstone, in which Yang Jisheng methodically and openly challenges the official history of the Chinese regime and gives voice to the victims of the catastrophe. In true Stieg Larsson spirit.

See: <http://www.stieglarssonfoundation.se/the-annual-stieg-larsson-prize/>  
<http://www.norstedtsagency.se/news/2015/Yang-Jisheng-wins-the-Stieg-Larsson-Prize/>

In later years this prize has been presented in cooperation with Teskedsorden (The Order of the Teaspoon, <http://www.teskedsorden.se/> ) who November 10th held a big gala in the Eric Ericson Hall in Stockholm.

Several hundred people were present, including Yours Truly. Master of ceremonies was the artist and singer Lill Lindfors, Beside presentation of the activities of Teskedsorden, other items on the program were music and actor Jonas Karlsson reading from Amos Oz's How to Cure a Fanatic. He also read a Swedish translation of the Stieg Larsson Prize speech by Yang Jisheng, saying among other things that love transcends time and space, demonstrated by how the victims of the Chinese famine were now honoured half a century later and in a far away place like Stockholm. We held a silent minute for the famine victims.

We also heard a panel discussion with Jason "Timbuktu" Diakit  (bestselling artist) and Mona Sahlin (former minister, social democrat).

The Teskedsorden Scholarship went to Filip Hammar, Fredrik Wikingsson (TV personalities), Karin af Klintberg and Anders Helgeson (film directors) for the documentary film "Trevligt folk" ("Nice People"). See: <http://www.teskedsorden.se/filip-och-fredrik-far-teskedsordens-stipendium-2015/> "Trevligt folk" is an interesting film and integration project, dealing with creating a national team for Somalia in the winter game called bandy! And then sending this team to the bandy World Cup!

Bandy resembles icehockey, but is played on a big field, with more players with rules more like soccer. It is a popular game in Sweden and northern Europe and the point with creating a bandy team among Somalian immigrants is to promote their integration in Swedish society and increase contacts between Swedes and immigrants. A trailer for the film and a TV report about Somalia Bandy: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mnq4pfGCK1E>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p07ytfH0Jl>

Some of the players in the Somalia Bandy team were there and I talked with a couple of them. The evening ended with mingling, food and some wine. Suddenly Joakim Larsson (Stieg's younger brother) approached me. He remembered me from the two previous Stieg Larsson prize events I've been to. We talked a little. He said it had been a bit difficult and costly to get Yang Jisheng to Stockholm, but it was worth it.

I managed to exchange a few words with Yang Jisheng (through an interpreter) and asked if he had had any problems with the Chinese government about his work and receiving this award. He said he hadn't. Sweden is seen as a friendly, neutral country in China, or "mostly harmless" as

Douglas Adams might put it. He also said that Stieg Larsson is known in China, his books have been translated, but he has not yet become that Big Name he is in many other parts of the world.

David Lagercrantz (author of the new, fourth Millennium novel) was there too and I managed to exchange a few words. He recently announced that he would write two new books in the series, and I asked if the plot of the two books would be connected. He couldn't reveal anything, but his face hinted that the two new books might be connected...



*Stieg's father Erland was there. I also met his brother Joakim.*



*The game of bandy, a sort of ice hockey on a bigger field and bigger goals. This game was actually invented in England in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and since became popular in Scandinavia and Russia. It is also played in Canada, the northern US, in some middle-European countries – and now by Somalians (though on Swedish ice).*

After another science seminar, "Stealing Space", we were entertained by a Fritiof Palm playing a theremin, the world's first electronic synthesizer, invented by Leon Theremin. You play with your hands in the air. The left hand for volume and the right hand for pitch. Here you see me having a go. The theremin has often been used for "scary" music in horror films, by Hitchcock and in the theme music to the "Midsummer murders" on TV.



**"NEVER FIRE A LASER AT A MIRROR." --LARRY NIVEN**



From a debate organised by the Institute for Future Studies, on the topic "The future of nationalism". The Norwegian professor Thomas Hylland Eriksen in the middle was main speaker. Göran Rosenberg to the far right is an author, well-known from the public debate. One opinion was that sensible nationalism may be an antidote to extremism.

I went to a release of a new book by the brothers Martin and Kristian Luuk. Me with Kristian (right) here, who is well-known as TV game and talkshow host and a Funny Guy. He used to be a local Letterman with a witty talkshow and now host the biggest gameshow on SVT, "På spåret" ("On the Tracks").



**From Intermission #46:**

### **An Early Futuristic Conference**

The first Swedish sf convention was held 18-19th of August 1956 in the city of Lund, named Luncon. However, almost a year before this there was a very serious "futuristic" conference held in Stockholm, though it was aimed at politicians and business life. November 15-16th 1955, the Social Democratic party arranged a conference called "Technology and Society of Tomorrow" (in Swedish "Tekniken och Morgondagens Samhälle"), often referred to as the Rigoletto Conference as it was held in the Stockholm cinema theatre Rigoletto, which still exists.

Hundreds of representatives gathered from science, business life, the trade unions and politics to discuss science, technology and how that would influence the society of tomorrow. Among the delegates were the then Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander, his young crown prince Olof Palme (later to be PM), Nobel laureate Hannes Alfvén (later author of *The Tale of the Big Computer: A Vision*, an sf novel from 1966) and many other Big Names.

It wasn't a science FICTION conference, as literature was only occasionally referred to (the published proceedings have names like Orwell, Verne and Wells mentioned in the passing), but it was a conference about the future. Around 35 lectures were held by scientists, business and trade union leaders, and politicians. All those speeches were the year after printed by the publisher Tidens in the book *Tekniken och morgondagens samhälle* (1956, 319 pages).

The topics covered were:

- Atomic energy
- Automatisation and electronics
- Chemistry and organic synthesis
- Genetics and plant breeding
- Basic research and future society

Each topic would have a main speaker usually a specialised scientist, which would then be followed by a number of follow-up lectures with comments. Let's have a look at what kind of futuristic visions we can find, as presented in the mentioned book.

Atomic energy was of course the big new thing. This topic started the conference. The plans for nuclear plants in the US and UK are described and Swedish politicians are urged to build Swedish reactors ASAP since "there are good reasons to assume that atomic power will be cheaper than coal and oil power". It is also noted that Sweden has big deposits of uranium-bearing shale. A detailed plan is also presented about the first big Swedish atomic reactor, the Ågesta plant - which was later built just south of Stockholm. Before this, there was a smaller research reactor, R1, built on the premises of the Royal Technical institute, bordering the downtown.

Neither Ågesta or R1 would have been allowed so close to a city in hindsight. Plans for even more advanced plants are presented, and Sweden would up to the 70's and early 80's build to 12 full-scale nuclear reactors, producing around half the country's electricity need. Automatisation is the next big topic. It's about cybernetics and letting machines and factories being run by automatic programs, freeing us from manual labour. The technology shows great promise, and America is leading the way. Office automatisation is also covered, with punchcard machines and hints of early computers (the Swedish computer projects BARK and BESK aren't mentioned, though).

A representative for Ericsson talks about the new fast, automatic telephone switches which in the very near future will benefit from this new fantastic invention called - the transistor. Organic chemistry comes next on the conference. It is about how to synthesize new fantastic compounds. We learn how studies of rye and sugar beets lead Swedish scientists to discover and synthesize an important local anesthetic and a blood replacement fluid. New antibiotics and promises of new medicines are also covered. Sweden has no coal or oil but lots of forests which also provides hydrocarbons - though the need for paper will compete with the demands of chemical industries:

"How that problem can be solved without obliterating the forests of the world is not easy to guess, even with an imagination like that of Jules Verne or Walt Disney. Television will maybe fix the problem. Perhaps we will be able to lie in bed in the morning, press a button and read the favourite magazine on the wall. Or we may get newspaper on plastic or polyethene, which after use are scrubbed clean of printing ink, recast and reused."

Other new materials are mentioned, like germanium for transistors (in reality, silicon became much more important). When it comes to genetics and plant breeding, both agriculture and forestry are expected to benefit enormously from new technology and breeding methods. The 10 years before the Rigoletto conference, Swedish agriculture increased productivity by between 10 and 30% - depending on crops - due to new breeds. In real life, productivity would increase even more from the 1960's and on, thanks to eg the work of one Norman Borlaug. Similar productivity increases were also expected for the forestry industry though it takes longer (trees grow slower). Paper, pulp and



wood export was of huge importance for the country, representing 40% of all export income (with Sweden having 10% of the world market). New machinery will make cutting down trees and grinding them to pulp much more efficient.

Automatisation plays a huge role here too. A special form of plant breeding is induced mutation by bombarding plants with X-rays. One of the speakers claim new important crops and plants may be created 100 times faster that way. (One may hope they don't happen to produce evil Triffids while at it...)

The importance of basic research is among the last topics covered. We learn how Alexander Fleming found penicillin by pure chance and how Otto Hahn discovered splitting the atom through basic research, leading to freeing atomic energy (in atomic bombs as well as power plants). And:

"Exploring space has hardly counted as a useful task, and astronomy as sometimes been considered the least 'useful' science. But studies of cosmic radiation has given us important information about the particles that make up the atomic nucleus and today we build huge constructions in the atomic science laboratories on Earth to produce and use atomic radiation. For producing energy we hope to also use the hydrogen bomb to reach and maintain temperatures of hundreds of millions of degrees".

Hannes Alfvén talks about how basic research about the Aurora Borealis led to constructing a new The Rigoletto cinema today, Kungsgatan (King's Street), where the conference was held. Form of very fast electronic valve, "the Trokotrone", which was needed for a model of an Aurora electric research device (transistors would soon be giving better performance). However, it is generally noted that Swedish basic research lags behind America, mainly due to a lower percentage of students in higher education, lower wages for scientists and less cooperation between universities and business - a gap that in coming years would be somewhat closed.

A speech that is rather chilling - I use that word deliberately - is by one Rudolf Meidner, titled "How to increase capital accumulation". He talks about what he calls "collective saving", which was later formalised into a plan for something called wagetaker funds, also called the Meidner funds, which became the centre for an extremely animated debate in the 1970's! The plan was to impose an extra tax up on all private companies which would buy up stocks in the companies to let the trade unions step by step take over the businesses. You bet that the non-socialist opposition parties fired heavy broadsides at this plan to virtually nationalize Swedish industry, and there was also a big debate within the Social Democratic party. Finally, the Social Democrats introduced a milder version of the wagetaker funds, but the debate didn't stop. When the opposition took over in 1991 the new government Bildt quickly scrapped these funds, and the idea of giving away private business to the trade unions haven't been heard of again. It was a lousy idea, but you could hear about it already in 1955.

Other topics covered are television (Sweden didn't yet have regular TV broadcasting at this time) and the growth of the automobile industry and car ownership. In 20 years time, one of the speakers said, half of the households will be rich enough to own a car - it would go much faster than that! Prime Minister Erlander closed the conference: "We have gotten rich material for our speculations about how the future society should be... a fantastic world of miracles presented. But it is not a world of magic. ... This conference has been about the future of technology and science. The path of technical development is intensely stimulating and imaginative."

This Technology and Society of Tomorrow conference was obviously of great importance for the postwar development in Sweden. Many of the plans presented were realised. The nuclear reactors were built. The automatisation and new electronics appeared. Productivity in industry, agriculture and forestry increased. Education and research was stepped



*The PM Erlander's closing remarks (from the book).*

up. The trade union funds were tried and (luckily!) abandoned.

But they missed a few things. Computers as such aren't really anticipated (there is general talk about automatisisation). The space age isn't anticipated. The impact of television and the automobile society is hardly touched upon. But it is fascinating that a bunch of leaders one weekend in 1955 sat down to thoroughly discuss...the future!



*Dec 12 the Scandinavian SF Association (aka SFSF) held a small minicon in the Tranströmer library with horror writer Jenny Milewski and sf dito KJ Larsson. Here we see three of the SFSF organisers: Mårten Svantesson, Tomas Cronholm and Carolina Gomez Lagerlöf. Ca 25 people attended.*

*Publit is the name of a company helping authors with DIY publishing and electronic publishing. Dec 17th they held a lecture about what's happening in this field in front of a packed audience (as seen on the picture) followed by a Glögg party afterwards. A very nice evening. The anthologies from the writing society The Short Story Masters, which I'm a member of, is published with distribution help from Publit (but we do editing and other practical work ourselves).*



**From Intermission #47:**

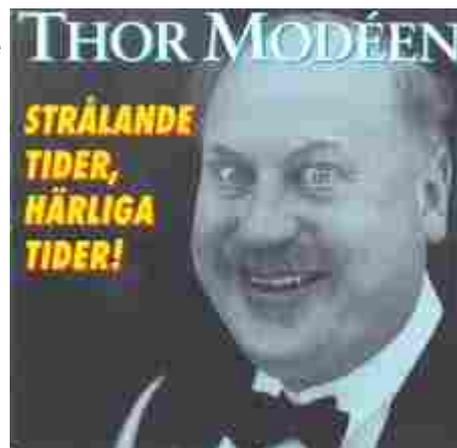
### **The Mighty Thor**

Just a few words about an odd but very nice event Friday the 22nd of January, for those interested in old films and odd stuff. Despite chilly weather and snow, members of the Thor Modeen fan club (abbreviated TOFS in Swedish) gathered on the Adolf Fredrik churchyard in Stockholm, to celebrat

Mr Modeen's 118th birthday, as they do every year.

Thor Modeen (1898-1950 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thor\\_Modéen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thor_Modéen) ) was a leading comedy actor, known for the so called "Lager Films" (Pilsnerfilmer - lager is of course the light beer of German type; Lager was consumed a lot in these films...) that caused an animated debate about the low quality of Swedish films before the age of Ingmar Bergman.

We heard a speech where January 22nd was announced to be the Lager Film Day from now on. So don't forget it! (Cheers!) From the churchyard the group of about 30, incl eg my friends from the Sunkit club, Martin and Anna-Lena, went to Thor's daughter Margareta for some great food - Beef à la Lindström, potato, sauce, vegetables - and entertainment. We for instance had a "fish pond" where we were fishing for candy and small plastic toys, that we could enjoy ourselves with. We could also have a look at the Thor Modeen exhibitions Margareta has put up on some of her walls: pictures, film material, newspaper clippings, even big oil painting.



Finn of the Lager Film Society held a speech about the history of the gathering, which has been going on since 1992 - it was my fifth time of participation - and in 1993 even making it to the TV news. Since 2003, the people have gathered at Margareta's place afterwards.

Wholesaler ("Grosshandlare") Lindberg led the re-enactment of the hairpiece scene from the quintessential lager film "Pensionat Thor Modeen's grave. Wholesaler Lindberg announces January 22nd as the Lager Film Day Paradiset" ("Boarding House Paradise", 1937) with Thor Modeen, the film that led to the infamous Lager Film debate. You can actually see the whole film on Youtube, with part 1 of 5 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pavgElaFOFA> - but it is in Swedish, with Swedish subtitles...



*Waiting for food. Left to right: Finn, Anna-Lena and Martin. A very entertaining evening at the home of Mighty Thor's daughter Margareta.*

"Wholesaler" is a title often used in the Modeen fan club, since Thor himself often played one. This film is in a DVD box of six Modeen films ( <http://www.studios.entertainment.se/den-stora-pilsnerboxen-6-dvd-box/> ) that came a couple of years ago.

The producer of it, one Stefan N, was there and said that since it had sold unexpectedly well, there will be a new DVD box of Lager Films coming now in August. Some people obviously like these films...

A very nice evening with a lot of humour I had a peek at Johan Frick's (RIP!) first and last sf novel, that Martin showed me. We remembered the recently deceased radio genius Kjell Alinge, and had a chat with a member of the Harry Martinson Society about an essay I've written about this space poet (Aniara) and Nobel laureate. Martin and Anna-Lena had just come home from Greece and talked a bit about how the situation was there. I like old films and "forgotten" older, odd culture. I don't mind

Ingmar Bergman, but the Mighty Thor was more entertaining.

As he used to say: "Brilliant times, wonderful times!" Or in Swedish "Strålande tider, härliga tider!"



*The re-enactment of the hairpiece sketch from "Pensionat Paradiset". In the film Thor sneezes so the hairpiece falls off.*



*From Sunkit, the cult music club - "sunkedelia" they call it, January 7th . From left to right: Yours Truly, Camilla, Dan and Adrian, who is an Englishman living in Stockholm. Adrian is interested in sf (so is Dan) and we chatted a bit about dystopias and the latest Star Wars film. Martin and Anna-Lena were missing this time, due to being in Greece (where Anna-Lena had a work scholarship, being able to borrow an Authors' Guild apartment to write). Sunkit is arranged every three months, nowadays at the South Theatre, Mosebacke Square.*

January 12 th I visited a seminar at the Royal Academy of Engineering Sciences, which was about Sweden's future electricity production (which looks good, since there's both hydro and nuclear power – and they think that eg wind power can be increased in the future). A speaker on this seminar was Jon Karlung, CEO of Bahnhof, one of the leading Internet service providers (a guy I know since 25 years back when we both took journalism at the Stockholm College of Journalism). Here me (left) and Jon. In his speech Jon said the electricity report was too defensive. We need more electricity, because that drives progress, creates jobs and so on.



### From *Intermission #48*:

#### Strindberg, Science and the Occult

Author and playwright August Strindberg (1849-1912) is together with Astrid Lindgren Sweden's perhaps most well-known writer, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August\\_Strindberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_Strindberg). (If we leave out recent Larssons and Mankells of more criminal inclinations.) Besides writing plays like "A Dream Play", "The Father" and "Miss Julie" he was intensely interested in philosophy, science, chemistry and the occult. He worked with telegraphy in his youth and was an enthusiastic photographer. He wrote non-fiction books with his thoughts on science, much of which we today would consider pseudoscience. Much of this took place in the 1890's when Strindberg had psychic breakdowns known as the "inferno crisis". This was also the time when Strindberg after having earlier cracked down on religion became religious, in an "Old Testament manner".

This is covered in the new book by Henrik Johnsson, *Det oändliga sammanhanget* (title means "The Eternal Circumstances"; Malört förlag, 2015,

<http://www.malortforlag.se> ), and Monday February 22nd



*Henrik Johnsson talks about Strindberg.*

he talked about his Strindberg research, in the beautiful main hall of the Stockholm City Library (the main branch, built by the famed architect Gunnar Asplund). The Johnsson wrote his PhD thesis on Strindberg and occultism and is presently teaching at Aarhus University in Denmark. Johnsson's lecture was very popular and the library had to set up a new section with extra chairs for the crowd listening.

Strindberg's basic worldview early on was rationality and what Johnson called "evolution morality", inspired by Darwin, but during the inferno crisis he drifted into all kinds of fringe teachings. He was living in Paris and got in touch with French alchemists and Strindberg experimented with making gold in his hotel room. This sounds like a wasted effort today, but in atomic theory and inalterable elements wasn't universally accepted in the 1890's. Strindberg leaned towards a monistic theory where everything consisted of basic "monads" which could evolve into different manifestations. Just

as a snail can evolve into a clam - it can't, of course - lead may become gold.

Another of his experiments were the so called "celestographs" (see examples <http://www.sfoto.se/f/artiklar/fotografen-august-Strindberg> ) where he took pictures of the night sky without lenses. Strindberg corresponded with scientists like Ernst Haeckel and was interested in using science to gain knowledge of metaphysics in some sort of "religious science". He became very interested in the 18th century mystic, philosopher and scientist Emmanuel Swedenborg and studied Carl Linnaeus.

Metaphysics and the occult could "lead to God", he thought, when ordinary science can't be used, but after that faith had to take over. Strindberg "accepted God, but not Jesus", ie he was against the trinity launched in the New Testament. He thought he saw "signs" of a hidden reality all around him, and that an objective and a subjective reality existed side by side. This is recorded in his *The Occult Diary*, written 1896-1906 (see <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/14294/> ). Many of Strindberg's weird ideas, often bordering science, are to be found in his 1000+ pages *En blå bok* ("A Blue Book", 1907, see <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/44118>)

But he denounced spiritism, talking to the dead and things like that ("It's only women and Far East and Mahatmas, and not science"). Johnson called Strindberg one of the first modernists, before modernism really existed. Wikipedia calls his play "The Ghost Sonata" a "key text in the development of modernism drama...a world in which ghosts walk in bright daylight, a beautiful woman is transformed into a mummy and lives in the closet, and the household cook sucks all the nourishment out of the food before she serves it to her masters." Modernism has roots in the occult, Johnson claimed. The surrealists were for instance very interested in parapsychics phenomena, seances and other stuff out of this world.

When audience input was welcomed I raised my hand and asked Johnson about if Strindberg also studied Newton. This great scientist was also into gold making and Newton too denounced trinity. The lecturer looked into the index of his book and answered that Newton is covered on three pages.

Strindberg never received the Nobel Prize. He was too radical for the members of the Swedish Academy. But when he died, of stomach cancer in 1912, his funeral march was followed by 60 000 Stockholmers.

I have earlier, in Swedish, reviewed a book about Strindberg and his last home, Strindberg i Blå Tornet, the "Blue Tower" (<http://www.freelists.org/post/skriva/Strindberg-i-Bl-Tornet> )



*One of Strindberg's "celestographs" where he put a photographic plate open to the starry sky without a lens...*



*A rather big audience in the beautiful, round main hall of the Stockholm City Library.*



*This is what Strindberg's desk looked like, from the Strindberg Museum in his last apartment (called "The Blue Tower"). Pens and paper is all in order.*

*After his first meal on the moon, the 22nd century astronaut said the food was good but the place lacked atmosphere.*

## Threats to Mankind: Here Be Dragons...

I went to the Institute for Future Studies (Institutet för Framtidsstudier; <http://www.iffs.se>) in Stockholm February 15th, to hear professor Olle Häggström talk about his new book about future threats to mankind. The title of the book is Here Be Dragons: Science, Technology and the Future of Mankind (Oxford University Press, 2015, <http://www.amazon.com/Here-Be-Dragons-Technology-Humanity/dp/0198723547>; written in English - no Swedish translation yet).

The lecture hall was packed and Häggström began with bragging about the favourable reviews in New Scientist ( <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22930540-900-here-be-dragons-hostile-aliens-tall-people-and-black-holes/> ) and financial Times ( <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/5815c14a-b2e7-11e5-b147-e5e5bba42e51.html> ).

Häggström talked about many science-fiction subjects, everything from space colonies and nano technology to transhumanism and artificial intelligence. But mainly it was about threats to humanity's future, things that could obliterate us totally. He divided the threats into external and internal threats.

The external threats were: asteroid or comet impacts, supernovas, our own sun, super volcanoes, natural pandemics, attacks by aliens. About the last he said it wasn't likely for them to bother about us except if they see us as a threat to themselves, and they might want to get rid of us with a "pre-emptive strike". But it's a very unlikely threat. Despite SETI, Drake's equation and so on, we haven't yet found the slightest trace of extra-terrestrial life.

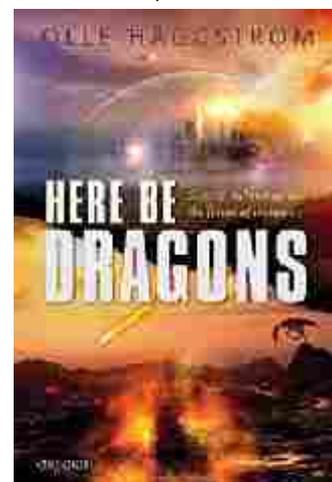
The internal threats were: nuclear war, global warming, a super-intelligent AI or a robot uprising, the "grey goo" from nanorobots running wild, other nano-technology, dangerous physics experiments. There are many of these things we know very little about, and he strongly advised governments and scientists to direct more energy into basic research about potential dangers. Recently we've seen the publication of an open warning letter signed by 16 000 scientists, about possible dangers with AI and self-governed military drones.

We don't know what the result may be of developments into advanced technology with military applications, he said. We were lucky that the first weapon of mass destruction, the atomic bomb, was shown to be easy to contain. Only about ten states have nuclear weapons, because you need huge resources to produce the basic nuclear ingredients. But what if a terrorist group use some DNA technology in someone's kitchen to produce a super virus that could wipe us all out. Future dangerous technologies may not be containable.

After Häggström's opening notes, there was a heated debate to which Hannes Sjöblad (Sweden ambassador for Singular University), Karim Jebari (philosopher active at the Institute for Future Studies) and Ann-Sophie Crepin (economist at the Beijer Institute and the Stockholm Resilience Center) were invited. Moderator was Christer Sturmark, chairman of the Humanisterna society and head of Fri Tanke publisher.

Sjöblad and Häggström seemed to be the two with most conflicting views. Sjöblad being a transhumanist and optimist, and Häggström being more pessimistic. Sjöblad started the debate with saying that Homo Sapiens is one of the ca 30 species of the Homo group that have existed - the 29 others are extinct. Maybe we should just accept that we will be just another step on the evolutionary ladder, we will evolve into something new and Homo Sapiens as such will go extinct. At present, the most valuable substance in the known universe is the grey goo of the human brain, he said, but in the future we may be able to upload the contents of our brains to super-duper computers and live forever in digital shape...

Sturmark noted that everything that may be a threat also may have positive applications. DNA tinkering may also produce a vaccine that can save millions of lives. Häggström said it was impossible to ban AI research. It is estimated to be worth tens of thousands of billions of dollars in the



future. But we could maybe re-direct such research just a little bit to make it safer, so that we won't wake up one day and find that HAL 9000 v 2.0 has taken over - and we are unwanted inferior beings.

Jebari noted that today's AI research may be on the wrong track. We try to create AIs "bottom up", ie by trying to teach computer things. That won't work. We need a "top bottom" approach, to first understand how thinking works.

Häggström talked about how we have been lucky this far. Other discoveries, like how to use fire, have been technologies with limited destructive force if let loose. A fire may destroy a forest or a few houses, but will go out. We could use "trial and error" in learning to control fire. But with some advanced technologies we get only one chance, and if things go wrong it's too late.

Sjöblad continued to promote his idea of uploading people to RAM memories (hm, what about computer viruses or electricity blackouts...?) and said it would be a way to conquer space. We could that way travel at the speed of light, as information, bits and bytes, on radio waves through the universe. We don't need these "meat bags" which are our bodies.

Sturmark said he missed one thing among the threats mentioned: destructive memes. Memes (term coined by Richard Dawkins) are ideas, ideas that are so strong that they spread. Häggström agreed that there have been examples of very destructive memes, for instance the Holocaust of World War II. He also went into what he called "synthetic biology", and warned that it's a technology that may make the mass surveillance society necessary. (Hello, Mr Snowden, wherever you are!)

Crepin talked about what she called reversibility and the precautionary principle. We should plan actions so that they may be reversed if things go sour. But things could go too far in the precautionary direction. Some research with beneficial potential is difficult to do, for instance concerning stem cells or GMO.

Häggström found arguments against Sjöblad's ideas of uploading human minds to computers. If we all become just computer files society and all that would collapse. Take the labour market. You just need to find one employee (=file) with the right qualifications, and then you just copy that file/employee.

The debate went more and more into philosophy. Someone pointed out that what you do in your own sphere also affects the entire society. Say that we can manipulate DNA to make children smarter. That will create a pressure on everyone to use those methods on every child. The conclusion is that you can't decide what you want to do with your own child without "forcing" everyone else to do the same.

The audience was invited to comment, and the comment I remember best was a man who vehemently protested against human minds being uploaded to computers. That's a destructive meme, he said, and we become traitors if we abandon our genes!

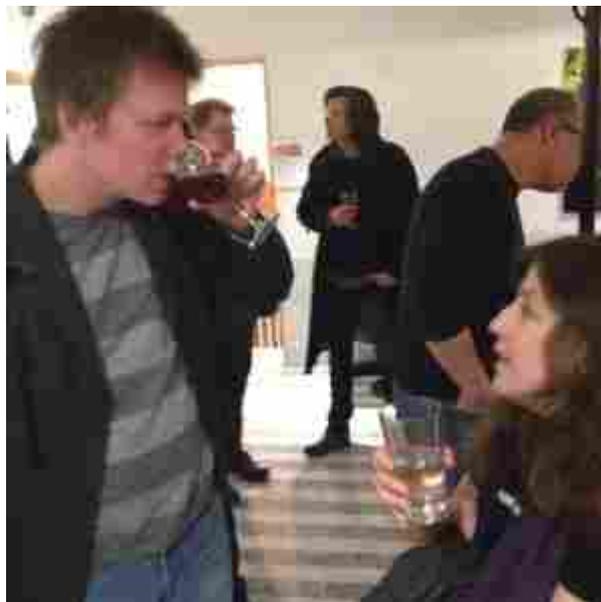
The debate was a bit disorganised, but interesting and very much science fiction. My fellow sf fan Anna Davour was there and when we chatted afterwards we were in agreement that most of the ideas put forth were Old Stuff in our genre. Mankind would benefit from reading a little bit more of those books with spaceships and aliens and planets on the covers.

**From *Intermission #49*:**

### **The Quest for Blago Bung**

*First Attempt - Mare Kandre: Writer, Musician, Artist*

In later years we've seen a new wave of female, Swedish writers who have begun to make a name for themselves in the fantastic genre. They include eg Karin Tidholm, Caroline L Jensen and Maria



*Afterwards I chatted eg with fan Anna Davour (right). Häggström (left) enjoyed a glass of wine, to ease the worries of the terrible threats to mankind...*

Turtschaninoff (a Finland-Swede writing in Swedish), but perhaps it was the multi-talented Mare Kandre (1962-2005, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mare\\_Kandre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mare_Kandre) <http://www.marekandre.se>) who paved the way.

I didn't know Ms Kandre, but my friend, publisher and poet Jonas Ellerström did, and Saturday the 19th he presented the release of a comic book (and a music CD) with Kandre's forgotten comics. It was held in that magnificent centre of culture of Stockholm, Rönnells, a grand second-hand bookshop which also hosts cultural events, usually several times per week.

First of all, Kandre was known as a writer who often crossed the border into the fantastic, with works like Bubin's Kid, The Devil and God, The Woman and Dr Dreuf and Bestiarium. She published a total of twelve books (if we include this latest one) translated into eight languages, but among them AFAIK not English. Before this she made a name for herself on the punk music scene, playing in the groups Kramp and Global Infantilists. But before even this, she studied at art schools in both Britain and Sweden and began drawing comics. She didn't create much comics but we all she published in the new book Punkserier ("Punk Comics", publisher Kartago, 2016) accompanied by a CD with 12 songs from her band Kramp. They never did any records. (Global Infantilists made two records, in 1982 and 1983, see "This Music" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpQFJq0LioU> and "An Inch of Nothing" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0x395O4WFUU> .) The CD is from a privately recorded cassette, with the "sound improved as much as possible...". (Do you remember tape cassettes? They were supposed to kill music long before the Pirate Bay...)

Jonas Ellerström introduced Åsa Oskarsson, who had played bass guitar in Kramp, and both told anecdotes about Kandre, about how she showed great artistic talent already in the lower grades of school, scenes from the punk scene in the late 70's London or how the band Kramp was formed.

They had one acoustic and one electric guitar, that's all, and said "Let's form a band!" They found a drummer, who happened to have access to a rehearsal locality, and the band was on. Oskarsson took many pictures during their short career and they are now on exhibition in the Stockholm Culture House (until mid April). Swedish Television will also air a documentary about Kandre, titled "It is I Who is the Genius" (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMdLDwfSh8A> ). Her comic book released that day

has three comics with a punk attitude and a surprising graphic talent.



*Rönnells Antikvariat was packed as Åsa Oskarsson and Jonas Ellerström talked about the life of Mare Kandre*



*Blago Bung playing. They also played "Wittgenstein".*

Ellerström's claim to fame is that his band Blago Bung was one of few who played with Kandre and her band. So it was only appropriate that this band held a concert during the second part of this book release day. The genre is "post punk", somewhat "raw" music with synths but often with very melodic (but sad) harmonies. It so happens that I heard Blago Bung already on a concert in 1983 though their setting was a bit different then.

The thing is that one band member then was the well known sf fanzine publisher Jan Fornell, and that was probably why I went. They also did a record, *Kärleken och döden* ("Love and Death") which

I have. the band now played some of the old songs from this album, plus new material. You can find Blago Bung on Youtube - Ellerström plays a mean bass guitar! - eg their fine track "Wittgenstein (live: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EK3fY06jYJU>, a better version from the record: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpS9aVlyNm4> ).

Mare Kandre would probably have loved this event, but unfortunately she died much too early in a prescription drug overdose in 2005. It's unclear if it was suicide or an accident. But echoes of her work still lingers after more than a decade.

### *Second Attempt - Dada Is All And Nothing, For a Hundred Years*

Just a couple of days later, the equally magnificent cultural centre in the form of the Romanian Culture Institute celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dadaism. After the introduction by its boss Dan Shafran, the totally packed hall heard a lecture with lots of interesting slides by art professor Tom Sandqvist. He has earlier written a book about Dadaism (Dada öst, 2005, "Dada East"). The main point of the lecture is that the dadaism art movement really originated in Eastern Europe, not the least by Romanian emigrants Romania and with inspiration from Eastern European Jewish culture.

As the First World War started a lot of artists, authors and intellectuals found a sanctuary in Zurich, Switzerland. It was here that the art world diaspora the 2nd of February 1916 found an announcement in the newspapers that Cabaret Voltaire would open on Spiegelgasse the 5th of February. This became the centre of gravity for this movement, known as dadaism. Among the founders were Hugo Ball, Emmy Hemmings, Tristan Tzara, Marcel Jancu, Hans Arp and several others - mostly from Eastern Europe. Professor Sandqvist's lecture was full of interesting facts and episodes and I can only cover a few points. The most difficult is perhaps to pin down what dadaism "is". Dada is nothing and everything, as the founders often claimed. Dada makes logic false. "Dada ist da, bevor Dada da ist," in German. Dada rips normal concepts apart, and goes back to basic Blago Bung playing. They also played



*Romanian Culture Institute boss Dan Shafran opens the 100th anniversary evening of dadaism.*



*One of the weird costumes the dadaists liked to wear (probably Hugo Ball inside).*

"Wittgenstein" (see below). Below left, a page from Mare Kandre's comics.elements, like the primitive sounds of language. Dada does it with absurd performances with a lot of improvisation, humour, strang clothes (check [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z\\_8Wg40F3yo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_8Wg40F3yo) ) and wild ideas.

Dadaists would do anything to provoke "normality". Sandqvist found one of its roots in the Yiddish theatre tradition from Eastern Europe ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yiddish\\_theatre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yiddish_theatre) ) with its mix of music, comedy and satire. Another root is the Yiddish language, with its mix from several languages and emphasis on the spoken world.

Dadaism is best experience live. They would say that the thought process emanates from the mouth. The artists of Cabaret Voltaire would often parade the Zurich streets in absurd clothes, making strange noises and reciting their sound poetry. Between sections of Sangqvist's lecture, we heard the Israeli performer Anat Pick recite dadaism poetry. She read it very well, with varied voices and intensity. The last poetry reading became a real dadaism event!

The audience were given whistles and instructions to make noise, whistle, to shout "Rouge Bleu" or "A-Bucharest" and so on, while she read the poem "L'amiral cherche une maison à louer/The Admiral looks for a house to rent", in three languages. The audience really went for it! A lot of noise was made, and one got a feeling that you experience at least a little bit of the 1916 performances of Cabaret Voltaire. To give an example, here's from Hugo Ball's poem "Karawane", which was one of the pieces performed:

*jolifanto bambla o falli bambla  
großiga m'pfa habla horem  
egiga goramen  
higo bloiko russula huju  
hollaka hollala  
anlogo bung  
blago bung blago bung*

And suddenly it clicked: Blago bung! There's where they got the name from, this post punk band! Different parts of the universe had now been connected, with a thread from Zurich 100 years ago to unknown punk bands.

As the band Blago Bung sang in "Wittgenstein", which echoes of dadaism:

*Language is all and nothing  
There's no way around it  
No way to where I want to go*



*Institution staff distributed whistles before the dadaist "happening". In the background performer Anat Pick.*

***If the stars were bars we would have reached them long ago! --Unknown***

### **A Chinese Detective and the Brain-in-a-box**

A few years ago Swedish Tv had a documentary about Werner Oland, born 1879 in the north of Sweden as Verner Ölund, and the original star of the series of Charlie Chan detective films.

Unfortunately he died of pneumonia while on a visit to his old homeland in 1938, where he had been treated like the film star he was, reaching almost Greta Garbo attention! Charlie Chan is a Chinese detective with the Honolulu police, created by the author Earl Derr Biggers (1888-1933) and Oland did 16 of these movies, said to have been the only profitable films for the Fox studio which at the time were in deep troubles. I have seen a number of the Oland C Chan films, which seem to be in the public domain and are available on Youtube.

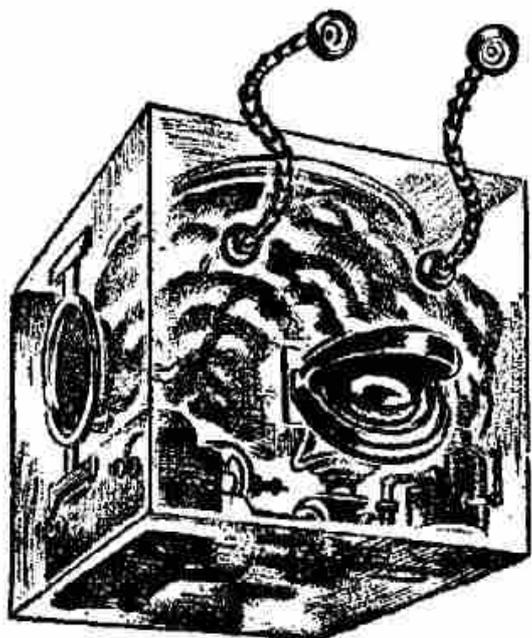


*From "Charlie Chan in Honolulu". The brain is in the big opaque glass bulb.*

Oland's life has been covered in a Swedish TV documentary and has been made into the theatre play "Werner Oland - Bjurholmspojken som blev hollywoodstjärna" ("WO - The Bjurholm Boy who Became a Hollywood Star") by the Västerbotten Theatre. After Oland's death studio had to quickly find a replacement, and after a series of screen test their choice fell on Sidney Toler (1874-

1947) who did an additional 22 (!) Charlie Chan films. Towards the end Toler was in bad health, the budget was shrinking, manuscripts were getting worse and this interesting detective character, speaking in pidgin English and invented Chinese proverbs, fell into oblivion. I have enjoyed the Charlie Chan films I've seen this far though, but perhaps this is just because I'm a nerd for old, odd movies in black and white...

So I turned to Sidney Toler's first Chan film, "Charlie Chan in Honolulu" (1938) - and found a surprising science-fiction element. The plot is centred around a murder on a ship in the Honolulu harbour. A man carrying a secret stash of 300 000 dollars, to be delivered to a woman on the ship, is murdered and Charlie Chan is called for. (Except initially, the comic element in the form of Charlie's son, assumes the investigation, while Charlie is in hospital to follow the new addition to his big family being born.) There are several possible suspects onboard, including the "mad scientist" Dr Cardigan.



*Simon Wright is the Brain-in-a-box from Edmond Hamilton Captain Future stories.*

About 35 minutes into the film it shows that Dr Cardigan in his cabin has a complicated apparatus hidden, which contains a so called brain-in-a-box! The brain is kept alive in a big glass bulb or retort with pipes and wires leading to it and is said to be the brain of a famous Chinese criminal. This device doesn't play any major role in the plot (Dr Cardigan is involved in exposing the killer though) but the point is that it may be the \*first\* appearance of a brain-in-a-box! At least as far as I know. Earlier I had thought that the brain-in-a-box was invented by Edmond Hamilton in his Captain Future series of novels, where one of his "Futuremen" was the scientist Simon Wright, who after an accident is put in a glass box. His Living Brain appeared already in the first story, Captain Future and the Space Emperor (1940); these stories were very popular in e.g. the 1940's Swedish pulp magazine Jules Verne Magasinet/Veckans Äventyr (1940-1947.) Did Hamilton see the 1938 Charlie Chan film?

A famous use of the same concept is to be found in Curt Siodmak's novel Donovan's Brain (1942), adapted for the screen no less than three times: "The Lady and the Monster" (1944), "Donovan's Brain" (1953), and "The Brain" (1962). The bodyless, living brain was also popular in the wave of drive-in cinema flicks from the 1950's and on (titles like "The Brain That Wouldn't Die", 1962, "The Atomic Brain", 1963, "The Saved Hitler's Brain", 1968 and so on).

But it was also used by "serious writers". We have for instance P.C. Jersild of Sweden, himself an MD and well-established as a "literary writer". In 1980 he published *En levande själ* (available in English as *A Living Soul*, translated by Rika Lesser) which deals with a brain kept alive artificially in an aquarium, by an "unethical" giant medical research corporation named Ypsilon. His novel was made into a short film in English, in 2014 directed by Henry Moore Selder, Swedish Wikipedia claims that Jersild has copied the basic idea from a short story by Roald Dahl from 1960 ("William and Mary", from the collection *Kiss Kiss*). It seems the authors in Wikipedia are unaware of the even earlier brains-in-boxes from popular fiction and films.

Or as Charlie Chan would put it: Old Chinese proverb says "Men of Fine Literature often ignorant..."

### Some links:

"Charlie Chan in Honolulu": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8okV9a0clY> and <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0029984/>

Werner Oland: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werner\\_Oland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werner_Oland) and a trailer for the play about his life <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpKM3g9fMa4>

Sidney Toler: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney\\_Toler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Toler)

Charlie Chan: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie\\_Chan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie_Chan)

Captain Future: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain\\_Future](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_Future)

Donovan's Brain: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donovan%27s\\_Brain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donovan%27s_Brain)

PC Jersild: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P.\\_C.\\_Jersild](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P._C._Jersild)

En levande själ/A Living Soul (in Swedish; try a translation service on the net):

[https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/En\\_levande\\_sj%C3%A4l](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/En_levande_sj%C3%A4l) and <http://www.sfi.se/sv/svensk-filmdatabas/Item/?itemid=77965&type=MOVIE&iv=PdfGen>

Swedish Wikipedia about En levande själ (dito): [https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/En\\_levande\\_själ](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/En_levande_själ)

## From *Intermission #50*:

### Sunkit Rocks as It Enters Its Third Decade

The coolest music club in Stockholm celebrated its 20th anniversary last Saturday. I didn't know about it in 1996, but came there in 1999 and have since missed perhaps two club evenings.

I'm of course talking about Sunkit. It has nothing to do with the Sun. The Sun doesn't shine in the Sunkit domains. The name comes from the Swedish "sunk-igt", approx "trashy", and it is the club that plays "incredibly strange music". Examples:

- The worst and funniest entries in the Eurovision Song Contest, including the local Swedish selections. Here we can hear about "Genghis Kahn" (German entry, 1979) or how Christer Sjögren promises "I Love Europe".

- Of course the cheekiest songs from so called "dance bands", eg songs like "Here Comes Mårtensson" (who has won on lottery and gets totally drunk every evening) or "The Moustache" (about how someone with hair on his lips get all the girls).

- Songs about religion or moral issues, like "You can hit on girls without booze" ("Man kan ragga brudar utan sprit").

- Sports songs or songs promoting different cities. My favourite is "Södertälje", the Swedish city known as harbouring more Middle East refugees than the entire United Goddamn States.

- Tunes about food, horses or other unexpected things.
- Cover songs, famous tracks sung by people who can't sing.
- Strange sounds (singing?) by people who are clinically mad.
- Songs about sex. The True Master here is one Johnny Bode, eg "Jerk me off with white gloves".
- Songs by Thore Skogman, the Swedish artist known to be the most prolific ever, rhyming of everything.

There is more, but I think you're getting the idea by now. And Saturday April 2nd Sunkit celebrated its 20th anniversary. The club used to be on every month in the cellar of the Olsson Brothers but is now the first week every quarter of the year in Mosebacke. The anniversary was in an annex called Kägelbanan. It was said they the day before had sold 250 tickets, and the place was more or less full. I arrived there with pals Martin and Anna-Lena and met Victori outside the gates. She earlier made a documentary about Sunkit. The film was also shown, early this evening, while people were arriving. Most of the regulars were there, not Dan E but of course Dan S from Luleå (who every Sunkit takes the 500 miles trip southward just to be there). We saw Trampe, Camilla and Calle, Grosshandlarn, Åsa, Jaan, Monica (the blind girl who enjoys listening to the incredibly strange songs), Erik, Jenny and Hampus (who BTW after the Sad Puppies affair he decided to go to Midamericon this year) and many others

The evening was of course lead by the two Sunkit founders and DJs, namely Burt von Bolton and New-Magnus Nilsson. The first hour was filled with "new" strange music, which I didn't care too much



*Sunkit's DJs Magnus & Burt.*

about, but soon the loudspeakers were filled with all the classics. You can find a good sample here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL93607C528A185077>

About half past nine, the Sunkit All-Stars band entered the stage, and did many of the Sunkit classics live. It's a great band (rumours have it they are known as the Tony Clifton band in civilian life) that really rocks! They made great versions of the Sunkit songs, so great that you actually forget that the songs are silly. Like (in my translation):

*Do not trust girls  
They look cute and nice  
But you're playing with gun powder  
Do not trust girls  
What they do and say  
When they have their cuddly talk  
And they fill you with their lies*

*"Reality is that which, when you  
stop believing in it, doesn't go  
away." — Philip K Dick*

It of course become very much sing-along. And the girls (don't trust them!) actually sing along in the above most enthusiastically. The "secret" is that Sunkit is irony and satire of the deepest kind, twist 3-4 turns so you don't know where you are and your brain simply capitulates. The band had several guest artists, including buddy Trampe who sang the computer song:

*Computer, computer, computer, is a nifty thing  
A hard drive is inside, it has a little memory  
which contains many files*



He finished it going down on his knees and turning it into almost a punk track. Burt took part in some songs, playing cucumber... Even Magnus entered the stage and did this famous sports song:

*Sweden, Sweden, our heroes come home  
Sweden, Sweden, with a five o'clock flight  
With yellow and blue bruises on every limb  
But hey have brought home the gold medal!*

*"Never let your sense of morals prevent you  
from doing what is right." --Isaac Asimov*

Another guest artist was Janne Svensson, famous for "The South Side Song", which he - he told us - composed 41 years ago. It's a tribute to the South Side district of Stockholm (where Sunkit takes place) known as "Söder" ("The South"). This district used to be for the lower classes, artists, bohemians and the like. Now it's more for upper middle class. A majority of Sweden's media people seems to live there, folks who can afford the extreme apartment prices, "environmentally conscious" people who drive their gasoline-thirsty SUVs to the green recycling stations. Mr Svensson played his balalaika, to much praise from an enthusiastic audience (he gave a repeat performance too), and sang:

*Then we go home to the South  
To our sisters and brothers  
We were lost for a while  
In northern Hagalund  
But now we go home to the South*



The biggest sensation was something else. You know about Eric Clapton, a great guitarist. There's an even greater one in Sweden, by *Janne Schaffer playing air guitar!*

the name Janne Schaffer. He's been playing with eg ABBA and has had local mega hits with Electric Banana Band. Janne Svensson sings, backed the Sunkit All-Stars. Suddenly he was called up on stage. Yes, he's been on Sunkit before but I didn't know he was here this evening. And he was asked to play...air guitar! That is, as you might now, when someone makes movements in the air pretending to play the guitar.

One of the greatest guitarists in the world (I'm sure he is!) and he was \*pretending\* to play the guitar...That was a great Sunkit moment!

My friend Martin took a video of it, and I told him he should put it on Youtube and he'll get a million views. (Update: it's here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9vB5ZPTDcM> ) Martin has BTW recently been mentioned in the foreword to the Oddest Book Title winner 2016, too Naked for the Nazis . He helped the author with some research and said: "For this reason I'm thanked in the foreword, to my surprise together with Queen Elizabeth.")

Another celebrity there that night was Magnus Carlsson, fro the band Weeping Willows, and Fredrik Lindström, who I managed to have a chat with. He's well-known from TV, doing his own shows and presently referee in Swedish TV:s biggest quiz show, "På spåret" ("On the track" In this show he has mentioned Sunkit songs a couple of times so he knows about Sunkit. But he told me that this was actually the first time he was physically present.

I have another episode in memory, concerning the singer Jan Johansen (who has competed for Sweden in the Eurovision Song Contest, so he's well-known). This was from my first years on Sunkit, probably the beginning of the noughties. Th DJs had just played a terrible cover version of superstar Carola's hi "Främling" ("Stranger", Sweden's 1983 Eurovision entry, finished third). I made some comments about how terrible it was, and Mr Johansen turned to me and said:

"Carola is my friend. Don't say anything bad about her, or I'll punch yo on the nose..."

My nose stayed untouched, though. I had just commented that non- Carola version of the song, which I explained.

A lot of dancing broke out. We have for instance the famous Sunki snake. You grab the shoulders of a person in front of you, someone grab your shoulders, etc, and we all form a big snake that wriggles though the floo

Talked a lot with eg Hampus and Dan S, and Dan's friend Robin bought me a beer (and a "shot", some booze that tasted like medicine - BTW Martin, Anna-Lena and Hampus were also beer providers, so thanks you all, from a poor starving author!).

The Sunkit evening was drawing to a close. It always ends at 1 am, which is the traditional time for Swedish joints to close (but some of them have licenses to 3 am or even 5 am). At that time we all form the famous Sunkit ring: you spread your arms over the shoulders of the nearest suspect and form one big ring (sometimes several rings) and then we sing along to the Lasse Berghagen song:

*It's the end, it's the end, it is over now*

*My love is leaving you*

*I'm free and now I understand*

*You never knew me*

*"Never try to out-stubborn a cat."  
-Robert A Heinlein*

A super evening! It was so great that we couldn't let it stop just yet. So a bunch of us went to Kvarnen ("The Mill") nearby which was open to three (if I remember Martin, Anna-Lena, Camilla, Calle, Dan S). There was a line outside, but it went reasonably fast.

The surprising thing was when it closed. There was a waiting line to get out... The first time I've seen such a thing!

Should you come to Stockholm, don't miss club Sunkit, which is on Mosebacke every first Thursday of January, April, July and October. It's a blast

The Riksdag (parliament) Library. The orange wall is in fact hundreds of years of Riksdag minutes and protocols. An MP lectures about the Swedish Freedom of the Press constitutional law, from 1766 (the oldest of its kind in the world). One of more than half a dozen stops for me during Stockholm's Culture Night in April



In april I also attended poetry reading in the Stockholm SF Bookstore, by Johannes Helldén (who has done the poetry collection *Astroekologi*, about alien life). This reminded me about Sweden's second best sf poet: Kjell Borgström. One of few pics I find of of him (right) on the net. Here in the famous debate sofa with David Nettle (left) in the Scandinavian SF Association clubhouse cellar 1979. No idea whose foot (!) it is. It was probably by one of the SFSF Minicons - some wild, very fannish days. Stieg Larsson used to be there too.

***"A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools." — Douglas Adams***

Me and former leader of the Liberal Party, Bengt Westerberg, from a seminar at the liberal thinktank Fores. (Note: in Europe "liberal" doesn't mean communist – Euro liberals are centre-right.)



Another interesting person on a seminar in the Europe House in Stockholm (topic: Will the EU stay together?) was this man (behind me), who is the grandson to the German panzer general Heinz Guderian. Interesting!.

## From *Intermission #51*:

### Eurovision Song Contest

The Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) was held in Stockholm in mid-May, since Sweden won ESC last year in Vienna with Måns Zelmerlöw singing "Heroes". The big finale was Saturday the 14 th and semi-finals on Tuesday and Thursday before that.

The national TV network SVT (Sveriges Television) is estimated to have spent ca 120 million Swedish crowns on it (around 10 million pounds), which in less than many others spend when they host and "only" ca 3% of their yearly budget. But it may be money well spent, because the show they put on has been praised as perhaps "the best Eurovision ever".

Much credit goes to the two program hosts, last year's winner Måns Zelmerlöw ("Måns" is pronounced "Mons") and Petra Mede (who was lone host in 2013 when we last hosted ESC, that year in the city of Malmö). Zelmerlöw, though reasonably young (29) is a seasoned song and dance man, eg winner of our local "Let's Dance" show and also a program host, for three years hosting our biggest summer show, "Allsång på Skansen" ("Sing-along on Skansen") on TV. Mede is a well-known comedienne, appearing in numerous comedy shows and also fluent in French, having a degree in French from Stockholm University (some conversation in the ESC show is in French, "douze points" you know). She's also a dancer, studying at the Royal Ballet Academy until her 20's, when she had to quit due to a bad back.

Unseen hero behind this year's Eurovision was the main script writer, one Edward af Sillén, who has a lot of humour and doesn't hesitate to flirt with the gay community (which has a special liking to ESC). He also wrote the scripts for the 2013 ESC. What was special with this year's ESC was a lot of humour and irony and a faster, more streamlined point-delivery system – and a very interesting final result.

Among the humour bits, hosts Petra and Måns did a funny musical number as if from the 1950's - showing they can dance - in one semi-final, "What is Eurovision" ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6qSt8Qp9ck> ). Some of the lyrics:

*We make music, and friends, with every nation  
And bankrupt the hosting TV station...  
To help to shore up  
A post-war Europe  
In nineteen-fifty-six, it all began  
The set, I'm rather certain  
Was nothing but a curtain  
There were only seven countries and one cameraman  
But then it started growing, now Australia's ours  
We're a big black hole, sucking in all the stars  
We'll take over the world, and then conquer Mars!  
That's Eurovision!*



Eurovision hosts Petra Mede & Måns Zelmerlöw.

On Saturday they topped this with a "typical Eurovision song", which of course was named "Love Love, Peace Peace", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMgW54HBOS0> . (Måns: "But ABBA actually won with a song about war. Waterloo. However, that's nothing we recommend.") Some of the lyrics:

*Love love peace peace  
Old women baking bread  
Peace peace love love  
And a man in a hamster wheel  
Love peace peace love*

***"Science fiction is no more written for scientists than ghost stories are written for ghosts." --Brian W Aldiss***

*Make it unforgettable  
You will be the best  
And win the Eurovision Song Contest  
Now we'll go down a notch  
Our hands will touch  
Pretending we're in love  
It's you and me and  
when we change the key*

Bread baking, hamster wheels etc are gimmicks some have used in the ESC. Another humour bit came from the reports from the European Broadcasting Union "official" spokesperson, one "Lynda Woodruff", played by the artist Sarah Dawn Finer (who herself has sung in the Swedish pre-selection shows). You can see her here, and as the name implies she masters the accent by being half-English: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O\\_acK30Q25M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_acK30Q25M)

There were other things in the in three ESC shows, like a dance performance by "The Grey People" representing the people of the refugee crisis, and a rather innovating "robot dance" with humans and industrial robots.

Justin Timberlake flew in from the US to give a special performance of his latest single. Not my kind of music, but reviewers say his performance was a highlight of the show.



*The dandelion ball symbolising the 2016 Eurovision, placed on a Stockholm square.*



*The temporary (80 m tall!) sightseeing tower in the Royal Gardens, for the Eurovision.*

As for the contest itself, Sweden was represented by a 17 year old Frans Jeppsson-Wall, who already at age 7 had a national hit with a song to the football (soccer) star Zlatan Ibrahimovic, "Who's da Man" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSZgoLSJZo> ).His song was titled "I'm not sorry" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COAXODxRdPs> ) and was rather clever, but a bit low key with a rather bare stage performance – no fireworks, not a set of dancers in neon costumes. He finished fifth, which was about what I expected and a decent result. (Trivia: Frans is quarter Nigerian, with a Nigerian grandmother living in London. He has himself lived in London and is bi-lingual, speaking an interesting English dialect, whichoo me sounds a bit like suburban street-English, if you get what I mean.) I've read that his song has been quite popular on the net, for a period the most downloaded song world-wide on both iTunes and Spotify! I think the younger audience likes him and we'll probably hear more from Frans in the future.

There were changes in how the points were presented In ESC the TV audience, through televoting, and a jury give half of the points each. This time those votes were presented separately, the jury votes from each country first. That's the phase when you see all the talking heads from all over Europe, and Petra had a chance to show her wits with some improvised jokes. (Like: "And congrats to you talented people on stage!" Petra: "It's only me here. But I agree...").

The televoting was then presented, but the votes from all countries were combined, so it went much faster. And since it was the votes from all countries there were quite a lot of points delivered – enough to make it decisive. This meant that the final result would be unknown until the very end and the excitement increased. That was brilliant! (It is said that the new point presentation routine was suggested by the Swedish producer, our own Mr Eurovision, Christer Björkman. And it will be kept from now on.)

Russia with one Sergej Lazarov was odds-makers' favourite, doing a number in which he eg climbs on the video wall... ( [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZkXb\\_IGS1g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZkXb_IGS1g) ) Australia with Dami Im ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ymFX91HwM0> ) was also quite high up on those odds lists, and so was Ukraine, but Russia was favourite by quite some margin. Ukraine went to the top with the very last televotes, with the singer Jamala and the song "1944" ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COAXODxRdPs> ). It's a song about how Stalin in 1944 deported the Crimean Tartars of which Jamala's grandmother was one. Russian reactions were furious, because they realised that "1944" of course also refers to their recent annexation of Crimea...

The Russian entry was actually most popular with the televoters, but the juries gave it thumbs down. Ukraine was second most popular with both the juries and televoters, but it is claimed that under the old point distribution system (some subtle differences I won't go into) Australia which finished second – would actually have won. In that case, ESC wouldn't have moved to Sydney or Melbourne, but the Australians would pick a European TV network to co-produce the show with.

This was the second year in a row that Australia was invited to join the ESC, the reason being that the contest is very popular Down Under and has been broadcasted there for more than 30 years. 3.5 million Australians watch it - even though it's an inconvenient time of day for them. New this year was that ESC was aired in both China and the US (a network named Logo, cable/satellite I presume).

The total TV audience for the 2016 ESC has been reported as 205 million people, which is slightly more than the 200 million expected. It's bigger than the Super Bowl. The city of Stockholm went all in for the event. 90 million Swedish crowns (ca 10 million US dollars) were spent. Well worth it, officials said. It promotes tourism and visiting Eurovision fans alone were expected to spend some 160 million crowns.

Below the Royal Palace a two-storey temporary building was erected, containing what was called the Euro Club and the Euro Cafe, having performances by Swedish and foreign Eurovision artist, from this year or earlier years. In the Royal Gardens, not far from there, they opened the Eurovision Village, with big TV screens and an outdoor stage for performances. I went to the Eurovision Village for one of the semi-finals and there were quite a lot of people there (many foreigners too) who watched the event on a big screen. (It was a bit uncomfortable; I had to sit on the ground. So I saw the rest of the shows on ordinary TV.)



*From the Eurovision Village, during one of the semi-finals, where ESC was shown on big screens.*

There was a bit of a scandal around this Village. Stockholm City had proudly announced that "Everyone is welcome" to Eurovision, but they had guards around the Eurovision Village with instructions to keep "beggars" out (ie there are a lot of Roma people from Romania and Bulgaria in Stockholm – I'm sure they are around in other European cities too). "Everyone is welcome" didn't apply, as angry comments in the papers noted.

In the Eurovision Village they also erected a temporary fun-fair style tower 80 metres (!) high, with a rotating sightseeing platform and on nearby Norrmalms Square they had a giant model of a dandelion, the flower that was a symbol of the Eurovision event (it was also used in animations in the TV production, a dandelion spreading its seeds). Everywhere in the city they had thousands of banners for ESC, eg hanging from the overhead streetlight cables. The underground train station announcement, which are pre-recorded, let the Eurovision hosts Petra and Måns announce the stations on the lines leading to the Globe Arena where ESC was held. You couldn't move anywhere

in the city without being reminded about the Eurovision Song Contest!

The Globe, a combined ice-hockey and events arena, is supposed to be the biggest spherical building in the world, some 85 metres across. It takes around 15 000 spectators, and those who couldn't get tickets to the TV broadcasts (or you could also get tickets to the main rehearsals) could try to get a seat in the nearby Tele2 Arena, where ESC were shown on huge screens. That is a football stadium with a retractable roof which seats ca 25 000 people. The Globe and Tele2 together thus accommodated ca 40 000 people. I think both were sold out all evenings.

If you get the impression that Eurovision was a big event – you are correct! And I think that Stockholm got a lot of good publicity out of it, especially as the TV production – according to most comments I've seen – was very successful. Some commentators have even suggested that next time all should vote for Sweden, just because they want the show to be produced by SVT and the Swedes again...



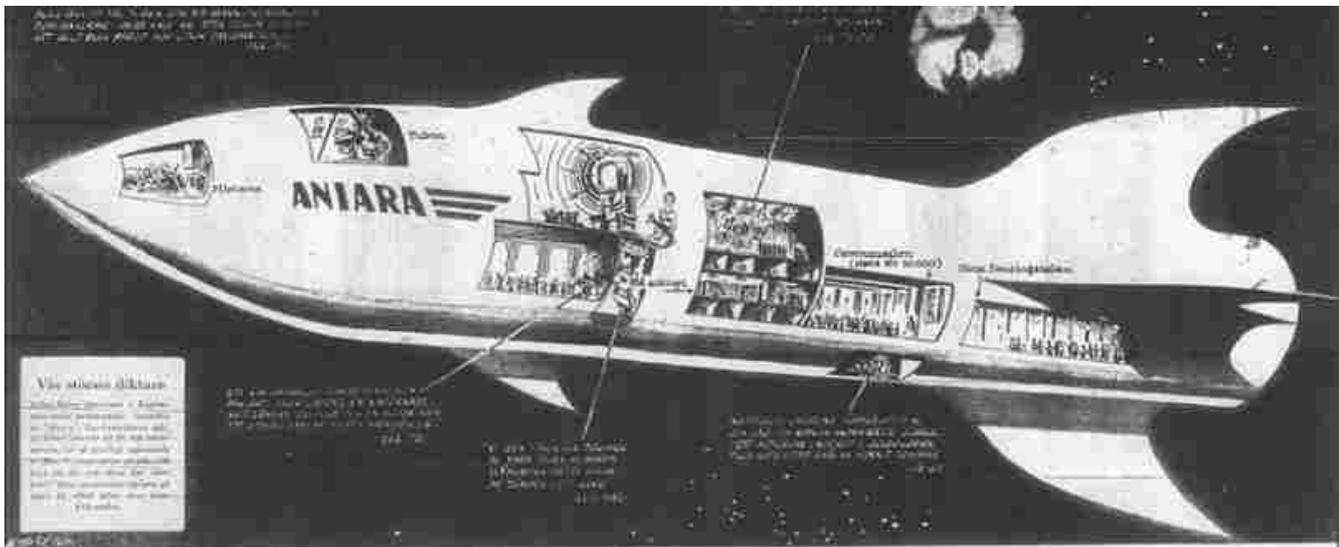
*Presentation of the digitalised net based version of a classic work, The Suecia, at the Royal Library. This was a huge work of copper etchings of all cities, palaces and other important buildings of 17<sup>th</sup> Century Sweden, produced by one Erik Dahlberg. A unique work for its time, of great historical value.*

#### **From Intermission #52:**

*This issue had a long report from this year's Swecon, Fantastika 2016, in Dieselverkstan, Stockholm. It's long and I won't repeat it (but it's available on the net, on the Europa SF site, <http://scifiportal.eu>). But here from my lecture about Harry Martinson and Atomic Noah, which was the first Swedish sf club founded September 15<sup>th</sup> 1945. (The manuscript to the talk was in Intermission #51, but it is also too long to repeat here.) Atomic Noah was a group of engineers who after Hiroshima wanted to construct huge Anihara-like spaceships to save humanity by taking us to another planet.*



*The reception area of Swecon/Fantastika, outside the program halls, as seen from the stairs of the second floor which had the dealers' room and the Green Room. The con was quite successful with ca 360 attendees. Much of the programming was in English – there were maybe 40-50 foreign attendees (biggest foreign group was from Finland). Dieselverkstan is 2-3 km southwest of downtown Stockholm, with a new suburban tram (streetcar) going most of the way there.*



**DIKTENS RYMDSKEPE ANIARA STARTAR NU!**

"Aniara of the poetry starts now!" was the headline in the big newspaper Expressen, October 13th 1956. Here their sketch of the spaceship of Harry Martinson's poetry. (I didn't use it since I found the illo after my speech.)

Ahrvid and Lars-Olov Strandberg, during a program item on Swecon. He is The Legend, 2005 Worldcon Fan-GoH, the only living fan who also attended Swedens first con in 1956. I had a Team Sweden football (soccer) shirt on. The Euro 2016 championships was on at the same time. The Swedes played lousy – out after the group games.



**"Fandom Is A Lay Of Wife."**  
 --Unknown  
 Wisecrack

**From Intermission #53:**



This issue had a long report from Finncon 2016, which I won't repeat (see the Europa SF site, though), which I won't repeat due to length. But I talked about the first Finnish con (in which I was involved), King-Con 1982. here the The Old Student House, Helsinki, where it was held – also site of Finncon 1986, the first Finnish con called Finncon.

From the table-top ice-hockey tournament on Finncon. It's on every Finncon. Pasi to the left won. I played lousy but by some mathematical quirk made it to the semi-finals, which I of course lost. (Photo: Michael Pargman.)



Yours Truly listening to a program item about filksongs, ready to report with the computer. (Photo: Kirill Pleshkov.)

Here from a famous Swedish filksong:

"The paper feed is broken  
The papers crumbles into small, small balls  
Oh, the zine will be delayed  
The paper feed is broken, so broken  
The subscribers will get angry  
If the zine doesn't arrive on Friday"



## The Return of Queen Christina

A big piece of film news is the return to the screen of cult film star (and former pinup magazine model) Christina Lindberg. She's known from the cult film "Thriller - A Cruel Picture"

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thriller\\_%E2%80%93\\_A\\_Cruel\\_Picture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thriller_%E2%80%93_A_Cruel_Picture), inspiring Quentin Tarantino making "Kill Bill". She has been out of the film business since the 1970's but will soon play in "Black Circle", described as an "international horror film", shot in Stockholm this summer <http://variety.com/2016/film/festivals/adrian-garcia-bogliano-first-swedish-movie-black-circle-1201773794/> See also <http://www.jahsonic.com/Grym.html>



Cult film "Thriller" (aka "They Call Her One Eye"), starring Christina Lindberg.



Ms Lindberg's other career was as pin-up girl, as seen here. I have actually met her. She later became a journalist and editor of an aircraft magazine, and turned up on a press conference about a new version of the Swedish jet fighter JAS 39 Griffin on the Stockholm Technical Museum. She's much shorter than you may think from the pictures. She has also turned up on film festivals, showing her films (nude stuff – she never did so called hardcore pictures) where the lines to get her autograph on DVD releases (something called Club Super-8 hs released a bunch) are long.

## The Word Is Teknovision

My local library had a sale of old magazines; they'll soon be renovated and needs to free up storage space. I bought a few bound year volumes of the magazine *Teknikens Värld* ("World of Technology") from the 1950's, and that for just 10 Swedish crowns each! Just over 1 USD. I love those old magazines.

Looking through them I come to *Teknikens Värld* No 20, 1953 (autumn that year; it was a bi-weekly, 26 issues/year) and this two page spread, in my approximate, fast translation, my comments marked / .

### Prize contest:

**NAME SCIENCE FICTION och become a glider pilot!**

**Big prize contest about the best Swedish name**

**Read today about the WORLD OF TOMORROW**

*Science fiction - it is tales about adventures in the world of tomorrow, exciting space travel and bold exploration of alien worlds - it is Jules Vernian visions of tomorrow's imaginative technological progress and inventions.*

*Teknikens Värld is now promoting this new, fascinating adventure genre with the exciting comic strip "Twin Planets", which is science fiction at its best. In the new gripping Planet Books series, publisher Bonniers /owner of the magazine also/ launches the new genre in literary form. But science fiction is a American concept that lacks a Swedish name. Teknikens Värld and Bonniers youth literature department have therefore decided to announce a prize contest to find a sticky and easy to understand Swedish name for science fiction. It must be short and a name that hits home. ...*

*First and second prize will be a course to get an A certificate as a glider pilot on Alleberg and free boarding at the sailplane school. Valuable book packages to contestants No 3-15, and deadline is January 1st 1954.*

"Twin Planets" starts in that issue, and the magazine also begin to write a lot about the coming space age (with some fantastic speculations about future space stations shaped like big wheels, atomic rockets, etc). Several articles will make references to "science fiction" - "it sounds like science fiction but..." - and so on. Moving forward to *Teknikens Värld* No 4, 1954:

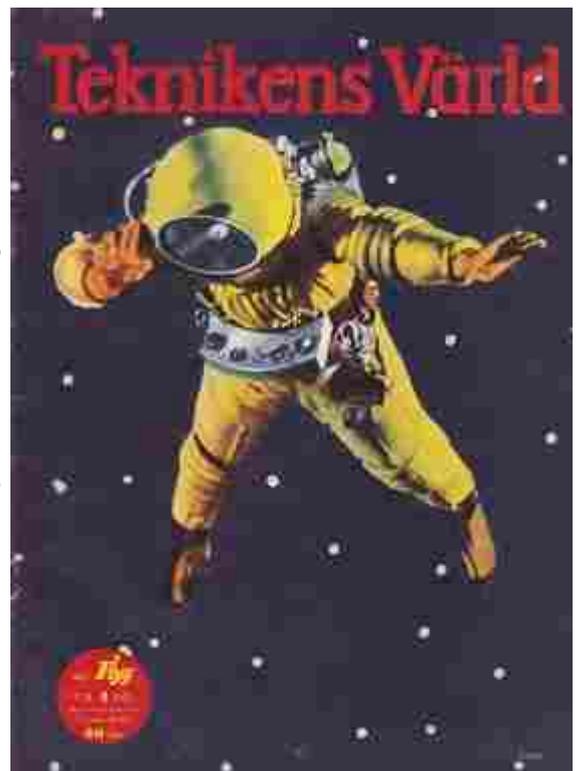
### The science fiction contest decided

#### The Word is TEKNOVISION

*The science fiction contest had a record number of participants ... The task wasn't easy since a direct translation doesn't cover the real meaning of Jules Vernian descriptions of adventures and imaginative technological progress in tomorrow's world.*

*Despite the task being among the more difficult TV readers massaged their brains and sent in hundreds of suggestions, more or less fanciful. Engineer Karl Bergman won the first prize with his word \*teknovision\*. The jury found the expression powerful since it stresses it is a technological genre with a visionary touch ... Hans-Erik Persson in Åseda suggested the boldly creative word \*teknorama\*, which gave him the second prize. Some had misunderstood the contest task and thought science fiction only deals with space travel and some were very bold in their word creations so that only a professional tongue twister would be able to pronounce them. One participant, from darkest Småland /southern Swedish province/ gave the laconic suggestion "rymdfnatt" /approx "space*

*"If you think this Universe is bad, you should see some of the others." --Philip K Dick*



geeky", "space crazy" or so.../

I don't recognise any of the names on place 3 to 15, except one: Alvar Appeltofft, soon to be a well-known fan (it doesn't say what his suggestion was). The new Swedish sf magazine *Häpna!* started soon after this contest, but not by Bonniers. *Teknikens Värld* was a rather popular magazine, a few issues later declaring sales of 84 000+ copies per issue.

A few years later, the short-lived Swedish edition of *Galaxy* had their own contest to find a Swedish name for science fiction, which came up with \*faktasi\* (fact + fantasy). The Harry Martinson ("Aniara") expert Tord Hall tried to launch the word *vetsaga* ("vet-" as the prefix of "vetenskap" = science). Neither stuck.

But if you want to call the stuff *TEKNOVISION*, please go ahead...!

## The Swede Behind Tarzan

As we have the new Tarzan film (the apeman in *The Legend of Tarzan* is played by Alexander Skarsgård, from the famous Skarsgård tribe...) we learn about that a Swedish soldier and later general may be Burroughs' inspiration for Tarzan. There's been a book about it earlier, *Mannen som hittade Tarzan* ("The Man Who Found Tarzan", 2008) by Joakim Langer and the daily *Aftonbladet* had two pages about it June 16th.

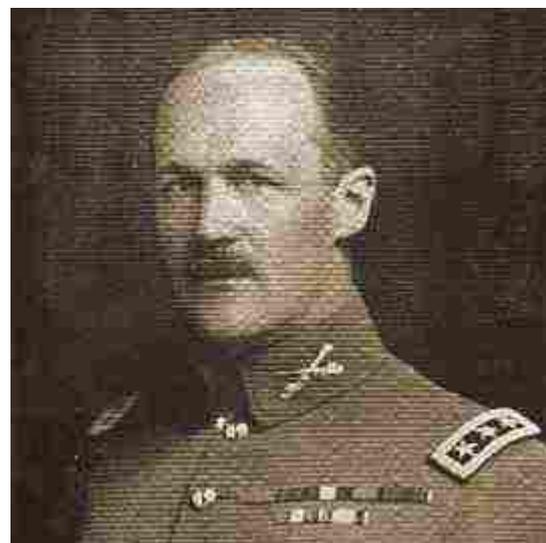
One Thord Ivar Hallström from Stockholm (1878-1964, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivor\\_Thord-Gray](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivor_Thord-Gray)) went to sea at the age of 17, later came to South Africa and joined the British Army in the Boer Wars. About that time he changed his name to Ivor Thord-Gray. During unrest in something called Pondoland he heard about how baboons had taken a baby boy. Five years later he was once again in the same area. While on patrol with the British he saw a group of baboons climbing up some cliffs, but a "strange" baboon missed a grip and fell to his death - where it was found that it was a human boy, 12-14 years old. In an interview in *Svenska Dagbladet* 1934 (January 14th) Thord-Gray says:

*"Could this be the missing boy? it was without doubt a human. Coming back to Cape Town I told the story for a journalist at Mount Wilson Hotel It of course caused a great deal of interest but it wasn't until 1924 that I came to learn that it had given Burroughs the idea to what would later become the famous Tarzan son of the apes."*

The interview took place in 1906. It was published in a local newspaper but was quoted extensively in both Britain and the US. Thord-Gray rose to the rank of general and is BTW famous for taking part in no less than 13 wars! He later did other things, like being a Wall Street banker for a while, doing archaeology, writing a book about a native tribe in Mexico, founding a marina in Florida, etc. Almost an Indiana Jones figure... (He never forgot his Swedish heritage. During the last decades of his life, he travelled back to and spent all his summers in Sweden visiting his relatives.)

But there are two versions of this story. According to Thord Gray the boy was killed falling off a cliff. According to another version the boy survived (Thord-Gray maybe rode off early thinking the boy was dead), was taken care of and survived until 1948. He became known as "Lucas the Baboon Boy" and died on Settlers Hospital in Grahamstown in May that year.

South Africa's own Tarzan boy made headlines in the *Dispatch* and all over the world between 1928 and 1938, and there was even talk of making a



Ivor Thord Gray (original Swedish name Thord Ivar Hallström).

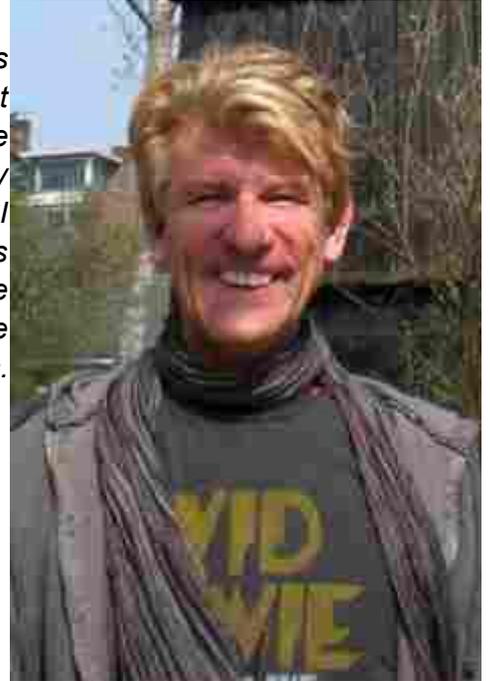


Lucas the Baboon Boy.

Hollywood movie and it's possible ER Burroughs read about it too.

Langer's book says that the story of Thord-Gray finding the baboon boy as a inspiration for Tarzan is well-known among his surviving relatives. And Ivor Thord-Gray originally spelled his (new) name Grey, which also gives a hint about inspiring (Lord) Grey-stoke (=Tarzan).

*The author Joakim Langer, who is BTW the son of the famous entertainer and radio/TV personality Pekka Langer. Joakim actually went to my school in Hässelby Villastad, around when I went to grades 6-8 (he was 1-2 years older and had left by grade 9). I met him almost daily then. "Pekka's son", people whispered - but the guy was OK. (Can't say I knew him well, but I met him now and then in the corridors.) Langer calls himself a "re-discovery explorer" and has also written a book about the real cannibal king of the South Seas who inspired Astrid Lindgren in the Pippi Longstocking books.*



**"I have the heart of a little boy. I keep it in a jar on my desk." --Robert Bloch**

**From *Intermission* #54:**



*The Swedish women's football team unexpectedly made it to the final in the Rio Olympics. Only an unlucky "own goal" stopped them from finally beating Germany. But s silver medal was fine too. "Times they are a-changing" football coach Pia Sundhage sang, in front of the crowd of the Royal Gardens, backed by all Swedish Rio medalist. Though the Rain it was a-falling!*

### **The MAC/PC Quarrel**

On the recent science fiction Worldcon, MidAmeriCon II (MAC), Political Correctness (PC) became a hot topic. The editor of the Hugo nominated short fiction site Tangent Online, Dave Truesdale, was banned from the convention after moderating a panel on the state of short fiction, and stating his opinions there. He was basically complaining that writers and editors run into trouble due to too much PC.

It was claimed he "hijacked" the panel. Can a chairman of a panel really hijack his own panel, one wonders. Isn't it his duty to throw something in to get the debate going? Anyway, after the ban MAC tweeted this (<https://mobile.twitter.com/MidAmeriCon2/status/767066848034689024>):

*"Dave Truesdale's membership was revoked because he violated MidAmeriCon II's Code of*

*Conduct. Specifically, he caused "significance /sic!/ interference with event operations and caused excessive discomfort to others'."*

Significant interference with operations and excessive discomfort? Really?

After Mr Truesdale was thrown out of the convention an additional charge was made, about him recording the panel discussion. But the con allows recording for personal and archival purposes (<https://midamericon2.org/home/registration-hotel-member-information/for-our-members/policies/code-of-conduct/>) and general law also allows you to make recordings of events in which yourself are a part. It's another matter whether you can publish recordings or not.



*Dave Truesdale, editor of Hugo nominated Tangent Online, and for obscure reasons expelled from Midamericon (here he still has the badge). Go figure.*

Anyway, recording the panel was NOT the reason for banning Mr Truesdale.

Afterwards, Truesdale decided to publish his recording. In my opinion, this is wholly defensible from a journalistic viewpoint, since the panel became the focus of a heated debate. One can even argue it's the biggest Worldcon scandal since 1939. People have the right to know, and must have the possibility to make up their own minds about what happened. As far as I can hear, no one is slandered, so that's no problem. (And also, such a recording hardly carries any monetary value. Nobody is going to make CDs of the panel and sell it for 10 bucks apiece.)

I suggest you listen for yourself:

<http://www.tangentonline.com/articles-columnsmenu-284/3227-2016-worldcon-panel-on-the-qstate-of-short-science-fictionq>

Several inaccurate reports about the panel have surfaced. It's claimed Truesdale ranted for "10 minutes". After everyone's introduction (ca 1:30m in) his opening statement takes ca 4:40 minutes (until ca 6:10m). The panelist speaking after Truesdale takes up just about equal time.

Nobody starts shouting or throws bottles. There are occasional emotional comments from the audience. Moderator Truesdale gives the word to any panelist who wants to say something. The discussion is interesting, well-moderated and as polite as any panel. The panelists disagree on things, but that's why we have such debates.

Did the panel go astray from the subject? I wouldn't say so. Subjects outside the opening statement are also covered. Most sf-con panels I've heard go astray at one point or another, but this stayed on talking about the state of short fiction. It is of interest if writers - incl of short fiction - feel they are sidestepped or attacked if they don't share or write within the "right" opinions. Such a status should be a topic in ANY discussion about fiction. And there have been several brawls about this in the sf world, including the Hugo controversies and the debate about SFWA and censorship. It's become a central topic in the sf community.

Banning someone from a Worldcon for having a panel discussion like this one? You must be kidding!

On the first Worldcon, in 1939, known as Nycon, a group from the famous sf club The Futurians - which included among others Donald Wollheim, Fred Pohl, Robert A W Lowndes - were banned from entering. This infamous event set fandom ablaze for years, became known as The Exclusion Act (see <http://fancyclopedia.wikidot.com/exclusion-act>) and set a standard that you simply don't ban fellow fans from conventions. (Or if so, the reasons must be very strong, say someone molesting children...) Most people involved were in or just out of their teens. The background was that the organisers, calling themselves New Fandom (among them were Sam Moskowitz), and The Futurians had been at each other's throats for months before the con. It was an adolescent, personal vendetta that went out

of hand.

But MAC was organised by grown ups and their reason for a new Exclusion Act wasn't teenage silliness, but ethical questions central for science fiction. That makes it worse. For me, fandom is - or at least should be - a place of free speech, openness, intellectual challenge, tolerance. The MAC/P affair is a spear right in the heart of this.

Who was intolerant enough to bring complaints about the panel to the committee? Who in the committee lost his/her head to decide to ban Mr Truesdale? Did they even bother to make any kind of investigation of what happened? That's questions I'd like to see answers too.

Whatever one may think of the Sad Puppies of the Hugo controversies (I don't know much about them; it's claimed they nominate rubbish, though) I think MidAmeriCon has just given them a shipload of ammunition.

Except for one bullet, which they have used to shoot themselves in the foot



*The Infamous panel. Neil Clarke turned his back to Dave Truesdale. But it's hard to understand why. It was a pretty ordinary panel, no slanders, basically on-topic, though panelists of course disagreed*

## Music World Shaken to Its Foundations: The Strangest Recording Ever!

You may have heard of the failed opera diva Florence Foster Jenkins ( try <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMu9PKWthLE> ). And maybe even the strangest Elvis impersonator on the planet, Eilert Pilarm ( go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MiJTxlEdtQ> ). But not about one Leif Andersson, who one day walked into a record studio convinced he would become a new Frank Sinatra.

The result was the strangest recording ever!

He paid for the record himself, but so Elvis too when he cut his first vinyl as a present to his mother. The record label September was a so called vanity label. The small orchestra in the studio couldn't find the right key to the melodies, the way Mr Andersson sang. But he was confident:

"I'll do it a capella then!"

And this was the historical result:

"Med andra ord", a Swedish translation of "Fly Me to the Moon":

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgFZ7JE4f\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgFZ7JE4f_U)

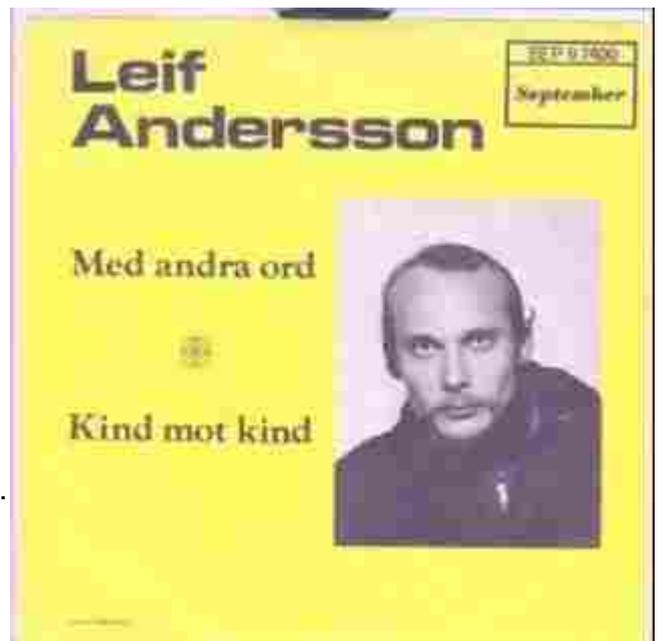
"Kind mot kind", a Swedish version of "Cheek to Cheek": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxpDUBynaTU>

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

(A 45 rpm vinyl pulished by Mellotronen)

50 records were printed, but when Wannabe-Frank a few days later received them he realise he perhaps wouldn't fill Royal Albert Hall or Madison Square Garden. He threw all the neatly printed, yellow records away. On the way to the garbage dump a few records went astray. Three copies of "Med andra ord/Kind mot kind" are believed to have survived. And the tracks found their way to Youtube and national Swedish Radio (SR).

Its channel P4 journalist Stefan Sundberg became fascinated with the unknown singer, did documentary and commenced a nation-wide search for Leif Andersson. "The Story of Sweden's Strangest Record", from the spring 2015, became SR's most downloaded documentary ever (here if you know Swedish: <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/avsnitt/652879?programid=3103> ). He tried everyone



in the Stockholm region phone book named "Leif Andersson" - a very common name - and he followed up with announcements in other programs for anyone who knew the unknown artist. In the southern Swedish city of Karlskrona (once known for unwelcome visits by Soviet submarines) someone heard the SR program. He has changed surname, but doesn't he write for our magazine Presspunkten, and...

Presspunkten was first with breaking the news in the spring of 2016: "The Strange record" ( "Den märkliga skivan" ) in Google Translate version: <https://translate.google.se/translate?hl=en&sl=sv&u=http://presspunkten.blogg.se/2016/february/den-markliga-skivan.html&prev=search> (original <http://presspunkten.blogg.se/2016/february/den-markliga-skivan.html> ). A local newspaper quickly caught on, "Mythical Singer Found in Karlskrona", <https://translate.google.se/translate?hl=en&sl=sv&u=http://www.blt.se/karlskrona/mytomspunnen-sangare-funnen-i-karlskrona/&prev=search> (Swedish original <http://www.blt.se/karlskrona/mytomspunnen-sangare-funnen-i-karlskrona/> ). And in May 2016 SR did a second documentary, "The Man Behind Sweden's Strangest Record" (here if you know Swedish: <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/avsnitt/722311?programid=3103> ).

The word began to spread among the fans of incredibly strange music. We would soon be able to meet Leif the Man himself - live. And that happened August 25th at Södra Teatern in Stockholm, organised by Magnus Nilsson and Burt von Bolton of the music club Sunkit. I have written about Sunkit before, a club going on for more than two decades for fans of the weirdest kinds of music. It is THE crowd made for the talents of Leif Andersson (though his surname is now Källberg).

Lots of people turned up. Along one wall was a table with a newly printed, new edition of Leif Andersson's record (sales seemed to go very well and people could get their record signed later in the evening). A number of people I know from Sunkit was there. Camilla and Calle, Dan S and his friend Robin (who treated me with a beer and atequila shot - thanks!),

Grosshandlare Lindberg, Monica, two Michaels - one who discussed guitar riff and another one who used to work for the famous underground comics publisher Horst Schröder (who I know, and others. Martin was unfortunately away on Very Important Dinner.

My friend Fredrik a Tampe was host. Stefan Sundberg from the radio program was first guest. It is his fault, all of this. As long as the songs were only on Youtube with 147 views it doesn't amount to much. It takes the power of radio activity and the dedication of an investigative journalist to start things rolling. He told about his fascination for the strange sounds coming out of this record and his efforts to find the man. It is in a way to call the recordings "bad" - they are made with love, honesty and conviction.

Next was the sound technician from the record studio, Björn Burlin. He told us that the small orchestra they had ready couldn't find the note Mr Andersson was singing and claimed the ears began to ache. So Leif Andersson did without them, in one take on both tracks. Mr Andersson said the recordings sounded OK, but Burlin noted he couldn't have heard them.

Third Guest was Kenneth Svensson, editor of Presspunkten magazine where Leif Andersson works a couple of days per week. (He is a pensioner now, at the age of around 70, but pops in a couple of days a week.) He said a co-worker who heard the radio program if it wasn't the Leif they knew. So they played the SR program for him and he said "But, yeah, that's me!".

The last man on stage was of course Leif Andersson himself! Host Trampe said it was a dream which had come true! He heard of this mythical recordings maybe 10 years ago and he couldn't dream that he would one day meet the singer.

Mr Andersson - I use that name, even if it is legally changed - is an elderly gentleman with thinning gray hair, glasses, a growing belly and a wry smile. He complained about a bad back but seemed otherwise in good mood. He lived in the city of Strängnäs in the 1970's, west of Stockholm.

The 40 years late success of his forgotten record came as a surprise. He liked to sing and often sang popular "schlagers" for himself, wanted to be a singer and he especially liked Frank Sinatra. He

hasn't done anything in music since 1974 when he did his record. When he heard the results he realised his limits. He saw the recording as a failure. He didn't give up his stage dreams entirely, and for instance applied to the actors school of the Royal Dramatic Theatre several times (without success). He has also studied at the Stockholm University, social studies and English. Writing for Presspunkten seems to be some sort of volunteer work (he's a pensioner) and he has written a number of short stories for them (rather good ones, claims his editor in chief Svensson).

If I heard it correctly the record costed ca 2000 Swedish crowns to make (a bit over 200 US Dollar) which would be half a normal month's pay in the 1970's. It was quite a lot of money. But Leif Andersson got his money's worth today!

The audience gave him long and warm rounds of applause when he agreed to give us a little singing. "But I have to do it in English, as I'm an old university student of it..."

So he gave us a few lines of "Cheek to Cheek".

An evening to remember.

#### Links:

Sunkit's "Historien om Leif Andersson och Sveriges kanske märkligaste skiva" ("The Story of Leif Andersson and Sweden's Perhaps Strangest record") <http://www.sunkit.com/historien-om-leif-andersson-och-sveriges-kanske-markligaste-skiva/> - Google Translate version: <https://translate.google.se/translate?hl=en&sl=sv&u=http://www.sunkit.com/historien-om-leif-andersson-och-sveriges-kanske-markligaste-skiva/&prev=search>

Stefan Sundberg writes "När verklighet överträffar dikt - Mitt osannolika möte med mannen bakom Sveriges märkligaste skiva" ("When Reality Surpasses Fiction - My Improbable Meeting with the Man Behind Sweden's Stranges Record") <http://presspunkten.blogg.se/2016/june/nar-verklighet-overtraffar-dikt.html> - Google Translate version: <https://translate.google.se/translate?hl=en&sl=sv&u=http://presspunkten.blogg.se/2016/june/nar-verklighet-overtraffar-dikt.html&prev=search>

#### Mailing Comments

**William McCabe:** Nice library idea! What kinds of books were deemed "inappropriate"? Was it skiffy books?

**Garth Spencer:** Hey, you do have friends – us here in EAPA! (One reason to try to get some life into the APA.) Stockholm had a few days with temps near 25 Celcius this summer. Most days it was around 20 degrees. We have experienced days some years with temperatures over 30 degrees, but they are rare. It is quite common for sf cons here to apply for grants (from culture funds or local governments), some time they'll get a little money but most of the time, unlike in Finland, they get nothing. (BTW, I once managed to get ca 1000 dollars in sponsorship from...Microsoft! If I remember, that was for the con Conscience 1995.) In what way has your Anarcho-Surrealist Party become popular?



Leif Andersson/Källberg today, now around 70 years of age.

*I'VE SEEN THINGS YOU PEOPLE WOULDN'T BELIEVE. ATTACK SHIPS ON FIRE OFF THE SHOULDER OF ORION. I WATCHED C-BEAMS GLITTER IN THE DARK NEAR THE TANNHÄUSER GATE. ALL THOSE MOMENTS WILL BE LOST IN TIME, LIKE TEARS...IN...RAIN.*