

COUNTERCLOCK



ISSUE # 24 - MARCH 2016



Die Rakete

Zeitschrift für Raumschiffahrt

In 1½ Stunden
um die Erde



Breslau

Januar-Juni

1927

Ergänzungsheft

Willy Ley & Gerfany's proto-fandom

EUROCON 2016 BARCELONA - Fandom on Iceland

Harry Warner quotes Don Wollheim in "All Our Yesterdays", page 191, about: FAPA - the Fantasy Amateur Press Association: "FAPA was formed for those fans who have outgrown the idea of trying to sell their magazines and now recognize their sincere interest in publishing and writing as a hobby. That is its purpose: to provide a vehicle for those who wish to publish but feel no desire to be tied down by strings of commercial obligation. It has to have a membership interested in doing, not in getting."

COVER ART:



Left: DIE RAKETE magazine distributed by Verein für Raumschiffahrt 1927-29, top right: Poster of the EUROCON in Barcelona, bottom right: Willy Ley.

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If I limited myself only to what is important, I would say nothing and write nothing. Let's regard what we say as *entertainment*.

- Wolf -

INTRODUCTION

There is a crack in the story of Walter Ernsting's 1955 SFCD foundation and that with it German sf-fandom should have begun. The name of the crack is Willy Ley and by following his trail I was able to witness the birth of German proto-fandom on July 5th in 1927, in the home town of Kurd Lasswitz. More than 30 years before the space age began with the first successful orbital launch of Sputnik on 4th October 1957. They didn't have the word *science fiction*, they didn't have the word *fandom*, but by all definition every other condition was satisfied.

Obviously there was a lot of correspondence going on between Oberth, Valier, Winkler and Otto Willi Gail (among others), and obviously the hat-maker Hugo Hückel was not a rocket scientist, but just a fan. Willy Ley was there, in the thick of it. As the SFCD was founded in '55, Willy Ley joined as member # 6. And today it occurred to me why Herbert Häussler didn't know about this society. He was only 15 years old when it all began and it was all over after seven years when the Nazis disallowed their activities.

If it were possible, but I don't know how to do it (how to contact him) I would like to thank Frank C Winter, the retired curator of Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, for his thorough paper on the Verein für Raumschiffahrt (VfR) and the contents of their magazine DIE RAKETE.

I had to pay 5 USD to access the paper through wikipedia at the Space Library and it was well worth it. But if you are not a dedicated truth-seeker and not very interested in the history of rocket science, but can enjoy the article from sf-fandom-point-of-view, then I would rather see you spending 3 USD, 3 EUR or 2 GBP on a TAFF vote. I'm sure dedicated truth-finders will be all over this article anyway. If anything is incorrect, then it will be corrected, when the error is discovered. But there's nothing intentional wrong.

I would also like to acknowledge a number of people whose sum of utterances prompted me to investigate it. These people being Chuck Connor (of EAPA), John-Henri Holmberg, Ronald M Hahn and John Clute. Those four gave me the "what, when, how and why" (in that order) to pursue this story. I fell over it by chance, really.

And I am thoroughly pleased with it. So would Ley possibly have been, or the BEM in the crater by his name on the far side of the moon.

Enjoy!

Wolf

Willy Ley & Gerfany's proto-fandom



I grew up in an environment, where the advances of science were just as interesting to me, as the literature which speculated far beyond it.

German fanzines of the 70's and 80's regularly contained scientific and pseudo-scientific articles. I learned many basic concept of cosmology from Perry Rhodan-magazines, which later was verified by the literature I absorbed on astronomy.

In my time, men such as Jesco von Puttkamer, Carl Sagan and in Sweden Eugen Semitjov and Anders Palm, bridged the realm of science with science fiction. Before them all was Willy Ley.

And it is my impression, that the significance of Willy Ley is underestimated in his own home country.

Before the war, Herbert H au sler was not the only sf-fan in Gerfany. Far from it, as we shall see. Even Harry Warner mentions Willy Ley's name bobbing up in American fanzines before the 50's. That should hardly surprise, since Ley was horrified by Hitler's politics and fled Germany in 1935 for Great Britain and he is mentioned in the US the following year.

But Willy Ley came from the very core of German proto-fandom, the VfR (**Verein f ur Raumschiffahrt - Society for Space Travel**). Before WWII the word *science fiction* was not used in Germany. It was called either *Weltraumabenteuer* (*Space adventure*) or *Zukunftsschilderung* (*Story of the future*) or some-

thing else, but absolutely not an English word. And in these terms, there was no wealth of authors. But there was Kurd Lasswitz, born 1848 in Breslau. His 1897 novel "*Auf zwei Planeten*", (*Two Planets*) was *required reading* for 'sf-fans' before the war. The first of his students to follow in the path of Lasswitz, was the 24 year younger Hans Dominik from Zwickau in Saxony, who had Lasswitz as a teacher in mathematics and physics while he studied at Gotha. But even though Lasswitz and Dominik with their writing laid a solid foundation for German sf, and even though the works of Jules Verne were translated early into German language, the demand for this kind of literature was far from saturated.

Let's move on to the days of the 3rd popular German sf-writer (whose work wasn't branded sf until after the war, when English became more accepted) Otto Willi Gail (1896-1956). He had the fortune to live in days when science and fiction were galloping in a tantamount pace.

German proto-fandom began with **Max Valier** (born 1895 in Bozen, South Tyrol, today Bolzano in Italy, not far from where I myself live.

Valier was interested in astronomy long before he studied it at the University of Innsbruck 1913-1915, along with physics, mathematics and meteorology.

In 1915, Valier was drafted into Austrian military service where he initially was kept busy as meteorologist, later in aerial reconnaissance and from 1917 as a test pilot. In 1919 he wrote and published the novel SPIRIDION ILLUXT, in which he accurately described an atomic bomb. The book is described as a *phantastische Erz hlung*, since words in other languages than German still were being avoided at all cost. Valier was a man driven by ambition.

A 2nd *key player* was another Austrian **Hermann Oberth**, born 1894 in Hermannstadt, Siebenb rgen (today *Sibiu in Romania*). He was in his youth already a devoted reader of the works of Jules Verne. He could already at college-level using physical-mathematical considerations prove that a human being could not be *shot* to the moon (as Verne would have it in one story), because he would not be able to endure the necessary g-forces of such a shot. But the only solution was a rocket (as Verne described it in another story). But as his father was a medical doctor, he first studied medicine in Munich, and after the first World War at the University of Budapest. Not until 1919 he changed the direction of his studies, when he began studying physics at the Technical University of Klausenburg (*Cluj-Napoca, Romania*). From there he continued his studies in Munich, G ttingen and Heidelberg. In 1922 his dissertation *Die Rakete zu den Planetenr umen* (*the Rocket Into Interplanetary Space*) was rejected on the grounds that there was no available expert on the subject. From 1923 to 1938, he worked as a teacher in the neighbourhood of his home town.

Oberth gained the attention of Max Valier, who with Oberth's assistance wrote "Der Vorstoß in den Welt-
raum" (*the approach to space*), published in 1924 and a commercial success with its 6th edition being published in 1930.

The 3rd man I will introduce you to, is **Johannes Winkler**, born 1897 in Bad Carlsruhe (*Pokoj, Poland*). His college degree was interrupted by the war in which he 1916 was gravely wounded. After the war he completed his studies and worked in Danzig (*Gdansk, Poland*). His parents pressed him to study *theology*. By will of his own, he also studied mathematics, physics and astronomy.



Johannes Winkler was editor of DIE RAKETE. This issue from 1927 contains Ein Brief an die Marsbewohner - A letter to the inhabitants of Mars.

Was it coincidence, that it should happen in the home town of Kurd Lasswitz? On July 5th in 1927 (and according to Willy Ley) in a back room of the restaurant Golden Sceptre in Breslau (*Wroclaw, Poland*) upon the initiative of Max Valier, Johannes Winkler with Valier, seven other men and a woman founded VfR (the Society for Space Travel). These people were Georg Lau, Theodor Fuhrmann, Alfons Jacobowicz, Hedwig Bernhard, Gerhard Guckel, Herbert Fuchs, Walter Neubert of Munich and a Diploma Engineer H.Sauer from Berlin. Most of these people were from Breslau and its vicinity.

Frank Winter, retired curator of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum has recently published a paper on VfR. "It was never called the 'German Rocket Society,' or any variation of that name, at least in Germany," said Winter during an interview. "The members didn't even do much rocketry until half way through the VfR's existence."

Winter's paper on VfR is interesting reading for sf-fans. He writes: "Ley, in his "The End of the Rocket Society," also says that "the germ of the idea" of space flight itself, probably dates to Johannes Kepler's novel *Somnium (The Dream)*, written in 1608 but not published until 1634. It is an imaginative description of how the Earth might look when viewed from the Moon, and is considered the first serious scientific treatise on lunar astronomy."

Willy Otto Oskar Ley was born late 1906 in Berlin and studied 1923-27 zoology, paleontology, physics and astronomy in Berlin and at the University of Königsberg (*Kaliningrad, Russia*). He joined the VfR early after its foundation and became member # 20. By then he had already published his first book: *Die Fahrt ins Weltall (Journey into Space)*.

Winter about Ley: "Soon after the Society had been formed, Ley explained, "Valier wrote me a letter asking me to join. Winkler (also) wrote to Professor Oberth and to many others. And they all joined." Oberth joined the VfR in August of 1927."

The content of the first issue of DIE RAKETE were primarily pieces of theoretical nature, including mathematical and other possible means of communication with extra-terrestrial life forms, a long article on Einstein's theory of relativity and other serious constructive pieces related to launches into space and space flight. Apparently sf has gone a full circle in Germany, from being a topic for academics, to something people generally sneered at as sheer fantasies, back to something again being taken (more or less) seriously.

My favourite paragraph from the Winter-paper is: "It is important to note that, as was true in the earliest years of the later American Interplanetary Society, founded in 1930 and afterward known as the American Rocket Society, science fiction literature (more specifically, "interplanetary stories") played a stronger role in attracting new members and circulating ideas on spaceflight in the earliest years of the VfR than is generally realized."

The attention on VfR worldwide has been on their inspiration and achievements in rocket science. But it is clear that VfR before banned by the Nazi regime in 1934 with an excess of 500 members must have gathered more than one sort of dreamers. Herbert Häußler would have found plenty of similar minded people in this environment, had he only come in contact with them. He was far from the only sf-fan in Germany. He was only the first to make contact with Forry Ackerman and American sf-fandom.

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Frank Winter delivers a thorough walk-through on the contents of DIE RAKETE in its 3 years of existence. In it, Valier practices both his fictional and non-fictional writing skills. Hermann Oberth submitted several articles. Franz Abdon von Ulinski contributed with the concept of an electric-propelled spacecraft. Winter: *"The second issue also saw Valier advertise the latest edition of his book, Der Vorstoss in den Weltraum and Winkler included in his "Book Reviews" section, a couple of new titles to the still small but growing literature of spaceflight: Die Fahrt ins All (The Journey into Space) and Mars der Kriegsplanet (Mars the Planet of War), both by Willy Ley, the first time his name appears in Die Rakete. From here, on, Ley's name became increasingly more prominent to the readership of Die Rakete."*

The Breslauer Modell- und Segelflugverein started building rocket plane models (model rocket gliders). ...an activity German sf-fans still haven't abandoned. Johannes Winkler must also be credited with introducing the great Russian theoretician on spaceflight, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky to the West. In 1928 there is an article on Otto Willi Gail, plus a sample chapter of his work, originally published as a book in 1925, *Der Schuß ins All (The Shot into Space)*. The sf-author was in constant touch with Valier and Oberth, which influenced his writing. His 1928 book has a foreword by Max Valier. When Valier made friends with Fritz von Opel, DIE RAKETE featured an article on rocket-powered cars. In the February 1929 issue appeared a sample chapter of the science fiction novel (published later that year in book form), *Flug in der Sterne (Flight to the Stars)* by the author Walter Vollmer.

The VfR ran short of funding in 1929 and Die Rakete was cancelled, Hermann Oberth became the new chair of the society and Willy Ley his deputy. In an attempt to gather fundings, they assisted Fritz Lang 1929 in the making of the UFA-film, *Die Frau im Mond, The Woman in the Moon*.



From the left: Johannes Winkler, Willy Ley, W.von Braun (?), Rudolf Nebel, Max Valier in April 1930.

Another interesting member of VfR was yet another Austria-Hungarian; Herman Potočnik, born 1892 of Slovenian ethnicity in Pula, southern Istria (*Croatia*). He wished to be remembered under his pseudonym **Hermann Noordung** and is chiefly remembered for his work addressing the long-term human habitation of space. Now, let's not deprive Arthur C Clarke of having come up with the idea of geosynchronous satellites, but Hermann Noordung also had it, and published works with the same idea. And given that he died of pneumonia in Vienna on the 27th of August 1929, he had the idea prior to Clarke. Max Valier became the first victim of space exploration less than one year later on the 17th of May 1930 as his rocket exploded on a test bench in Berlin. *Meanwhile, an exceptionally bright youngster named Wernher von Braun joined as one of the junior members of the VfR.*

Wernher von Braun, born 1912 in Prussian Wirsitz (*today in Poland*), was the *boy wonder* of VfR. He was born and baptised in the fannish tradition of a silent "H" added to the name. Barely 18, he received in May 1930 his college degree. But already 1929 he worked with Oberth. Later he advanced to become the most prominent VfR-member ever.



Left to right: Rudolf Nebel, Franz Ritter, NN, Kurt Heinisch, NN, Hermann Oberth, NN, Klaus Riedel, Wernher von Braun, NN

Willy Ley and Wernher von Braun have co-authored several books; among them *The Complete Book of Outer Space* (1953), *The Exploration of Mars* (1956) and *The Complete Book of Satellites and Outer Space* (1957). But Ley was also a prolific writer on his own.

The Conquest of Space is a 1949 speculative science book written by Willy Ley and illustrated by Chesley Bonestell. The book contains a portfolio of paintings by Bonestell depicting the possible future exploration of the solar system, with explanatory text by Ley. (*Wikipedia*).

Other VfR members who have wikipedia-pages in English and German are Rudolf Nebel, Guido von Pirquet, Klaus Riedel, Walter Hohmann and Eugen

COUNTERCLOCK # 24

Sänger (inspired by Lasswitz). Linked in German language only to Rolf Engel and to the hat-maker Hugo A Hückel.

Willy Ley became American citizen in 1944.

Johannes Winkler died 1947 in Braunschweig, in a country once called West-Germany.

I recall some commotion in German fandom, when Hermann Oberth was to be guest (of honour) at the SFCD-con in Erlangen 1984. His affiliation with the NPD 1965-67 wasn't forgiven. I don't know if he was at the convention. Images (on site: SFC Universum, Cologne) from the Erlangen-event show Michael Moorcock and Wolfgang Jeschke, but no Hermann Oberth. He died in 1989.

Let me tell you, anyone who thinks it is easy to leave ones home country and to speak a foreign language for the rest of ones life, is a fool. But Willy Ley was Guest of Honour at Philcon II, the Worldcon 1953 which gathered 750 sf-fans in Philadelphia.

He received the Hugo 1953, 1956 and a retro-Hugo in 2004. Willy Ley died in June 1969. A month before the moon landing.



George Pal's 1955 film *Conquest of Space* is based on Ley's and Bonestell's book, with an additional plot for cinematic drama.

The VfR was founded again after the second world war and registered with # 765 in Münster on the 20th of October in 1953. Chairman: Leo Sunder-Plassmann, Münster, deputy & secretary: Cornelius

Schultz. The statutes of October 5th 1953 were last altered on 4th December 1953.

In September 1929 the VfR had 870 members and reached the 1,000 mark soon after. It doesn't take any reading between the lines to understand that a society for space travel founded 30 years before the space age began, was a club of sf-fans. During the second half of their existence, they were busy with more hands-on rocket science and even had a launching field in Berlin for their test rockets.

But so did we in our sf-club Sigma TC. We launched rockets on our 5th, 10th and 25th anniversaries in 1981, 1986 and 2001. the launching ground was the football field near Fisksåtra and Villa Caprifol, where our conventions were held 1981-1986. On our third rocket launching occasion, the fireworks were so advanced that we needed a launching technician.

German readers may enjoy the further adventures of Wernher von Braun & friends in Rainer Eisfeld's 2014 published book; *"Zwischen Barsoom und Peenemünde"* (*Between Barsoom and Peenemünde*), which covers rocket science in Nazi hands and many more things.

Sources: various Wikipedia-articles in German & English

Wolf von Witting, 7th March 2016

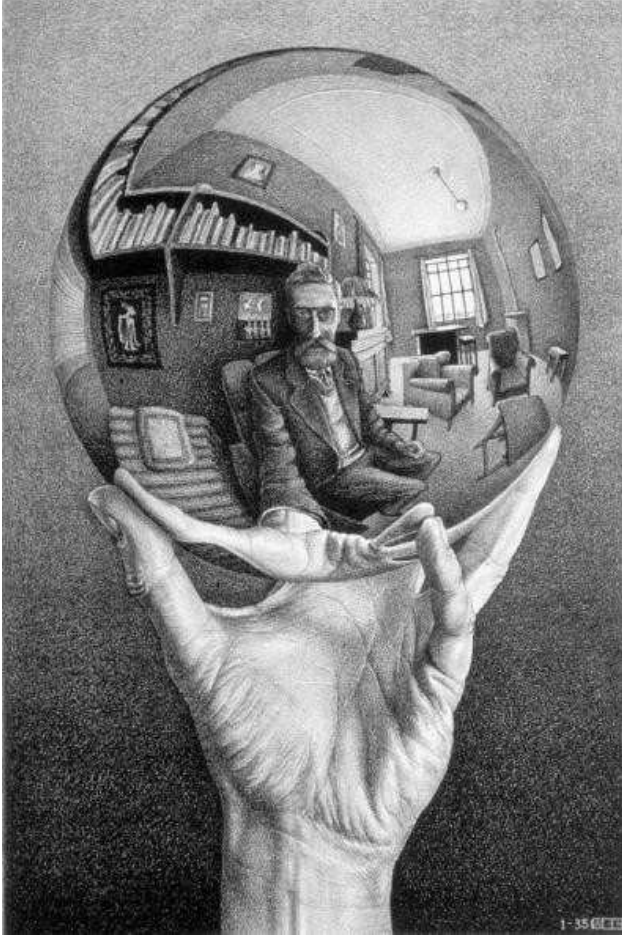


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MAURITS CORNELIS ESCHER

Born 17 June 1898 in Leeuwarden, Netherlands
died 27 March 1972 (age 73) in Laren, NL.

I was delighted to find that artistic excellence is still in demand, at least in Italy. On February 28th (2016) we embarked on an excursion to Treviso (near Venice), to see the Escher-exhibition at the *Museo di Santa Caterina*.



Hand with Reflecting Sphere also known as *Self-Portrait in Spherical Mirror* is a lithograph print by Dutch artist M. C. Escher, first printed in January 1935.

The *Hand with Reflecting Sphere* was on the flyers and posters for the exhibition. We arrived early in the day, while most Italians would have their lunch and so we didn't have to stand in line.

Already being familiar with the most famous pieces of Escher's art, my interest was on the lesser known works.

I am convinced, no matter how brilliant art-critics find Kazimir Malevich's monochrome masterpiece "the Black Square" (1915), at this exhibition everyone would have walked straight past it, mistaking it for a discoloured cover-plate, or something.

The works of dutch Maurits Escher are something one is entertained looking at again and again.

My first contact with an Escher reproduction must have been in the mid 70's. It was in a German fan-

zine, though I for the life of me can't recall in which one. And it was either the Ascending and Descending stairway or the Perpetual motion machine. Both of which belong to his best known works.

All the objects on display belonged to Italy's most dedicated Escher-fan **Giudiceandrea Federico**, who certainly has managed to gather an impressive amount of Escher's litho- and xylographies. To think that the artist originally carved it all in stone or wood makes the mind boggle.

I am also a fan of singers who do *funny stuff* with their voices, such as Steve Harley (Cockney Rebel), David Essex and Ian Hunter, so I couldn't help but to notice some of the album covers on display.



There was the *Mott the Hoople*-album from 1969 and *Ian Hunter's* first solo-album from 1975.

What's the connection between these two? Right! The top of the class answers the question without consulting wikipedia first. Ian Hunter was the lead singer of Mott the Hoople.



Escher - Other World 1947

As we left the exhibition four hours later, 150 people were standing outside in line. In the rain. Waiting to get in. Not many tourists. Most of them Italians.

And the exhibition is open 31 Oct 15 to 3 April 2016.

MY ADVICE TO TIME TRAVELLERS



Time Travel is not to be undertaken lightly and if you intend to go back in time you need to be properly prepared. The question is, if any of the available Handbooks on the topic really measure up to the standard. Have they actually been written by Time Travellers, or merely by someone with vivid imagination?

How can you tell the difference?

Let me give you some advice on Time Travel. The things you **really** need to know and how you should prepare for the journey.

1) LANGUAGE - You are not going to make it very far, if you only can speak English. If so, stay within 200 years from date of origin and do not leave the UK or the United States. With archaic German you can cross through most of medieval Europe, but I would advise you to also learn Latin. The further back you go, the more pronunciation will distance itself from what you are used to.

Should you wish to go further back than 1,500-2000 years, you might also want to consider koiné Greek. Before you rush off and learn Aramaic, or anything silly like that, you should consider the fate of Karl Glogauer. If you are not familiar with it, read Michael Moorcock's book "*Behold the Man*" and read point 4 of my advice carefully.

2) HEALTH - A Time Travellers Handbook should contain notes on the time and areas in which diseases such as the black death harvested millions of lives. Avoid these times and areas like the plague. Pun intended. We can't vaccinate you against it. It was difficult enough to get our hands on the original virus from the Spanish Flu. And that was only 100 years ago.

Don't wash yourself often. A handful dirt and bacteria makes you surprisingly resistant. Be prepared for a wall of smell wherever you go. Deodorants and perfume were rarely used. And perfume was mostly used to cover the smell of dirt and dust.

People often emptied their night pots in the streets. Don't sleep in any bed outside your time travel device. you will be sure to catch fleas.

3) SIZE - If you are 5 to 6 ft (170-180 cm), you might be considered very tall. Any taller, then you will be considered a giant. Be prepared that most of the people you encounter are shorter than 5 ft (150cm). This goes for all time beyond 200 years into the past.

4) HISTORY - May not be what you thought it was. Remember that history always has been written by the winners of a war. Significant details about history may have been omitted. Most certainly if they were embarrassing facts on the side of the victors.

Take nothing for granted. Don't believe for a moment you already *know* what happened.

5) TIME TOLERANCE - Don't worry about messing up any timeline. You can't do it. Be careful with your technically advanced gadgets. You might get stoned or burned on a stake for witchcraft.

You can find your head chopped off quicker than you can say: "God is dead."

Don't try to teach people tricks which are before their time. They are simply not ready to understand them.

When the time is ready for them, the inventor or the discoverer will appear. You make cause it by chance but all attempts to do so by intent have ended fatally. Religious tolerance is low, the further back you go.

You **do not** wish to meet the Spanish Inquisition!

If you have to meet a Spanish something, you'd be better off with the flu.

6) KNOWLEDGE - You do well in studying the time and area you have targeted for a visit. You **can** bring back specimen of extinct species.

FAQ ABOUT TIME TRAVEL

1) Why can't I change the timeline?

Answer: Because what has already happened, has happened.

2) But why can't I change the timeline?

Answer: Because what has already happened, can't be changed.

3) Does it mean I can't change the timeline?

Answer: Yes! That's exactly what it means.

4) What happens if I attempt to change it?

Answer: Try it! At your own peril.

5) So what if I go back and kill my dad before I was born?

Answer: Then you will screw your mom and find out that's what **actually** happened. It's why you never met your dad, motherf---er.

6) What if I go back in time and make a bank deposit 100 years in the past? Will I be rich as I return?

Answer: No, you will be as broke as you were when you left. The money you deposited was all lost in the 1929 financial meltdown.

- Wolf -

THE AUTHOR GERRY HAYNALY



Perry Rhodan - Arkon is a biweekly spinoff-series to the successful Perry Rhodan space opera. This issue was written by an Austrian sf-fan.

Many years ago, when I first published a fanzine, in 1978. One of the people contributing to its content was a young Austrian Perry Rhodan-fan in Graz. His name was Gerold Haynaly, now generally known among PR-fans under his pen-name Gerry. Even though we have known each other for decades we didn't really meet until GarchingCon 9 (CoClock #15, page 5-11). On Friday comes his next novel.

Wolf: "Gerry, I couldn't help but to notice that you've been publishing PR-novels. As I understand you have also been writing for another Perry Rhodan spin-off called PR Neo (*an attempt to show how the PR-series could have started, had it been written today*). All in all, how many novels have you had published by now?

Gerry: Now that you're asking I suddenly realize what my hobby has been becoming. Let me think. I wrote seven Sternenfaust-novels (*Starfist*), three of which were co-authored. There was my novel "Opus Erawan" with Tatcher a Hainu and Dalaimoc Rorvic - (*characters from the PR-series, who in character dynamics resemble Laurel & Hardy*) published in the PR-Fan-Edition - which allowed me to enter the PR-universe. It was followed by two novels with the PR Neo-series and now my most recent story: "Der

Smiler und der Hund" (*The Smiler and the Dog*) with Perry Rhodan Arkon.

Wolf: You are also writing detective stories. Did you publish anything in that area?

Gerry: I wrote on "Mord in Wolfenbüttel" (Murder in Wolfenbüttel) and another detective novel is in the drawer awaiting an overhaul.

Wolf: This being a hobby, what is your profession?

Gerry: Yes, it's a pretty time-consuming, but darn exciting hobby. The solitude and tranquillity of writing compensates for my work, teaching Networks and security (*digital and IRL security, surveillance, lock-picking, encryption, passwords, Cloud Security, etc*)

Wolf: We have known each other for ever! But how did it all really start for you, with sf-fandom and fanzines? When did you visit your first convention?

Gerry: I have to admit, I belong to the hardcore-Perry-Fans. I founded my first Club, the PRC Sirius, when I was 15. Its fanzine *Sirius 2000* and your "Peacelord" (*WolfEd: haven't seen the name of my first fanzine mentioned for ages. I chose it because PR in English was called the Peacelord of the Universe*) were the forums for my first attempts at writing. My first sf convention was an SFCD-con in Vienna late 70's. The 2nd was the Perry Rhodan WeltCon in Mannheim 1980.

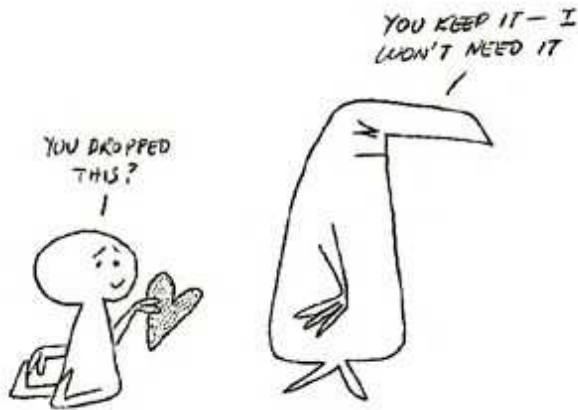
Wolf: What are your plans for the future? Do you have any visions?

Gerry: Yes, to become rich and famous. Haha! No, but seriously, being a guest-author on the first edition of Perry Rhodan would be a long standing dream come true. And of course, I have faith my latest project, a suspenseful thriller will fall in with my expectations.

Wolf: I hope it will come to that! And with any luck, we see each other in Zagreb. Thank you, Gerry!



SFERAKON on 13-15th of May 2016



Artwork by: William Rotsler 1926-1997 from
THE TATTOOED DRAGON MEETS THE WOLFMAN
(1960) - A Valentine's Day Special available on efanzines.com

TAFF GOES WEST...



Have you voted already? Do not forget to vote!
All you need to know here: <http://taff.org.uk/>
Online ballot: <http://tafftrip.com/taff-ballot-2016/>

Deadline is March 29th - 2016

One day as I was bakin',
Some chocolate chipped cookies
This song came to my head,
Which now is only filked by rookies
The title should be obvious
The lyrics straight and forward
An easy sing-along
Even with whiskers in disorder

Musha-rigum-doodum-da
Whack-fol-the-mummy-O
Whack-fol-the-mummy-O
There's Cookies in the Jar

- WOLF'S UNFINISHED FILK -

I was out walking one day, and suddenly
there was the edge of the world.
I stood looking at it for awhile.

Then I went home again.



Photo: Anders Bellis

Beyond the edge of the world, there was
grey nothingness.

As I stood there watching,
three travellers appeared.

As they are travelling through
nothingness,
their journey has no beginning and no
end, and they will travel forever.

They were thus in too much of a hurry to
have time to exchange more than a few
words with me.

ANDERS BELLIS

COUNTERCLOCK # 24

News travel fast on the Internet and on the 17th of February it was announced on Eurosmof that Reykjavík on Iceland will see its first convention 28-30th of October 2016. CounterClock was eager to look behind these astonishing news.

For years, we haven't heard anything at all about Iceland. Naturally we are curious to know. Johan Anglemark reported to us, that it so came to pass in June 2015, as three Icelandic sf-fans attended Archipelacon (the Nordic SF&Fantasy convention on an Island between Finland and Sweden) that they were encouraged to run their own convention. And I guess it is to everyone's delight, that they decided to oblige.



IceCon is a dream that is becoming reality

There is a certain impossibility inherent in the mindset of Icelandic artists. It is almost assumed that artists can't live off the fruits of their work alone. This is not to say there are no full time artists in Iceland nor that there are no attacks on their artistic integrity or merit. It is a simple matter of cold hard math. The most popular bestselling authors will sell (maybe) twenty thousand copies of a new book and it takes years of loyal readership and catching lightning in a bottle to even approach those numbers. There are no more than two authors in Iceland at any given time that can expect those kinds of sales. These are the Stephen Kings and J.K. Rowling of the Icelandic literary world, household names whose work is debated over cups of coffee and by the water cooler. The vast majority of writers have to accept and live with what Icelanders call "hark."

Hark is a quintessentially Icelandic word, hard and unflinching, and signifies a type of struggle. A band member handing out flyers or selling CD's on a street corner is "harking it", as is an author reading to a barely listening audience in a bookstore or a poet selling books on a street

corner in the frost and snow. It is interesting to note that the Icelandic-English dictionary translates the word "hark" as racket, tumult or row, so the word does not necessarily always have positive connotations.

Every artist struggles with getting recognized. That's not unique to the Icelandic experience. But when there are fewer than four hundred thousand Icelandic speakers and readers in the entire world (well, at least this one) it would be understandable for desperation to set in for writers of weird fiction. Icelandic SFF has started to creep into bookstores in the past decade and it may be surprising to note that experimentation has been allowed to reign among the writers. With low sales being a foregone conclusion an author intent on writing about the more fantastical aspects of reality can let go of reins of marketability and commercial attainability. Of course there are success stories of writers such as Emil Hjörvar Petersen, Kjartan Yngvi Björnsson & Snæbjörn Brynjarsón and Hildur Knútsdóttir that have all boasted sales of more than a thousand copies per book (which are considered a respectable sales numbers in our small country). More join their ranks every year, so we're very excited about what the future might hold.

This experimentation is not unique to Iceland, but we all know what a remarkable group SFF readers are and they have been the most important part in the launching of Icelandic SFF. Writers and creators are forever locked in union with the most important of partners with whom they can shape the most wondrous creations. The readers.

IceCon is a place for making connections, to further relations between writers and readers and to bring to light what wonders have been concocted under the banner of the weird, or "furða".

The word "furða" is as far away from "hark" as possible. It's pliable, easy, rolls off the tongue. Furth-a. Yet its simplicity hides the magnitude of the word. Furða means weird or strange or different. And if we look beyond the dictionary its meaning is even broader. Furða has come to encompass the entirety of Icelandic fantasy and science fiction. It's the weird dystopian worlds of reimagined empires, the apocalypses of forgotten gods, the seed ships, the ancient evils, the impossible and the strange. Furða. It's weird, it's wonderful, and it's ever so more complex than its innocent appearance indicates.

Now to add to this culture we have IceCon, a literary fan convention with a focus on fantasy

literature and the forces influencing it in Iceland. IceCon is about the fans of the weird. A place to discuss the weird, the fantastic and the impossible and (as we say in Iceland) to wonder how the sausage is made, why it's made and how we can make it better.

It's a start.

A beginning of something new

In this context it's strange that IceCon started as something completely different. People have been talking about holding a convention in Iceland for decades, but nothing happened until 2012. So most of Icelandic SFF fans have gone through their lives without attending a single con or knowing what a wonderful experience it is. Although Icelanders are lucky enough to have access to local geek store (yes, singular) Nexus, where fans have been meeting since 1992.

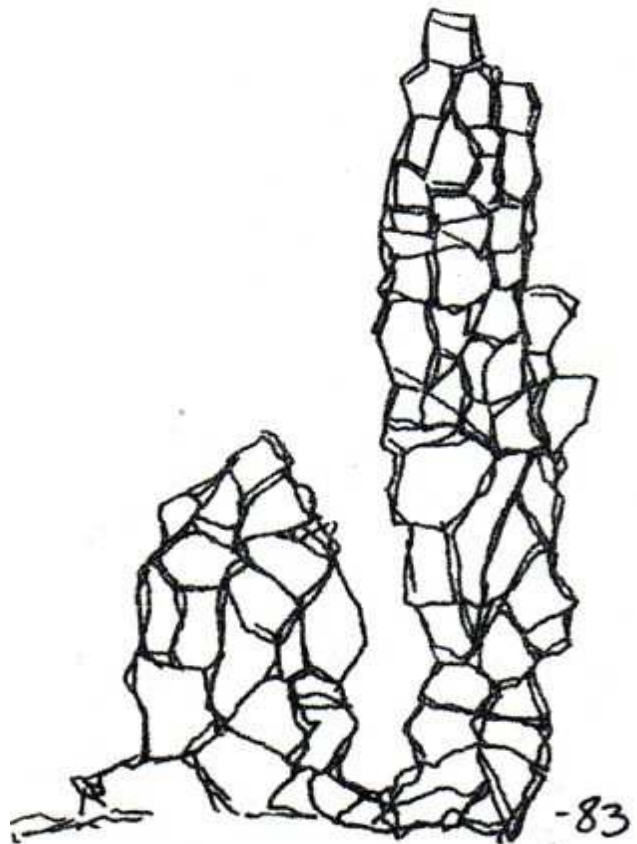
Icelandic SFF literature was almost unheard of until 2010 when new authors started writing in the genre. In the past there were some attempts to launch Icelandic SFF, one of the earliest examples was *Ferðin til stjarnanna* (The Journey to the Stars) by Kristmann Guðmundsson, published in 1959 and recently republished. Sadly, very few of these attempts met with commercial success, even though a few were well received, but for the most part Icelandic literature simply soldiered on without SFF. But many books have been published in the past six years and every year more authors explore the genre. In November 2012 the first fan convention was held at Norræna húsið. It was a small happening with about fifty people in attendance and a two day program. The convention was called *Furðusagnahátíð*, which could be translated as Weird-story-fest, but unfortunately this was a just one time event.

A literary tradition is being created here that is in a way independent of the wider world, and in a way influenced by a hodgepodge of whatever seeped into the culture from those strange, arcane lands beyond our shores. Most author chose to publish their works themselves but some authors have found success with the big publishing houses. Because of the small market there are writers that have chosen to write in English and even found some moderate success, an example of this is Christian Matari and his *Locus Origin* series. There was even a publisher, *Rúnatýr*, that focused only on SFF. Unfortunately they closed in 2014, but their writers have all moved on to new and exiting things.

As is often the case when SFF breaks into a old literary tradition the biggest success has been in

children's and YA fiction. The prestigious Icelandic Children's Book Award was awarded to SFF fiction in 2012, 2014 and in 2015. But the genre has had success outside of these two branches and it is our hope the in the coming years one Iceland's biggest sellers will be an SFF title.

This brings us to last fall when the members of the IceCon committee first came together. There had been rumblings about a convention being planned in Iceland and we wanted to make sure that SFF literature would be represented, but as time passed it became clear that these rumblings weren't as real as we hoped. So we just went ahead and did it ourselves.



Artwork: Wolf von Witting, "Crystal Rauk" 1983

What, were & when

IceCon is held in Iceland, in the (barely pre-post-apocalyptic) frostbitten wasteland of downtown Reykjavík, in one of the oldest and most beautiful buildings in the city. Iceland is just south of the arctic circle, populated by survivors of more than thousand bitter winters and hundred fiery eruptions. The inhabitants have always been few in numbers and today number just over three hundred thousand.

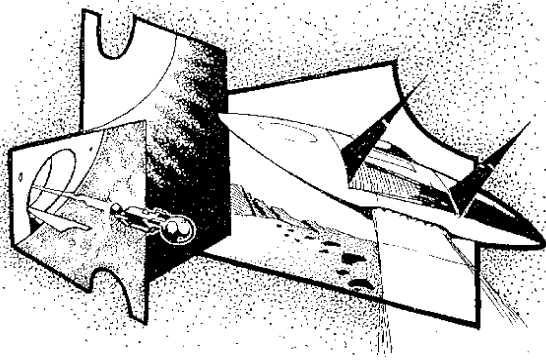
Holding a convention isn't as easy as one would think, but from the start and along the way some great people have helped us. Our venue is *lðnó*, a

small theater built in 1897, and is one of Reykjavík's most historic buildings (none of them are especially old, this is one of the oldest... seriously). It is located at the heart of Reykjavík next to the City Hall and Tjörninn, a small lake/pond. Hopefully this spectacular venue will help create a great atmosphere for the convention, as it has for countless important events in the past. There's a nice, little coffee shop in Iðnó so all convention members should be able to get properly caffeinated between panels and other events. The coffee shop also has a liquor license and will serve as a bar for the Saturday's evening Halloween party, as the date of the convention will be the weekend of 28-30th of October.

With IceCon we want to celebrate the fact that we have crazies writing fantasy here. We want to highlight the fans that read these books. We want to pick each others brains and figure out what makes us tick, why we write, how we write, what we read, what matters, what doesn't matter, how we create worlds and how we maintain them. We want to hear voices we haven't heard before, we want to listen and be influenced and we want to show off. We want to make it something special. In the next few weeks we even more things are happening. The Guest of Honor has accepted our offer and will be announced soon along with our website and registering system going online. So hopefully everyone can register and start planning their trips to our beautiful country. If you want to see more than Reykjavík then do plan for a few extra days. We're very optimistic about all of this and look forward to meeting you if you decided to drop by at the end of October.

The IceCon committee:

Alexander Dan Vilhjálmsson, Einar Leif Nielsen, Brynhildur Heiðar- og Ómarsdóttir, Kristján Már Gunnarsson, Emil Hjörvar Petersen, Johann Thorsson, Hildur Knútsdóttir, Kjartan Yngvi Björnsson and Snæbjörn Brynjarsson



Artwork: Arthur Thomson, ATom 1927-1990

Sad news from Greece: In Memoriam: Angelos Mastorákis



'Angelos Mastorákis, one of the foremost pros and BNF:s of Greek fandom, has left us.

'Angelos was the editor of science fiction magazines 9 and Nova, the second title being published in two different incarnations, together spanning a period of 16 years, from 1978 to 1994, and featuring short stories as well as articles. He was also a founding member, and for four years the chairman of, the Athenian Science Fiction Society, ALEF, which recently celebrated its 18th anniversary with a great party in his honour. ALEF is by far the most active part of Greek fandom, holding meetings every Saturday and every second Sunday, the latter featuring programme items followed by a few beers down the pub, as well as organising an annual one week science fiction film festival, featuring directors and actors from all over the world as Guests of Honour, and an incredible number of new science fiction films. The festival is open to the public and has been a massive success for 10 years running.

The sf magazine 9 was distributed as a supplement to the newspaper Eleftherotipía, and thus reached a very large audience indeed. Each issue, with a very few exceptions, contained one short story by a Greek author, and one short story by an author from abroad, mostly from English-speaking countries. In total, Mastorákis published 123 stories by 38 Greek authors in 9, a number of the authors having their first stories published in the magazine. Also, 9 featured science fiction comics, most of them from abroad, some of them from Greece. The variety was stunning.

In an interview in the newspaper Compass, Mastorákis explained that what he was doing was the result of a kind of "personal madness": "I love

science fiction, which I regard as the literature of modern times! Others might like, for example, detective stories, but that is not my bag. I am beset by this madness!" It is not hard to hear his good-natured laugh accompanying those words.

Mastorákis also published a number of short story anthologies, containing stories previously published in 9, and stories from the Greek science fiction writers' workshop, organised twice a year by ALEF.

'Angelos Mastorákis left us early in the morning on the 10th of February this year, after having been diagnosed with cancer a few months earlier.

As a personal note, I would like to add that my very good friend, the author and sf/horror-fan Sabina Marinova Theo of Bulgaria, was a great fan of the science fiction magazine 9, nominating it for a EuroCon Award in 2007. This might be a sort of indication of how far and wide 'Angelos Mastorákis managed to reach out across this part of the world.

Without him, we are very much poorer. But in his spirit, and in his honour, we will carry on.

-- Anders Bellis,
for Greek fandom



Artwork: Christian Holl

Genesis (the years 1970 - 1977)



Genesis is an English rock band formed at Charterhouse School, Godalming, Surrey in 1967. Let's only throw a limited eye on wikipedia's facts. They are not inaccurate, but it serves no purpose to echo them. The names Peter Gabriel, Tony Banks, Mike Rutherford, Phil Collins, Steve Hackett and Anthony Phillips will be forever linked with music, which in distant future will be regarded as the classical music of the 20th century.

- It is as complex as classical music, I said to a lady who studied music at Stockholm University.
- Oh, but classical music isn't particularly complex, she retorted.

And yes, of course it is so. The first piece of music I ever grew fond of in life, was Smetana's "Moldau" and "The Musical Box" (album: Nursery Cryme 1971) caught my ear very much in the same way. Even the length of the piece and the ending are similar. It is probably completely coincidental. In *Supper's Ready*, (album: *Foxtrot* 1972) Genesis perform a noteworthy stunt, playing one of its seven segments in an 9/8 rhythm.

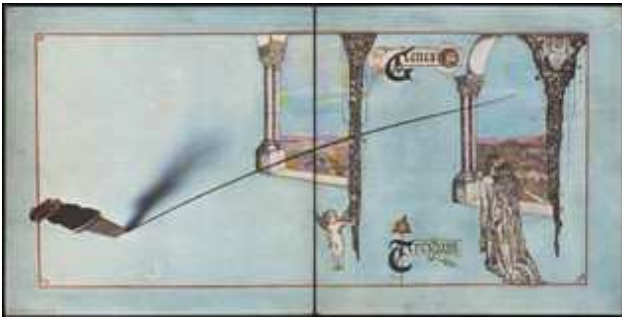
Two classically trained Norwegians; Yngve Guddal and Roger T Matte highlight the classic quality of Genesis compositions by performing them on two Steinway Grand pianos.

[Yngve visited the University Of Music in Berlin and Roger the Norwegian Academy Of Music in Oslo. They had separately the same problem for many years: each had tried to arrange the music of GENESIS for piano but had found it impossible with only two hands. The solution finally presented itself when they met, and the result can be heard since the release of "Genesis For two Grand pianos" Vol.1 (2002) and Vol.2 (2005) STEVE HACKETT commented: "*Genesis For Two Grand Pianos is an ingenious and thoughtful project delivered in a virtuosic style reminiscent in places of Stravinsky's work for two pianos. It seems as if classical hands*

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have firmly grasped the torch originally lit by a rock band who often looked to music's roots in the first place. Genesis' largely keyboard based tunes are cleverly reduced to their constituent parts most effectively to my mind and in some cases have only gained in this unique interpretation."]

I have always felt, that my listening habits go well with my interest for SF and Fantasy. Genesis, with their music, conjure up sceneries, which in their juxtaposition have powerful impact on imagination. Theirs is a world of wonders, which I associate with steampunk and fantasy. It ranges from Greek and Roman mythology (Fountain of Salmacis) to sheer science fiction (Get'em Out by Friday). And even though some bands have been compared to Genesis, I have never heard anything quite like it.



TRESPASS 1970

According to an article in the ROLLING STONE October 2014, the closing track on this album "The Knife" is a fan-favourite and "gets all the glory", but it's exactly the track which I like less than all the others. All in all, it's a homogenous album you can listen to from the beginning to the end without skipping. But this goes for all of their albums '70-'77, so I won't mention it again. "Looking for Someone" is the 7-minute opener, which the author of the ROLLING STONE-article favours. And I agree, it is an underestimated song. *White Mountain* tells the tale of a duel between two alpha male wolves, Fang and One-Eye. Personally I was first grabbed by *Vision of Angels* and its judgment on this world: "Some believe that when we die, we really lived. I believe there never is an end. God gave up this world, it's people long ago." I listen to lyrics. Always. In perfect harmony with the "Vision" it is followed by "Dusk", which contains several images for the mind. "A pawn on the chessboard, a false move by God may now destroy me."

If there is a God as a non-corporeal sentient entity, can Gods make false moves?

I believe the 8:50 minutes track "Stagnation" to be the favourite of those who don't like their music too simple and predictable, but more of an adventure.

Undoubtedly the band found a new and interesting style of their own on this album, to distinguish Genesis from a multitude of progressive rockbands emerging in the early 70's.

The knife cutting through the canvas on the album cover may be a homage to artist Lucio Fontana, the founder of Spatialism.



NURSERY CRYME 1971

Even though Anthony Phillips left Genesis to be replaced with Steve Hackett, he is still in a small way connected to this album by having co-written two tracks, *The Musical Box* and *The Fountain of Salmacis*. On drums and percussion, the new addition Phil Collins had come to stay with the band. Paul Whitehead, the creator of their album cover art, caused quite a stir with his vision of the music. All those heads on the croquet lawn could still genuinely shock people back in 1971.

It was years before slasher movies became popular. In his vision, Whitehead went for the Victorian age, but Genesis inspires beyond it with their fantasy. Today we have a name for it. We call it steampunk. Of course, the genre contains a lot more, as it should. But for me it goes very well into the same category. The three main epic pieces on this album are *The Musical Box*, *Return of the Giant Hogweed* and *The Fountain of Salmacis*. But the shorter compositions feel just as necessary, *For Absent Friends*, *Seven Stones*, *Harold the Barrel* and *Harlequin*. Just as the body needs rest, and the mind needs dreams, so does the ear benefit from a bit of calm between the storms. Not that I consider *Harold the Barrel* as calm. As a story, it balances on a ledge between the humorous and the macabre.



FOXTROT 1972

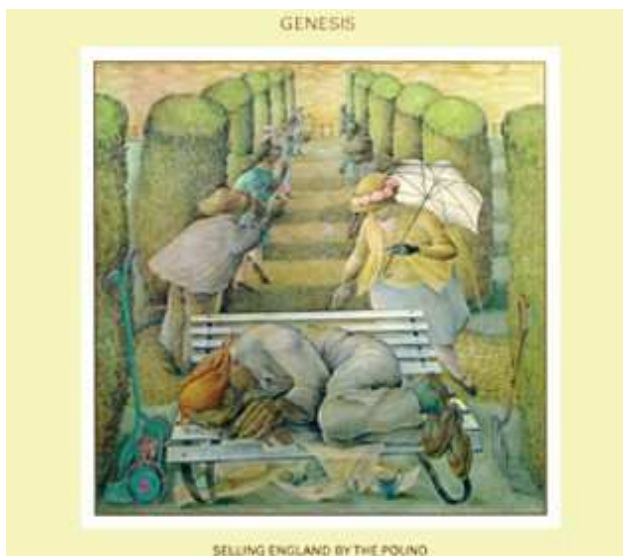
"A carved oak table tells a tale of time when king and queens sipped wine from globets gold and the brave would lead their ladies from out the room to harbours cool. A time of valour and legends born, a time when honour meant much more to a man than life. And the days knew only strife to tell right from wrong,

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through lance and sword. Why, why can we never be sure till we die or have killed for an answer? why, why do we suffer each race to believe, that no race has been grander? It seems because trough time and space, though names may change each face retains the mask it wore." I love this song, the Time Table. Or how about this one? "The scattered pages of a book by the sea, held by the sand washed by the waves. A shadow forms cast by a cloud, Skimming by as eyes of the past, but the rising tide absorbs them effortlessly claiming." Now, is that poetry, or what? It creates visions. And it is slightly more enlivening than; "Can't live, if living is without you." or "Baby, it's true, I love you!" Because after all, who the frak cares? At some point everyone grows tired of repetitive drivel. But one can't exactly accuse the seven segment long, over the entire flip-side of the Foxtrot vinyl album, epic 23 minutes "Supper's Ready" of being very repetitive.

Not even at: "Mum to mud to mad to dad, Dad diddley office, Dad diddley office. You're all full of ball. Dad to dam to dum to mum. Mum diddley washing, Mum diddley washing. You're all full of ball."

I like my music to give me visions I can paint. This album gave me a lot of them. Alas, that was many years ago. I wonder if those watercolour paintings even still exist (somewhere in Sweden)!



SELLING ENGLAND BY THE POUND 1973

With "Selling" Genesis moves again forward and Phil Collins gets his first lead vocal on "More Fool Me". Tony Banks performs an amazing piano-introduction-solo to "Firth of Fifth" and for the first time Genesis moved into the charts with "I Know What I Like". In April of 1974 it moved up to 21st position in the UK Singles chart. Did you know the song was inspired by the Beatles? I didn't, until just now, when I read about it. But Genesis was not meant for the charts. Not this kind of music. When Genesis started making money and climb the charts,

they slid down the hill into pop music. But okay, they deserved making some money also. I don't mind so much. It was after all, pretty good pop music. But not epic and symphonic as these albums between 70 and 77 were.



THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY 1974

The final Genesis album with Peter Gabriel as lead singer. It is a concept album about a New York street kid called Rael and his quest for spiritual self-discovery. And yes, this is where I got the first part of the name Rael Foxboro from (for my Perry Rhodan-parody, 1979). The surname came from a discarded ballpoint pen I found at Grand Hotel Saltsjöbaden while working there one evening. The pen had only one word on it (Foxboro). Many things could be said about this album. But in this case I would actually recommend reading the wikipedia-article on it.



Steve Hackett - VOYAGE OF THE ACOLYTE 1975

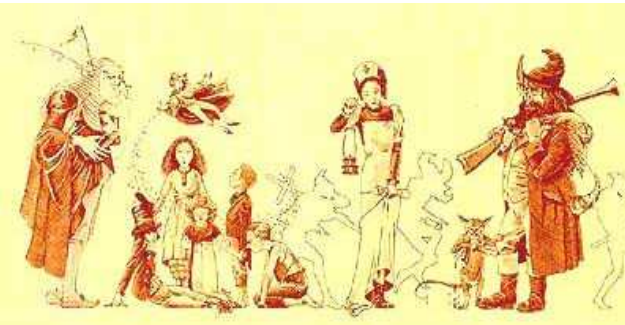
Here we have Hackett's first solo-album. But with Phil Collins and Mike Rutherford helping out. The latter participating in the song-writing. One could say it is half a Genesis-album. We can hear Hackett sing on "The Hermit", Phil Collins on "Star of Sirius" and Sally Oldfield on "Shadow of the Hierophant". As a solo-artist Steve Hackett may have been the most tenacious member of the band. He has not had the same commercial success as Gabriel and Collins, but for the listeners who are into it for the music, he has often been a treat. I also quite liked *Please, Don't Touch* 1978 and *Spectral Mornings* 1979.



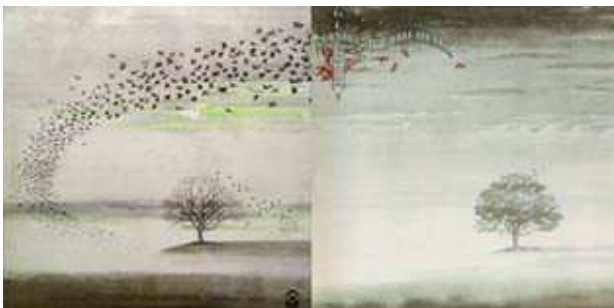
A TRICK OF THE TAIL 1976

When I was in my teens, I didn't even notice the change of lead singer. Of course I can hear the difference between Peter Gabriel and Phil Collins, but I didn't really reflect about the change of lead vocal until I read about it. On the other hand, the voice of Phil Collins was already familiar to me from previous albums.

There are several fantasy-themes on this one. The tracks *Squonk* and *A Trick of the Tail* being two. For many years *Entangled* was one of my favourite Genesis-songs. It is also a song you can play to almost anyone. I just can't see how anyone who has any tranquillity and harmony inside, can't love it.



It is difficult for me to pick a favourite album among the seven Genesis released 70-77. I know which one I heard first. That was *Nursery Cryme*. But I can't say it is better than the others.



WIND & WUTHERING 1977

The album was actually released on December 27th in 1976, but I didn't find it in the shop until 1977. And I was eager to get it as soon as possible. It sounds a lot of Hackett to me, and it is the last of the greats.



Ant Phillips - THE GEESE AND THE GHOST 1977

Again, another half Genesis album, by participation of Phil Collins and Mike Rutherford. And with Steve's brother John Hackett on flute. This is a "night album" for my taste. It means, this album is one I could play at nights, while writing. There are not many such albums, but this album has been perfect for that purpose. On the 2008 re-issue bonus CD is a bonus track with Phil Collins singing "The Silver Song". Most of the time I prefer Gabriel's voice, but in this case I have to say Collins' fits better.

The best Anthony Phillips solo-album IMHO is the in 1981 released album "1984"



Mike Rutherford created a musically very interesting album in 1980 with "SMALLCREEP'S DAY". But commercially it appears he had more success with his band Mike & the Mechanics.

And then they were three, turned to pop music and lived happily ever after (I hope). But that's another story to be told by someone else.

- WOLF -

EUROPEAN EVENT CALENDER



Mancunicon is the 2016 Eastercon and the 67th British National Science Fiction Convention. It takes place **25-28 March** 2016, in Manchester, UK. If you haven't booked already, it's too late to even consider going. *We have now reached our membership limit, and the convention is full. No new memberships are available, and there will be no memberships available on the day.*

But don't worry, there are plenty of other wonderful sf-conventions you can attend. And most of them are less expensive.

<https://www.mancunicon.org.uk/>



Festival de l'imaginaire - Fantastikfestival **16 - 17th April** 2016 @ Schungfabrik, Teiteng in Luxembourg. This is a convention I have had high upon my list of conventions I would like to visit. Gérard Kraus, who has been running the show must be doing something right. It appears to be the *new type* of convention and from Jürgen Lautner's movie on youtube it looked fun and crowded.

This note of the organizers attracted my attention: *LuxCon is a charity event, as such we are not asking for booth rental but are very grateful for any contribution towards the costs we are facing organising the event. We do not generally pay appearance fees or otherwise contribute to costs you might entail.*

Anyway... tickets are being sold at the door. It's five Euros for a day and 9 Euros for the weekend.

No wonder the place is overrun by sf-fans of all shape, species and colour.

<http://luxcon.lu/>



The Croatian sf-club SFera celebrates 2016 its 40th year anniversary. The convention in Zagreb takes place on **13-15th of May** and I am seriously working on getting there to filk with Dalibor & friends.

We had a great time in Zagreb 2012 and it is time to see our Croatian friends again. They speak English.

This convention has been targeted for tarriance.

<http://sferakon.org/>



StarCon Italia, also ITALCON 42 have kidnaped Captain James T.Kirk and the 7th Doctor.

19-22nd of May in Bellaria, Igea Marina. Obviously a media-convention and it's in Italy, so there will be food. It's the one certainty about Italian conventions.

By now also some of the attending fans have perhaps learned some English? But, hey - it's the 42nd ITALCON! <http://www.stic.it/>



Fantastika is the Swedish National convention to be held in Stockholm **17-19th of June**.

The SweCon is generally affordable and run by an experienced team (basically the same people who did the Eurocon in 2011). Swedish cons are on the **up** going trend. You are not likely to be disappointed. I can safely recommend the experience.

This convention has been targeted for tarriance.

<https://fantastika2016.wordpress.com/>



The Finns are no less experienced in running cons than the Swedes. It is neither the first time for the town of Tampere to be host for the event. FinnCon has also been on my list of conventions I would love to visit, but I just haven't come around to do it yet. Definitely affordable. Finns usually have no entrance fee and they all speak English (also). Recommended event on **1st - 3rd of July**.
<http://2016.finncon.org/en/>



The SFCD-Convention in northern Germany will be an encounter between SF and Medicine. In German. This convention has been targeted for tarriance. And it is the weekend before the Worldcon. I have already *promised* to be there, **12-14 August**.
<http://www.medi-kon-one.de/>



30th September - 2nd October
 Musik-Jugendherberge Wernigerode and German filkers speak excellent English. In case you didn't know - filk is the folk music of sf-fandom. And filkers are generally known to be nice, helpful and sociable people. In short; they have all the necessary character traits. Yup, I'd love to go there...
www.filkcontinental.de/

For ICECON, in Reykjavik, Iceland on **28-30th October**, see page 11ff

It really shocks me when I encounter people who think kindness doesn't matter. Because I think it's pretty much the only thing that matters.

Josh Radnor



4 - 6th November 2016, in Barcelona

The Spanish EUROCON gives a very good impression so far. Not only has the organising committee been communicating well with their European colleagues, but somehow it seems they've managed to create quite a hype (not necessarily intentional) around the event. Expectations are growing. Will this be the biggest bang since... well... EVER? And the convention is running the risk of being sold out before it begins, This convention has been targeted for tarriance, if funds hold out until November and if I'll be allowed entrance (might be sold out).
<http://www.eurocon2016.org/>



11-13th November, Park Inn Hotel, Nottingham
 Novacon is the UK's longest-established regional science fiction convention, held every autumn since 1971. It's built around a single-stream programme mixing both literary items and more informal events, with deliberate emphasis on social contact between sf fans and genre professionals.

Novacon follows a long tradition of SF conventions held in the UK since the late 1930s. Back in those days it was a proud and lonely thing to be an SF fan and the main source of their interest was the written word.

The CounterClock editor attended a Novacon and hereby certifies that if you are a fan of the old school you will LOVE this convention.

<http://www.novacon.org.uk/n46/>

 Germans may also be interested to know that the COLONIA CON isn't dead. It goes on with a new team. **28th - 29th May** in Cologne, Germany
<http://www.coloniacon.eu/>

The 13th ElsterCon in Leipzig have Ian McDonald & a good reputation for running a smooth convention. **16th - 18th September**
<http://www.fksfl.de/page99/page100/index.html>

The European Event Calender comes in the first issue of CounterClock every year. This issue is unfortunately a bit late. Usually it should come no later than early February.



Taral Wayne, Toronto, Canada

I set this aside as looking interesting, but “setting aside” is virtually the same as putting it somewhere out of sight where it can be forgotten. I opened CounterClock again today and gave it a closer look. Unfortunately, there not very much I can comment on – your observations on pop music didn’t inspire any thoughts. I looked a little closer on the history of Flemish fandom, but mainly it reinforced my belief that fandom can get too big, too diverse to be anything but another mundania to get lost in.

I can understand why a tiny fandom reaches out to others, but from the point of view of someone in English-speaking fandom, it is already too big to know everyone, or for more than a handful of people (those who control the few, influential institutions like the WorldCon or Locus) to matter very much.

If we added to that the fandoms of 87 other countries, we would be individually reduced to microbes. Moreover, most of the SF in those 87 languages is never going to be widely available in the 86 other languages. What real commonality can there be?

Bigness for its own sake has never appealed to me, because it makes us little. And isn’t the whole point of belonging to a fandom to be made “big” again?

Of course, old style fandom is doomed in the long run. But what isn’t? I’m sure that the first dope smokers and first motorcycle clubs have all seen their hobbies change out of recognition, and they don’t feel they fit in the modern scheme anymore. SF fandom will survive one way or another, even though it may not be in a form that I want much to do with.

That was more or less what happened with my involvement with furry fandom.

Originally, it was mostly artists who used funny animal comics to tell more adult stories. There were several advantages to this, but explaining them is a subject for another time and place. Over time, however, the comics died out due to poor economic success. Many of the original artists and writers drifted away. A couple of annual conventions grew to dozens, and the fandom focused more on social events than on comics and art. Cons turned out to be the perfect place for costuming, so although there were only a handful of costumers back in the 1980s, today furry fandom is entirely about costuming and role playing. But I, like most of my generation of furry fans, have zero interest in running around in a baggy fur costume pretending to be “Woof the Wizard Warrior” ... or whatever. The original fandom is quite dead, and what lives on is no concern of

mine. I think SF fandom has been following a similar path, and has become little concern of mine also.

Ironically, SF fandom is probably more like what fandom must have been like in the 1930s... revolving around the books and magazines, and fawning over authors. The sort of fannish fandom of the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s survives in fans who are largely senior citizens, and has been effectively marginalized.

In any case, apart from stirring up a little latent, old-fart paranoia, CounterClock didn’t push any buttons this time around.

WolfEd: *Your honesty is refreshing. I will be equally honest and admit I didn't feel very inspired. Had it not been for the contributions of Jaap Boekestein, Tais Teng and Roelof Goudriaan, #23 would have been quite a sad issue. Now, that was four months ago and I really feel I needed those four months to contemplate into which direction I want to take this fanzine.*

There is one issue on which I have to disagree with you though. ELOY do not make pop music. I don't think they ever entered any charts with their music and I have never heard them on the radio.

The music articles I bring should relate to SF and Fantasy-themes. I feel SF&F are incorporated in three very different forms of media. The written word, the images (film and art) and the music.

The music has always come last in sf-fandom. But I recall Dieter Liebig, the Gerfan from Niederkassel who insisted on writing about music for my first fanzine (PEACELORD, 1978). He introduced me to Manfred Mann's Earthband and at the time I was wondering what on Earth it had to do with SF.

But now I'm grateful.

Where is fandom going? Sometimes I feel like the last faned in Europe. I know I'm not. Far from it.

There are still a load of faneds in the UK. But you're right... I also feel some of that good old pioneering spirit. Even though it is sort of a reverse pioneering.

...at the End of Days.

Perhaps we are not at the end of days at all.

Fandom reshapes itself, and we are the old farts who have difficulty keeping up.

As for pushing buttons. I found a button to push for this issue. It lit up and said; "Please don't push this button again!"

Rudi Gerstner, Asimov Basement Bar Bad Kreuznach, Germany

Earlier this year, on January 12th, Bettina Wurche raised an interesting question at the bar, after ordering a mango-lemonade without ice.

She asked why robots and cyborgs have a gender. You should have been there.

WolfEd: *Oh! Indeed. Well, the first robot (android) coming to mind is the female from Metropolis. And cyborgs..? Do Daleks have a gender?*



Artwork: Arthur Thomson, ATOM 1927-1990

John Purcell, Texas, USA

Well, I downloaded and printed out the latest issue of CounterClock for ease of reference as I write this loc, and that's always a good thing. It will also be a fine addition to my ever-growing fanzine collection.

I have to say that I really enjoyed the fan history angle the 23rd issue has, Wolf. Very interesting reading about Dutch and Flemish fandom during the 1950s and 1960s by Jaap Boekestein, which makes for an interesting counterpoint to a recent addition to my fan history books, Harry Warner, Jr.'s *A Wealth of Fable*, that just arrived last week. Warner doesn't spend much time or space discussing overseas fandom because his main focus is on American fandom of the 1950s, but he does devote a chapter on international fandom, so Jaap's article provides welcome and extensive additional information. The history of fandom is something that I find fascinating no matter the region under discussion. What I would like to see next - and I'm sure these exist already somewhere - is a history of German and Russian science fiction fandom; both nations have produced some excellent literature in the genre, and I would love to learn about those countries' fans.

Roelof Goudriaan's recounting of *Shards of Babel* was fun reading, as well, plus it is good to see his name again. Back around 1980 he and I traded fanzines, but I don't think he sent me *Shards*; I vaguely remember another fanzine he produced, one that had a cartoon dragon drawn on the front cover. I think. It had the word "New" in the title, but I'm not sure. It has been so long that it's hard to remember the exact title, but I'm fairly positive it wasn't *Shards of Babel* he traded. I sent him a rag called *This House* back then. Maybe he can enlighten me - and the rest of us, for that matter - of other fanzine titles he produced way back when.

Great photos of Wetzkon II, too. One of these years I would love to take a vacation in Europe and visit fans in the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and wend my way down to Italy. It would be a grand tour, no doubt taking a full month of travel, or at least two weeks. Probably once I retire, so that means we're looking at ten years from now. *sigh* I don't know if I want to wait that long.

Thank you for publishing CounterClock, Wolf, and I look forward to seeing the next issue. The 35th issue of my online fanzine Askance is almost done, and I really need to send you a copy of my paper-only zine Askew. The latter will require the purchasing of international postage, but fortunately a one-ounce envelope is affordable these days. Take care and keep pubbing.

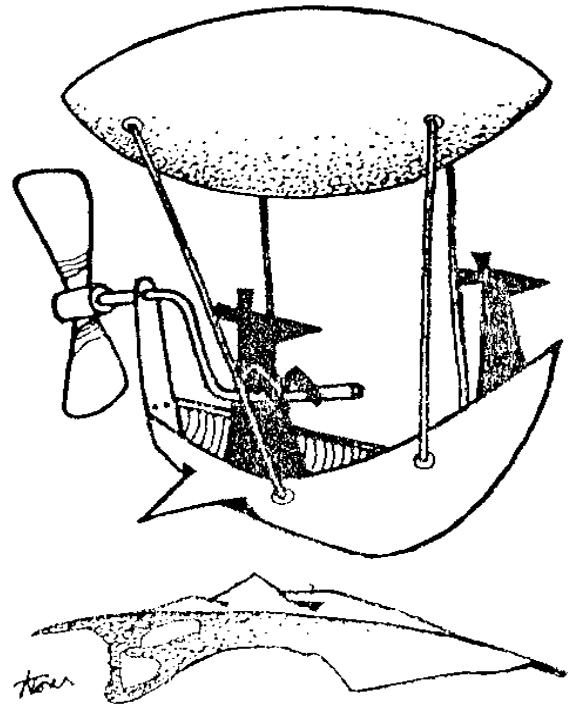
WolfEd: *If you liked the fan-historical angle of the previous issue, then I hope you will LOVE this one.*

I am surprised no one has thought of VfR as proto-fandom before. The more I read about them, the more they seemed like regular sf-fans to me.

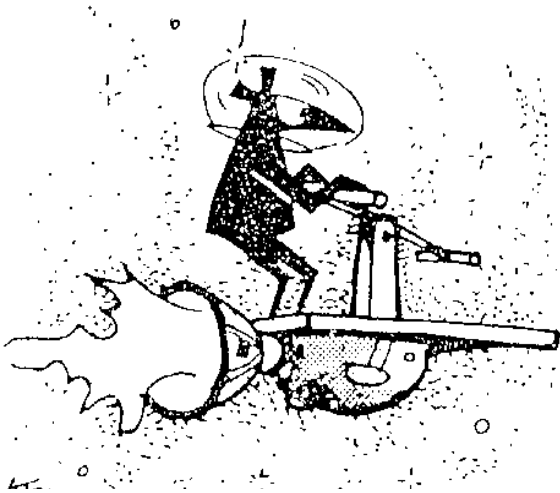
That is, until the Nazi's banned them and appropriated all rocket science for military use.

I have projected reading more fanzines in the future. Askance, Trapdoor, Broken Toys, etc I wish I could print and make books of them, but our flat is too small to allow for that as it is. And my eyes are no longer what they used to be. No problem reading at the computer though.

German sf-fandom was covered in #14, but Russian sf-fandom, now there's an idea!!!



Artwork: Arthur Thomson, ATOM 1927-1990



Artwork: Arthur Thomson, ATOM 1927-1990

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

November 17, 2015

I hope your birthday celebrations were great fun. And now, I hope it will be considered a late present, a letter of comment on CounterClock 23.

That is a great cover. A little dystopian, I remember something some years ago about advertisers looking to put huge ads on the face of the moon. SFnal, perhaps, but we live in an age where SFnal ideas are now an around-the-corner reality.

I wish global warming was SFnal...I have seen a detailed map of the world with sea level raised by a few metres, thanks to the ice caps in the Arctic and Antarctic being mostly melted. It's not just Europe who would suffer...most of the US east coast would be underwater, and New Orleans would see damages Hurricane Katrina couldn't have done. A question...you say that Dutch fandom is dying. Would it accurate or inaccurate to say that fandom as a whole is dying? It certainly has for me here in Toronto. Fandom seems to have become mostly passive mediafans looking for games, comics, anime, cosplay and Doctor Who, with a handful of literary fans who seem quite content to be obedient audiences for local writers. Few fans are actually doing anything anymore.

I still have all my copies of issues of Shards of Babel from Roelof Goudriaan. That kept me well-informed as to the state of European fandom. I figured that Kees was a Perry Rhodan fan, for I remember that parallel to the Worldcon was the Perry Rhodan Worldcon, and a peek inside made it look like a business meeting, which young men in suits, definitely outshining us rude fans in t-shirts and jeans. Can't believe it was 25 years ago, but there are still some good memories.

Good for you for going for TAFF again. Also, I wish I'd been able to get out to the local Toronto party that honoured TAFF winner Nina Horvath when she was here, but we could not go. I regret not going; I expect it would have been the only time I'd ever be able to meet here. I'm sorry, Nina.

This coming weekend is SFContario 6, which is also Convention 35, the 35th Canadian National Convention. I am not sure how much of it I am going to be able to go to, possibly Sunday, and then, possibly only for the Aurora Awards luncheon on that day. Both Yvonne and I are nominees, and we are hoping that we might bring at least one trophy home that day. Wish us luck!

Time to send this off. Yvonne is winding up her day at work, I am a house husband again, and I want to have some dinner ready for her when she gets home. Take care, and see you with the next issue.

WolfEd: *I hope you are not disappointed I didn't ask you to nominate me for TAFF again. I thought it tactically wiser to broaden the base and only keep JHH (since Sweden is the closest thing to a true home that I have). Thank you also for your LoC on Clockwise 2016. Since it never will have a LoCol I bring it here instead.*

The Dutch say, Dutch fandom is dying. Yet all the old Dutch sf-fans are still very much alive and well.

Some fandoms are on the rise, such as Greece, Croatia, Spain, Finland and even Sweden, which is fantastic!!! Gorfany is in a constant metamorphosis.

The old school is dying, the SFCD is losing ground, but fans in Leipzig, Dortmund, Cologne and around Frankfurt and Mainz probably don't experience their fandom as dying.

It's only us old wolves. But just look at the enormous herd of sheep!

LLOYD PENNEY on Clockwise # 2016:

February 18, 2016

Thank you for Clockwise 2016 A. I will keep that letter in there, for I think you might be preparing issue B. (Ah, yes, you are. Or hoping, anyway.) I know this is your TAFFzine for this time around, and I think you may have it this time. You will have our votes. I've just got to find a TAFF ballot or two, and mail them out. I might have to do it this way because you might not want to find some Canadian e-dollars amongst all the US\$ and GB£. We will see what we need to do. I think we have some American bucks lying around. In the meantime...

Great cover. Shows its age...besides all the streaking rockets, and the mountains of books, there's an old telephone on the desk. I see these, and feel a little old.

I believe in TAFF, it is a great way for fans to see that fandom is a world-wide phenomenon. Those fans are everywhere. I would like to see a Canadian

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win TAFF, too, and I think Murray Moore is the perfect candidate to do just that. He is retired, and would be able to look after the fund, and have the time to go, have a great time, write the trip report, and then promote it for future years and winners.

Indeed, you must have the time to manage the fund, but as you say, you need a change. When Yvonne and I won CUFF some years ago, we took the time to write our trip report, raise funds from their sales, and forward it to those who came after us. It was a great change, and a big chunk of money the fund needed.

You are quite welcome for the 2015 nomination. I am always afraid that any nomination from me means the candidate I have supported in this way is guaranteed to lose. That's another reason why I think you will win this time around.

Madness need not be a disease, but merely a different way of thinking about things. If my sister-in-law shakes her head at anything I might say, I know I am on the right track. She thinks Yvonne and I are crazy, but still envies us a little because of all the different things we are involved with.

I grew up with SF on TV and with SF anthologies from the public library, but not with comics. My parents didn't like them, and therefore, I shouldn't, either. I did have a few, but when I wasn't reading them, my mother threw them away. There were so many fields I wasn't exposed to in my formative years (comic books, gaming, the beginnings of Doctor Who, so much more), I didn't get into them, and I still haven't. I might be ignorant of these fields, but there's so much money I didn't spend, I guess... I cook at home, too. It allows Yvonne to concentrate on sewing projects. And, I do not drink. Well, I like Bailey's, and sweet sherris, and hard apple cider, but no beer or hard liquor. That's the main reason given for me not being a TAFF candidate.

Working with trains...I am sure you and James Bacon have a lot to share. I don't know anyone who works with CP, CN or VIA trains here, but I have at least travelled from Vancouver to Toronto via train, three times. Nothing beats that ride.

I do see the Jehovah's Witnesses on street corners here and there where I live, and there is a Kingdom Hall within walking distance. I also know a few Mormons, and I know the Mormons and the JWs are like fire and gasoline...they do not like one another. While any attempt to talk to the JWs has met with dislike and instant recruitment pitch, I have had great conversations with Mormon elders.

I did not know you were an exchange student here! I haven't been in Montréal in quite some time, but will be going to Ottawa this spring for a wedding.

I full agree with you on the TNG episodes you list...

Measure of a Man, The Inner Light, others were truly great. I really did like the New Twilight Zone, and even the newer TZ from around 2000. When it comes to movies, I have seen so few of them... we've been very particular, and we've benefitted from those hard choices.

Yvonne and I have made the decision, and we've made most of the preparations already, and paid for most of it...we will be spending the last half of August in England. We'll do lots of touristy stuff, plus spend a day at the big Harry Potter exhibits in Watford, north of London, and then go to Lincoln for The Asylum, the biggest steampunk event in the world. Expensive, but worth it, and I suspect we will not be doing any more travelling of any length after that. Retirement beckons, and we have to save as much as we can.

Done! Take care, and see you with whatever next issue you're thinking of. We must get with it, and make a TAFF vote soon.

WolfEd: *I can imagine how JW and Mormons could drive each other crazy. I am so cured now from my... excursion into the biblical spiritual world. It was quite educational though.*

Yesterday, late in the evening I got a 7-page technical translation to do. Italian to English. It also needed to be finished by today. This resulted in me going to bed at 03:00 AM and now I am sitting again until... well, maybe 02:00 AM, while I usually go to sleep between 22:30 and 23:15

My mind will be sort of... going into zombie-mode soon. Forgive me for replying shortly again.

Back-Cover: Barcelona Eurocon poster by Artist GoH: Enrique Corominas

PERRY RHODAN # 2841 brought a very positive short review of CounterClock # 23. We were delighted to read it and thank the chief editor of PR for his kind words.

WAHF: Klaus N Frick, Hermann Ritter, José Sanchez, Barbara Comelli, Rolf Strömngren (*whose LoC I found in time, but currently lack the strength and mental power to translate. Please, forgive me this time*).

Bee seeing you! - Wolf

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