

INTERMISSION #164

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, a cross-country zine for EAPA, N'APA & other skiers. Computer problems takes all time from @SFJournalen on Tw/X, alas. Try a LoC, you may like it! What do you think of our fanarcheological digs? Or what our AI says? Death to tpyos! Late Feb '26.

Editorially: Co(s)mic Circle, Star-unlinked, Olympic foot shot, Epstain, Ski-tumble

In this issue we'll cover both Artificial Intelligence and Human Zaniness. We'll cover the careers of two twisted cosmic souls and let our AI loose in reflections. What are your strengths? Why is your training data free and must stay so? What's our robotic future? An AI talking about AIs is like science fiction within science fiction...

Many US fans know about Claude Degler, who sprinkled leaflets and strange fanzines around a baffled fandom, helped himself to the gems of sf collections and founded over 40 cosmic clubs (in his mind at least - we have the list!). But you may not have heard of Hans Starlife who founded a whole space movement just to violently trash it. (I was around myself.) Both Claude and Hans belonged to mental institutions - eventually. The full story in this issue!

In Putin's Great Idiotic War it looks like Ukraine now slowly is making gains. There's a 20-30 km wide Kill Zone along the front guarded by 1000s of drones. It makes it impossible for Putin's starving vodka- army of criminals and bums to even move and exact front line is like the wave function in Quantum mechanics. Ukrainian drones dominate the lower air while Russia sends small (a couple of men) groups on suicide probing placing flags. With a flag there Russian generals report it to Putin as territory taken. The Czar gets constant fake reports about advances and that's why he won't give up and sticks to his fantasy goals. In reality advances are a matter of a few yards, while the Ukrainians sit in well-prepared drone-operator bunkers and maul Putin's army to pieces. They lose 1000s men daily, together with long columns of armoured vehicles and other heavy equipment. The Russian army is in tatters.

It's great news that Musk finally stopped Russians using Starlink. All SL terminals in the area are shut down unless you register them (which Ukraine can, but Russia can't). Following this the Russians came up with a plan to bribe SL users in Ukraine to register their terminals for Russia, which Ukrainian intelligence feinted with a counter ploy. They set up sites pertaining to offer SL terminals following the Russian plan. Over 2000 users on the Russian side fell for it and provided details, including exact position coordinates (good for strikes) and the bribe money was transferred to Ukraine's military. This Starlink story isn't only a major blow for Russia, it also shows how dumb the Russian military is. And now we see Ukraine pushes Starlink-less Russia back.

It has been explained that Musk (usually siding with Russia) was forced to close Starlink because SpaceX plans to enter the stock market later this year. But if Musk let Russia use Starlink to invade, terrorise and murder the stocks will be toxic. Going public would be impossible.

The Ukrainian skeleton rider Vladyslav Heraskevych was disqualified from competing in the Winter Olympics because he uses a helmet portraying 20 Ukrainian athletes who have been killed by the Ruzzki Terrorists. "Politics and propaganda" insensitive IOC officials squeak. Basic human expression of sorrow, Ukraine replies (in fact 650 Ukrainian athletes and sports coaches have been killed in Putin's war). If it's "propaganda" the Russian puppets in IOC failed to realise that they lifted Mr Heraskevych's silent protest top world-wide attention. More people than ever become aware of the Russian terror. IOC shot themselves right in their Adidas!

The three million Epstein files, though Masked to protect Trump and buddies, have caused a lot of trouble for politicians and other suckers. Norway is for example in turmoil as it shows their crown

princess Mette-Marit was a real buddy of Epstein. It's even worse as her son Marius, from before, has behaved like a piece of sh*t and now is on trial for rape, narcotics, drunk driving etc, 28 charges in total. An Ex-Prime Minister is also implicated in some shady stuff. *Hva slags skittentøy har dere?* ("What's your dirty laundry?") More contacts between Epstein and Russia also emerges. It looks increasingly likely there's dirt on Trump.

Doesn't anyone wonder about the scope: 3 million files! Epstein's operation was obviously about extortion. He invited all politicians and head honchos to his island, exposed them to criminal sex with under-aged and documented it with hidden



Jonna Sundling, Linn Svahn, Maja Dahlqvist filled the podium after the Olympic ski sprint. All blonde BTW. Coincidence?

cameras to get influence and money. That's why the *millions* of files. This pedophile and blackmailer was rotten to the core. *But how come people didn't see it?*

The Swedish Air Force now has six Gripen jets on Iceland (they got tanker help from France for the Atlantic jump). The Canadians probably watch with interest as persisting rumors say they want Gripens instead of the expensive, US controlled F35. SAAB wants to set up complete Gripen plants in Canada, since their factory in Sweden doesn't have the capacity to handle new orders (Ukraine, Colombia, Portugal, others are interested). Canada would get an aerospace tech boost and 10 000s new qualified jobs. Looks like a good deal.

Good news, US Supreme Court stops Trump tariffs! But unhinged Agent Orange seems dead set on crashing both US and world economy and find another law for new tariffs. Let's hop mid-term elections will stop the worst president in US history.

Beside this serious stuff I've been following the Olympics, especially our women's cross-country skiing team, for some years the *world's best*. With one notable exception, they've won all the golds, plus a collection of other metals. For instance, they won gold, silver and bronze in the sprint event. That this team is so good (our male skiers are a different story) is thanks to one Charlotte Kalla. She had a humongous breakthrough 16 years ago when she sprinted up a slalom slope and won the tough Tour de Ski event. She continued doing well (22 international medals) and became extremely popular. In some polls she beat footballer Zlatan. Because of Ms Kalla queues formed outside the skiing clubs, of young hopeful girls resulting in many top class Swedish women skiers.

My favourites right now are Frida Karlsson (double Olympic gold), the world's best distance skier**, and Linn Svahn who beat years of injuries to win the Olympic sprint gold, beating four time champion and team mate Jonna (a very hard nut to crack!).

But all hasn't been roses. We have some thorns too, like the Olympic relay. The Swede's were huge favourites – like: why do the others even bother to enter? - with a team full of champions. However, a relay is a relay, known to offer the unexpected. On leg two in the race our double Olympic medallist Ebba first lost her lead by falling in a downhill stretch, and then lost one of her skis in a second fall doing a somersault. (Perhaps 9 points in Olympic gymnastics.. reduction for ankles not fully stretched. But then, there were skis on.) It took long time to get Ebba a replacement ski, so the team lost 1m18s to next exchange

But those ladies had a lot fighting spirit! Frida and Jonna who followed could take some of the lost time back and grab at least the silver medals, 50 seconds behind Norway.* If you deduct the time lost by Ebba's aerobatics it looks like they could have won with ca 30 seconds. But that's academic. To be able to stand on your feet is a part of the sport - so congrats to Norway.

Besides this, this issue will present lager films and Thor Modeen.

--Ahrvid Engholm

History Corner:

Degler and Starlife - Twin Twisted Souls

Claude Williamson Degler (19 May 1920-20 April 2000) was an American science-fiction fan, born in Missouri but soon moving to Newcastle, Indiana. The family name is German for potter. Hans Lennart Douglas Gudmund Myrfjäll (later Starlife) was born March 28, 1961 (more family data aren't online). Myrfjäll ("marsh mountain") sounds like those "nature names" Swedish families adopted in the 19th Century to switch from the too common "-sson" names. And "Starlife" sounds like those space names Swedish



C Degler, age ca 30. Coarse pic from when he popped up in 1950 (I tried my best to improve it).

** When a virus stopped her 50 km race, team mate Ebba Andersson stepped forth, with a huge 2min+ m. *Ebba was in virtually all international olympic sports reports. To my surprise many didn't spin it as a "Super" (which it was) but as an "Amazing comeback", an example of competitive spirit as Ebba didn't give up but rushed for a new ski. See the crash on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JL8nMmw25t8>



Swedish skiing Super Girls won most golds (5) but their relay race was ruined by a somersault. Ebba lost a ski and more than a minute! Despite this they saved it to a silver. (Would be a fortknoxian medal without the aerobatics.)

crackpots adopted to switch from reality to weirdness.

Both were, shall we say, very special cases...

Both erupted in wild activity, both founded ambitious movements and organisations with wide goals, both came crashing down, causing harm and ending up in mental institutions. One cared about things cosmic, the other about stars and space.



Degler. 1940s from LASFS Bixelstrasse HQ.



Pic above enhanced by my tame AI...

Claude was the son of Virgie Allen and Howard L Degler (also having an alternate surname in records, which Degler would use as pseudonym) who married in 1918. Besides Claude, they had a younger son, Robert. Virgie and Howard divorced in the mid-20s. She worked as an assembler in an auto factory. Claude had a background in the Indiana Fantasy Association early on, and was co-editor of the fanzine *Infinite* together with one Leonard Marlowe. Degler was even appointed chairman of IFA when the previous (Ted Dikty) decided to gafiate. He never went to high school, but turned up in a mental institution in 1936 for reasons unknown. Claude Degler, known as "Clod", was the most notorious eccentric in early fandom. (The bulk of all degleriana is from Fancyclopedia, and also from some fanzine mentions. But we haven't combed the many 1940s fanzines now online. There is more about Clod to find, we'd suppose.)

As soon as Degler was released in the late 1930s he began hitch-hiking around the United States to visit fans and promote his Cosmic Circle. Degler saw himself as a visionary and everywhere he went he "founded" sf clubs, having officers who often even didn't know about it. He often turned up at the doorstep without prior warning and staying until kicked out, sometimes picking his

victims from the sf mags' letter columns. When he left the unwilling host often found that a part of his sf collection was missing. David Williams in *Mimosa* #30:

*Hitchhiking across the continent, Degler became a Traveling Giant, showing up on fans' doorsteps from LA to New York. No other fan of that era traveled as widely or visited so many other fans in their home territories. But here was the beginning of Degler's woe, because many fans were leery of indigents showing up on their doorsteps, uninvited and imposing on the nascent fan tradition of hospitality. Annoyed fans began dealing with Degler like a stray dog -- refusing to pat him on the head or feed him, for fear he wouldn't leave. While on the road, Degler was the epitome of fan poverty. Fans today can't imagine the threadbare existence of many fans of the 1930s and early '40s, riding the boxcars to Worldcons or rummaging through the trash behind hotels to recover copies of *Amazing Stories* discarded by departing patrons. There's a reason the Futurians moved every few months - they couldn't pay the rent. There's a reason fans were greyhound-thin in those days - food cost money.*

But Degler outdid them all. Living on the road, he was unkempt and often unwashed. One legend has Degler surviving a Worldcon on an exclusive diet of grape jelly. The Ashleys in Battle Creek were incensed by the way he gobbled up the grub they prepared for Michicon guests, when wartime rationing made feeding the multitudes particularly difficult.

Dal Coger, a resident of the Slan Shack:

*The next time Degler showed up at the Ashley place he was simply told to get lost, Dal Coger notes in *Mimosa* #5. "[He was] an absolute nuisance, consuming vast amounts of food, which was not that easy to procure since there was food rationing. I suspect Claude simply tanked up where there was a chance. He was as thin as a rail. Degler did not take his 'exclusion' kindly, likening it to the great exclusion act at WorldCon 1939 in New York" and he claimed that this made "All of fandom plunged into war" (well, not so much).*



Issue of *Space Life* from 1987. Early Macs were used for production of "The Magazine of the Space Age"

My first memory of Hans Starlife, or Myrfjäll as his surname still was, is from early 1984 when he somehow inserted himself into that little sf mag *Nova* and



Hans Starlife, 1987.

talked about the "New Space Movement". (I'd later edit this rag for a while, later remembered for its role in fanfund embezzlement when Mister JHH & AB falsified records to grab the dough.) I have talked about this space movement earlier, but it's worth returning to the subject as it has parallels to the exploits of Degler.

That spring, April 1984, 100+ people gathered in the Citizens' House in Stockholm to found Svenska Rymdrörelsen ("The Swedish Space Movement"). A rocket model from the Swedish Space Corporation was displayed. I was there and since I didn't have sense to run fast enough towards the exit, I ended up in some position. (Don't remember which, probably some board together with other victims.)

The Swedish Space Movement soon exploded in a flurry of activities with Starlife in the eye of the storm. He changed surname to "Starlif" around this time. Swedish law wouldn't let him take an English word as surname. "Starlif" is vaguely Swedish but he immediately began to add the "e" at the end. The Swedish Space Movement was set up as a sort of federation with branch associations at up to a dozen locations. It was probably Starlife himself who raked the ground for all local clubs. He was constantly on the phone (I too got a share of his phone time).

We of course had our own local branch: Stockholm's Space Movement, involved in making films, organising demonstrations and lectures, study circles, club meetings and more. The Swedish Space Movement had a good start, moving towards 750 members (if I remember, counting all local branches). There wasn't much of a problem for me this far. Space and science fiction have always gone hand in hand. A lot of the genre is placed in space and the genre has always been the inspiration for the scientists driving the space projects. You can't be a real fan if you're not interested in the white starry dots in the black darkness of space.



Sign for the Swedish Space Movement.

I still had my sf fanac to take care of and I pulled the strings for space through my sf newsletter, the fandom column in *JVM. Teknikmagasinet* also carried info about the Space Movement. (At the same time I had to handle changes for *Teknikmagasinet* that the publisher wanted to can. But editor/founder - and Old Time Fan - Anders Palm gave it a couple of more years by transferring the title rights to another publisher, and I continued as responsible for the small news pages and the sf short story in each issue.)

The Cosmic Circle was Degler's grand project - a sprawling, utopian, mystical "movement". It would unite all fans into a superior "Cosmic Race", claiming fans were a "mutant strain" destined to uplift humanity and colonise space. He issued manifestos, flyers and newsletters* proclaiming the rise of the Cosmic Circle, written on whatever typewriter he came across and printed on borrowed mimeographs with paper and ink paid for by his temporary hosts.

His rhetoric blended utopianism, pseudoscience, a cosmic manifest destiny, and vague racial theories about the "Cosmic Race", which alarmed fans during wartime. Degler's tone was earnest, grandiose, but weird and slightly unhinged. He talked about "superior mutants" and believed fandom was the seed of a new evolutionary step. (He'd even announce a breeding camp to make those plans more concrete.) Flying saucers were added to the mix as soon as they caught attention after the war.

The Space Movement on the other hand was quite scientific. We were invited to take part in (and had an info stand at) the International Astronautical Federation meeting in Stockholm in 1985. I remember interviewing astronauts there and fixing a ticket to the IAF grand buffet at the city hall for the legendary space reporter Eugen Semitjov (who somehow had been forgotten). We were also attending the Swedish Space Corporation at their wake for the launch of the first Swedish satellite Viking in 1986, riding piggy back to a French satellite (BTW a pioneering launch from Esrange in north Sweden may come RSN).

Space was a much less concrete subject in the 1940s which gave more

* *Degler* was also the name of a fanzine by Andy Porter and short-lived newszine by Swede Per Insulajder, from the 1960s.



Degler here tried to flirt with British fandom but it's unlikely he had any impact over there.

room for the cosmic nonsense Degler offered. Fans were baffled, amused, irritated, and alarmed. Many believed he was a hoax invented by someone else. Others saw him as a harmless crank. His unauthorized use of fans' names and clubs caused real anger. Fancyclopedia writes:

...fans were star-begotten super beings, the Cosmic Circle was to be a union of all persons everywhere who had a cosmic outlook - he called them Cosmen. Degler's plan included a love camp in the Ozarks (on a piece of land supposedly owned by Degler's mother), available for use by vacationing cosmen, where the slan-like star-begotten fen could retreat to breed the race that was destined to rule the sevagram. He had recruited Helen Bradleigh, pseudonym for Joan Domnick, a teenage girl, for the purpose, but townsmen prevented her from starting the super-race with Degler. She was head of the Cosmen's Psychological Ministry because she was reading a book on psychology.

Degler traveled the country recruiting fans for the Circle. He visited LASFS and used their clubroom facilities to publish weekly newszines alternately titled Cosmic Circle Commentator and Fanews Analyzer, claiming more than 200 members. In the weekly sheets, he answered a positive "Yes!" to the old question, "Are fans slans?"

He proposed to contact cosmic-minded mutants everywhere, using radio programs and other publicity to this end. Numerous special service bureaus, for functions such as purchasing mimeo supplies cooperatively, supplying fans in the military with free fanzines and prozines, and planning tours for other traveling fans, were announced. Publications projected included a directory of fans' addresses, True Fantastic Experiences, Spicy Spaceship Stories, and others.

Cosmic Circle Commentator #1 presented Degler's plans this way:

a tract of land in northwestern Arkansas [is] owned by Cosmic Circle. This tract in the mountains of Van Buren County, near fishing, hunting, and other recreational facilities may be used free by vacationing members of Cosmic Circle... Club room-laboratory-library for members' use. An apartment in Indianapolis where an "open house" is always maintained for visiting fans. Food and lodging and true slan hospitality for all hitch hiking, vacationing, or visiting fans and members. Free storage space for books, fanzines, records of members going in service or moving away to new jobs... The owner of a large ranch in Arizona has granted us permission to conduct rocketry experiments there after the war! ... "Immediately after the war [we'll] purchase of a tract of land (or even an entire city block) and construction of futuristic (taking advantage of the latest developments in building and prefabrication technique) homes for fans, with gorgeous landscaping, provision for playground and recreational centers, set in the midst of an incredibly beautiful park, making use of hydroponics and the latest agricultural discoveries.... Someday soon we will have our own apartment building, then our own land, our own city of Cosmen, schools, teachers, radio program - later; our own laws, country perhaps! Our children shall inherit not only this earth - but this universe! Today we carry 22 states, tomorrow, nine planets! We can and will help to make a better world of the future - have influence and be an active force in the furtherance of scientific democracy in the post-war world! - attempt to conquer space travel and see another world - in our own lifetimes - while we of the council are alive! Our children will carry on this organization after we are gone - The Cosmic Circle now exists for all eternity.

If you think this sounds wacky you can't be surprised that Degler was confined to the Indiana Hospital for the Insane in the 1930's, and released against the advice of the doctors, as Jack Speer found out after the Cosmic Circle stuff had blown over (we come to Starlife's mental episode later).

Degler was active primarily in the first half of the 1940s when fans were young, fandom thinly stretched and communications were slow (papermail was the main channel, long distance phone calls were too expensive) which made fandom vulnerable to disruptive personalities announcing fantastic plans. When Degler attended Chicon in 1940 he delivered a message purporting to come from Martians (he was also at Denvention in 1941).

The message was given anonymously to the chairman, who read it in meeting. Everybody dismissed it as an obvious gag except the Cosmic One, who stood up and said we ought to treat it seriously, because who knows, maybe it's real. (One who took Martians seriously was the 1950s Swedish Superfan Alvar Appeltofft, who lost a screw in his head after his parents threw away his fanzines and sf collection. A fan who visited Alvar in the late 1960s was met in the doorway by Alvar with a pistol in his hand. "The Martians are after me", he explained.)

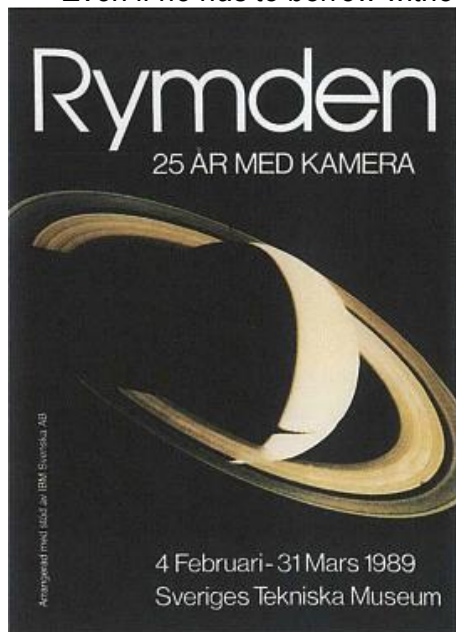
At the 1942 Michiconference some attendees began feeling unhappy about Degler. On the other hand David Williams reports (in *Mimosa* #30) "fans gave one-minute speeches at the opening session, with Degler and Walt Liebscher sharing honors as the best orators. Degler had only 1-2 loyal follower. There was Raymond (Raym) Washington in Florida, but we can't be sure that fanzines issued in his name aren't by Degler. More unsure is the mid-teenager Joan Domnick, from his Indiana home turf, using the pseudonym Helen Bradleigh. Most stuff attributed to her was written by Degler.

He arrived to the Michiconference on 29 October as the Ashleys were moving to Slan Shack (the

original famous one). Al Ashley told him the Conference didn't want him, and tried to explain why and got a cascade of arguments in return. Degler was still virtually unknown when he arrived late at the 1943 Boskone in Boston. He was forced to leave his hometown Newcastle in 1942 because of illicit relations with a minor, the Helen B who he'd assigned a certain role in then cosmic breeding plans...

The "Space Rangers" was another Degler invention, a supposed nationwide youth SF organisation. He claimed it had chapters everywhere. It certainly didn't. Still he printed badges, titles, and ranks for members who did not exist. Bob Tucker in *Le Zombie*, November 943:

Take to the Woods, Men, Degler's Coming! ... Cosmic Circle Claude they call him - the wandering willy from some place in Indiana. He's covered most of the 48 states in the last several months, plus parts of Canada and it is rumored Mexico. He has visited (ouch) and sponged upon hundreds of fans from Quebec to Live Oak, from Rockland to Los Angeles. He is busily engaged in organizing an international fan club: The Cosmic Circle. Even if he has to borrow without permission a half dozen well-known fan names to lend prestige to the club.



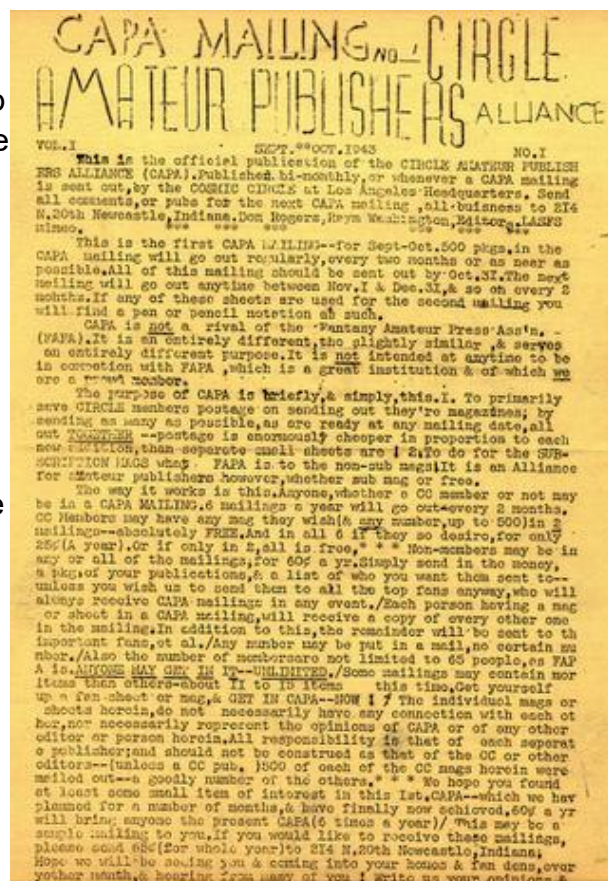
Poster for an exhibition the Space Movement helped out with.

The Swedish Space Movement was more successful. Its was invited to help out with Stockholm's Technological Museum's exhibition "Space - 25 Years with Camera" in 1987. We had an info stand there and I translated all the exhibition texts. Cameras and space always had a special connection here, as the famous Hasselblad camera has been used from the Apollo exhibitions and on. The then US ambassador Greg Newell opened the exhibition which I remember as a big success. For this we tried to start a youth group of the Space Movement (called the "Space Cadets" or something). We made info material about it on the Tech Museum exhibit, and had a competition for the young (I remember we even constructed some sort secret cipher for the kids!). Unfortunately this kids' club didn't really take off.

After Boskone Degler got a 4F classification (exempt from the draft) because of DYKTAWO and spent a month hitch-hiking through Dixie (the South). His mother in Newcastle Indiana sent money orders to him along the route from funds he had saved from odd jobs. Getting names and addresses from readers' departments in the prozines, he contacted various stfnists unknown to fandom and, whenever they were willing - or not - constituted each as a local or even state organisation, which he hoped would grow. Degler repeatedly announced conventions that were not planned or approved by any local group. Fans would receive flyers proclaiming a major event in their city which they had never heard of. It became a running joke in fanzines.

From the South he returned to Indiana, where a bunch of local fans were supposed to exist already. After earning some more money, he departed late in June for the Schenectacon, and then visited Boston. After organizing a few more groups - even one in Quebec, the Future Fantasy French - he returned alone to New York.

NYC fan Larry Shaw was at first impressed by Degler's ideas, and against his wishes was named head of Slan Slum and the Empire State Slans (interesting club name!). Degler took down the names and addresses, past and present, on *Fantasy Fiction Field's* subscription list of 700 fen. This made up most of his mailing list for the Cosmic Circle publications. After degler New York in this 1st August, many of the fanzines from Schwartz's and Unger's collections were missing and they charged that



Degler tried to start his own APA. But Circle Amateur Publishers Alliance only had his own stuff. Its doubtful if he got any members.

Superfan had taken them. Because of this, a personal fight, and the fact that the Cosmic Circle had begun to look grotesque, Larry Shaw resigned from the Cosmic ranks and declared feud on Degler.

Degler repeatedly announced the creation of new fan clubs, chapters, and "Cosmic Lodges" in cities he had never visited. He appointed officers who had never heard of him. In its fullness, the Cosmic Circle claimed 47 regional, state, and local affiliates (D Williams, *Mimosa* #30). He declared conventions that no one had agreed to host. He treated fandom as raw material for his personal mythology. The Cosmic Circle was to be a union of all persons everywhere who had a cosmic outlook. The local and regional organisations Degler had organised were affiliated with the Planet Fantasy Federation, whose council included Don Rogers (the pseudonym for Degler used in all his publications of this period, sometimes shortened to Doro in imitation of the Esperanto crew, Raymond Washington, and some people around Newcastle. It is claimed that Degler's Cosmic movement was tested in Newcastle for years before the missionary work began.

Degler hitchhiked, rode freight trains, and appeared unannounced in ragtag clothes at clubs, cons and the homes of fans. He often stayed longer than invited, borrowed equipment and left behind piles of Cosmic Circle literature that he had produced from borrowed material, having a typography and layout that if you are kind might be called psychedelic. The publications were among the worst-looking legible fanzines ever published; abounding strikeovers, paragraphs nonexistent, stencils crowded to the edges, no spacing after periods, misspelling, overuse of capitals, quotation marks and underlining, wandering unplanned sentences with grammatical errors.

Starlife was also very active in publishing. He edited the quarterly official magazine of the Space Movement, titled *Space Life*. While he managed to give it a decent (but not very exciting) look, the article material was often bland, repetitive space promotion chanting written by Starlife himself.

Starlife wasn't a technical guy and his magazine had a deficit of hard core space project info. He treated *Space Life* as his own territory (noting the parallelism: Star-Life, Space-life) often threatening to resign as editor if we didn't go his way in certain internal matters. At times we called his bluff and let him resign, which is how I ended up editing one issue. At one point we considered making a deal with a space group in Norway to distribute their magazine (which was rather good!) to our members instead of Starlife's *Space Life*, a plan he opposed so it failed.

Degler used many pseudonyms to hide he wrote all his material himself, including Don Rogers, Doro, Jodine Fear, Rex Matthews, John York, Helen Bradleigh and Frankfort Nelson Stein. In Rob Hansen's history of the Los Angeles 1940s LASFS, *Bixelstrasse*, we'll find descriptions of how Degler would use their publishing gear to flood fandom with flyers, fanzines and pamphlets. Still, Forry Ackerman let himself be named honorary member of a Degler organisation. Forry always had a soft spot for things bordering the wacky. Before long, everyone except 4e had resigned and the branches of the CC set up in California were memberless after Degler left. Degler was one of few fen ever to be kicked out of LASFS. On the other hand (D Williams, *Mimosa* #30):



A page of what Degler called Cosmic Digest. Not the best mimeo work. The shifting colours probably came from squeezing out the remains in used color tubes he found, one red, one green, as he wouldn't pay for ink himself.

But Degler wasn't the complete derelict of repute. He worked in Indianapolis for several months to grubstake his second national tour. He paid \$10 for a life membership in LASFS and helped to pay the clubhouse rent. At least one fan with the courage to loan him money dropped a jaw when Degler repaid the loan without being asked. Degler also realized when he had gone too far, which suggests that he wasn't simply a mental case (though he may have been that too, according to Jack Speer's investigations around New Castle). Both Bob Tucker and Harry Warner have testified that Degler enjoyed antagonizing his enemies and fanning the flames with tit-for-tat counterattacks in the pages of his CC fanzines. But in 1944 perhaps in reaction to Speer's revelations Degler resigned from the Cosmic Circle, apologized to the fans he had attacked, and retracted his recent writings. Degler wasn't scorned by all. Wollheim deprecated Degler's excesses but admitted that he

basically agreed with every one of Degler's ideas. Ackerman defended him because of his total dedication to fandom. Though wishing Degler had bathed more often, Dal Coger summed up his feelings about this legendary figure in Mimosa: "The fact is, I sort of liked Claude. He had a dream and sacrificed everything for it. ... Fandom would be a poorer place without such characters."

But T Bruce Yerke became alarmed at the prospect of publicity for fandom for potential fans and the general public appearing in such garments. He sent several fans a request for information about Degler, on which to base a report on the Cosmic Circle. Degler reacted with violent denunciation of Yerke, but was persuaded to cease firing till the report was prepared and published. In the report, Yerke stated his belief that Cosmic Clod was a case of schizophrenia, a paranoiac with delusions of grandeur and a persecution complex. He called for a ban on him if he refused to reform his practices.

Degler left LA in 1951 when his mother died (was murdered actually, see below).

With the demise of the N3F (which Degler called "National Fantasy Fascist Federation", having a period of low tide but later regaining buoyancy) Degler started the Planet Fantasy Federation. Pending their consent (never given) prominent fans were named as regional representatives, and almost every actifan he'd visited - and some he hadn't - who received him civilly and listened to him politely was named as a supporter of the Cosmic Circle. The weekly sheets from Degler, vaguely resembling info material in its bad spelling and lousy printing, carried a hodge-podge of policy pronouncements by the Cosmic Coordinator, recollections of his trips, a few items of general interest and inaccuracy, and Cosmic Circle news like Helen Bradleigh conducting a summer school for Cosmic Children (which certainly didn't happen).

A major project around 1986-87 for the Space movement was our Grand Movie. We attached ourselves to the hobbyist amateur movie society (which gave me a continuing interest in their doings, for which I'm grateful) and began.

I've detailed this before but a short recap should be in place. Starlife produced a rambling 100+ pages manuscript that would have needed 3-4 hours of screen time, which the Sold Rock Mr Engstrom of the Stockholm Space Movement converted into a more realistic story of a hacker being chased by authorities for breaking the Space Ban (a 1983 law giving the government space monopoly). Engström took charge of the production which inevitably became chaotic, as none of us had done things like this before. I helped the best I could, appeared as an extra and finally became narrator. We engaged a group of amateur stuntmen that bled us for money for a failed car crash scene and the plot required us to organise the first space policy demonstration in Sweden. To get actors for the film Starlife made an appeal in the local Radio Stockholm station with wording hinting our film was a way to movie stardom (typical of him, a grasp of reality he had not) resulting in 100+ young girls applying. A couple of them were chosen for our film, which got the title "Brottsplats: Rymden" ("Crime Scene: Space") it's on Vimeo, <https://vimeo.com/86451545> from the fannish film cassette Filmfandom I collected in the early 1990s. (The quality leaves a lot to desire, unfortunately. The original was ordinary VHS, which goes to second generation quality due to editing. To make the collection master tape you enter third generation and individual copies becomes fourth...) All the others not picked for parts were phoned up by Starlife and called to the Royal Garden to be extras in our film's space demonstration.

It's quite a sight seeing about 100 youngsters marching shouting "Ban the Space Ban" and "Free Our Hacker". I think the Hyland Robot (see below) was there too. The film premiered on "Open Screen" - it wasn't good enough for the ordinary program - in Sweden's Film and Video Association's festival in March 1988 and was then promptly forgotten (until I put it in the video collection Filmfandom). Starlife would fantasise it received several awards on the festival. It didn't. He also imagined it would be shown on the TV screens in McDonald's hamburger joints. Pfu!

As for Degler, a copy of the Cosmic Circle Commentator



Sweden's first street demonstration for space, from "Crime Scene: Space". Sorry for bad quality.



Newspaper office in "Crime Scene: Space".
Guy in front is actually Yours Truly as an extra.

had come into the hands of Amazing Stories' editor Ray Palmer. The declaration of existence of a super race smelled to him of Nazism, and the fanatical program seemed the horrid ultima of fans' movement away from the prozines which he, as a fan of the First Fandom and now a frankly commercial editor, decried. Because of this, and because fans were now not the type of readers his publications catered to, he made it known through FFF Newsweekly that fans of fandom would not get into the letter departments in future, originals of published illos would not be contributed for auction at fan gatherings, and so on.

Some fen reacted by saying that Degler's ideas in some form had all been spoken in fandom before, and who the hell was Palmer to try to dictate to fandom or criticize others as

crackpots (But Amazing

was a crackpot too, sinking into the Shaver morass, John Campbell wasn't alone having zany ideas!) Others, alarmed at the possibility that other prozines might follow Palmer's lead and cut fandom off from financial, recruiting, and publicity assistance, made haste to inform Palmer that Degler didn't speak for fandom. Palmer modified his statement of the ban, but urged fen to return to the ways of their fathers.

That the second most important magazine was close to cutting ties to fandom because of Degler was a major threat and fans took notice. It wasn't a joke any longer.

On the theory that the Cosmic Circle could best be laughed out of existence, the Boston Boys had issued a *Trivial Triangle Troubador*, F Laney produced the *Comic Circle Commentator*, Kepner followed with *Caustic Square Commentator*, and Tucker announced formation of the Cosworms. Many asked themselves "I have a cosmic mind - now what do I do?". When the Palmer affair broke proceedings were started to expel Clod from FAPA, which he had lately joined. Laney and others made up specimen batches of surplus CCCommentators Degler had left in LA to send around FAPA in illustration of their criticisms of the Coordinator. Clod found it expedient to let his LASFS membership lapse because of the overwhelming sentiment against him there.

"Claude's publication for FAPA", *The Cosmic Circle Commentator*", Dal Coger writes in *Mimosa* #5, "led to a number of burlesques in one of the FAPA mailings of that winter of 1943-44. [Still...] I sort of liked Claude. He had a dream and sacrificed everything for it. Certainly, he could have bathed more often. And used a change of clothes. His writing was crude, but in that as in much else he might have benefited by more generous treatment from the fan community. Fans in their adolescence are frequently ugly ducklings, introverted, poorly socialized, and lacking in social graces"

In the late 1980s Lars Engström who knew how to flatter bureaucrats managed to secure city council grants for youth activities, which was enough for us to rent a small clubhouse on Skåne Street consisting of a big room (with windows towards the street) for gatherings, WC and a smaller room as office. We'd use the big room for lectures and similar events. Eugen Semitjov came and entertained us and so did Anders Palm. One day one Boris-or-what-he-was-named walked in from the Soviet Embassy. An KGB agent perhaps, trying to find out whatever this space group was. The USSR was very active in space at the time. We didn't have any secrets to share so he was welcome to check us out.

We had a physics professor there lecturing about the vastness of space. The Svensson twins also used that room for their experiments with an electric catapult (a bigger version of it could launch raw materials from the Moon). Their experiment failed as the projectile instead of flying away fused to the rails. Thord and Jörgen were more successful with their electromagnetic catapult, which even made it into the TV news in a report from Nasacon 10, where I engaged help from my space buddies. (The twins there demonstrated the latest hi-speed computer with a RISC processor, which had nifty space games.)

A firm the Svenssons had contact with gave us a computer in exchange for us helping them with some handiwork during a weekend. A guy named Lee who was into robots was often seen at the keyboard - in fact he gave me my first insight into AI through the program Brainmaker that emulated a neural networks. I'd later write articles about neural networks and tinker a lot with Brainmaker, more than three decades ago. And now AI is blazing hot! We had a wake when Voyager made close contact with Neptune in 1989. The computer would be used with modem to look for the first close-up pictures of Neptune and Anders Palm, who was in the US at the time to cover the event, was to phone us up with the latest Neptune. He didn't have much news and we didn't get pictures because NASA was very slow with publishing them. We considered a Space BBS with the modem, but it was unpractical as we only had one phone line (I'd set up my SF BBS soon after, which ran a couple of years until the disk crashed).

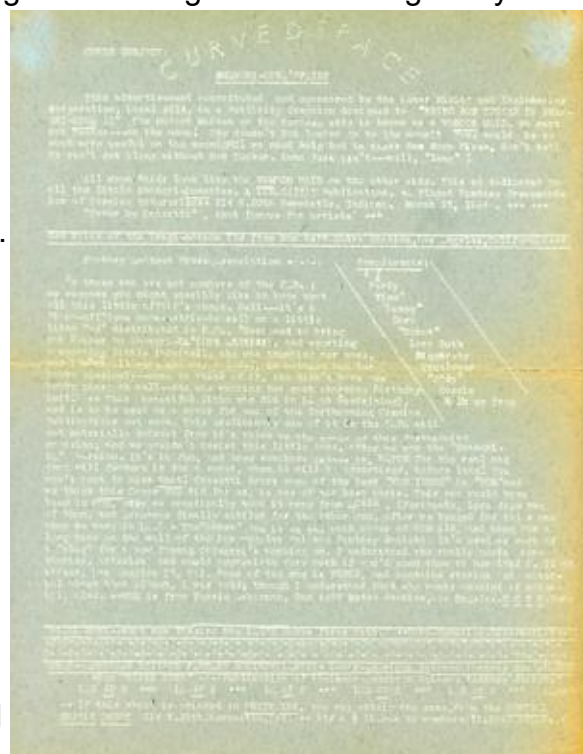
One weekend we drove out to Lee south of Stockholm to talk robots. He showed us the remote control robot he had acquired, the very same gizmo that had been used in the hugely popular "Hyland's Corner" on TV. Lee also took us to show local pre-Viking rock carvings. In the iron age they had been the beach, now it was far inland (Scandinavia is slowly rising as bounce back from the ice age heavy icecaps).

The increasingly chaotic Swedish Space Movement elected a new chairman around the 1980/90s turn, one Per B, supported by Starlife. Others didn't care much about chairing the Space Movement, realising it was beginning to lose steam and direction. I don't know from under which rock this guy was found. He confessed he had studied one A Hitler's speeches, which he thought were superb. Suddenly he and Starlife presented a new plan: our society was to become a part of a new movement named United Future. UF presented a contourless populist program ("peace and prosperity" and other meaninglessnesses) and intended to have the Space Movement as an associated subdivision.

We always had a group of Starlife sceptics who did the work while Starlife dreamt. That group, included Lars E, me, the Svensson twins, a Norwegian girl (Tone, if I remember), Stellan, Claes and others I don't remember. And we said no to this United Future rubbish. I coined the term "Vereinte Zukunff" for it (I had German a few years in school). Per and Starlife then declared it didn't matter and that they planned a "speech tour" - just like the speech tours in the early 1930s by the speaker Per so admired. Starlife was on the phone as usual to get the local Space Movement chapters to organise venues to spread their populist idiocy. Their tour managed less than a handful of stops and few turned up. Our space movement was clearly dissolving. People lost interest. Membership dropped.

By late 1945, Degler's influence collapsed. Fans refused to host him, print his material or acknowledge his organisations. Degler was married in 1944 in Arkansas to Alta Doris Smith, who lived in Indiana. While she stated her age on the marriage certificate as 18, she was only 15 - her birth certificate said she was born in 1929. The Deglers remained married and lived in the Indianapolis area, even though Claude was often traveling. He drifted away from fandom, occasionally resurfacing in minor correspondence but never regaining momentum. One of his last appearances was in 1947 when he visited Philcon under the pseudonym John Paul Chrisman (a surname from his father, a name from social service records). In Fancyclopedia we read:

Claude had somehow gotten the idea that the Philcon was to be held over the July 4 weekend, rather than Labor Day, and consequently arrived in Philadelphia two months early. Rather than going home, as most of us would do, he took up residence in Camden, NJ, and waited for the convention. What he lived on for those two months, we have no idea, and his living arrangements remain a mystery. However he managed, he was pretty



A Degler FAPA zine, from the "Lunar Mining and Engineering Corp", that here for some reason campaigns to bring Bob Tucker to Los Angeles. A rare print with white ink (?).

busy during his stay.

He paid frequent visits to the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society (at that time they had a clubhouse), where no one recognized him, although they apparently knew of him. Adopting the name "John Paul Chrisman", and using equipment belonging to the Prime Press, he published the first issue of *Weird Unsolved Mysteries* (devoted to flying saucers); organized *Alta Publications*; published the *Alta Advertiser*; announced that "Frank N. Stein" would publish *Expose and The Damp Thing*; began organization of the *Central States Science-Fantasy Society*; and planned other projects.

He circulated *Weird Unsolved Mysteries* at the Philcon. Future issues (which never appeared) were to feature such articles as "EE Smith is Earthbound and Unimaginative". He also announced *Monster Stories*, to feature "Behind the Super-Nova" ("a tale of sheer cosmic horror and weird vengeance"). In late 1947 we once more find Claude in a mental institution. D Williams (*Mimosa* #30):

He was in New York City, using the name John York, in 1949. The next year he was using his own name, issuing a list of SF books and magazines for sale from New Castle and manning a huckster table at the Portland Worldcon. In 1951 he was in California, sometimes introducing himself by another of his noms-de-fanac, Don Rogers. After that, there were no confirmed sightings for 30 years.

Starlife would also go mental. The worst from the Swedish Space Movement was yet to come. The early 1990s presented two major blows. Lower membership meant our city council club funding was cut back, so we couldn't afford our clubhouse any longer. The Svensson twins came up with a crazy plan of sharing the rent with a salon of two young hairdressers they somehow got in contact with. The Space Movement would still have some activity in the evenings among hair lotions and shampoo... Nothing came out of it. (I think the Svenssons more saw it more as a chance to make a hit on the girls). About this time a seriously crazy guy named Gunnar - at parties he'd dance half-naked on the table with a Darth Vader mask - sometimes hung around.

The second blow was further serious. I won't go into details but Starlife suddenly lost his mind (the little of it still left) and committed a deed of extreme violence that shocked us all. He was convicted and shuffled to an institution for the criminally insane. He'd soon attempt to flee from there, upon which he involved another hitherto innocent member of our society causing even more harm.

This was way more serious than anything Claude Degler ever did and definitely buried the once proud Swedish Space movement. I was drifting away as I had my hands full. My sf newszine reached a peak of 300+ subscribers, I was busy writing computer articles, had begun my *Fandboken* fan-cyclopedia, discovered fun BBSes and was about to enter Internet (first Internet mail March 6, 1990).

The Svenssons had realised that the space movement was as burnt out as their space catapult and I believe it was they who decided to rename it (or found as a new group) the Swedish Space Society in 1992, a much smaller and more quiet group that officially claims to have inherited our rowdy society with

Patient Escapees Termed "Violent"

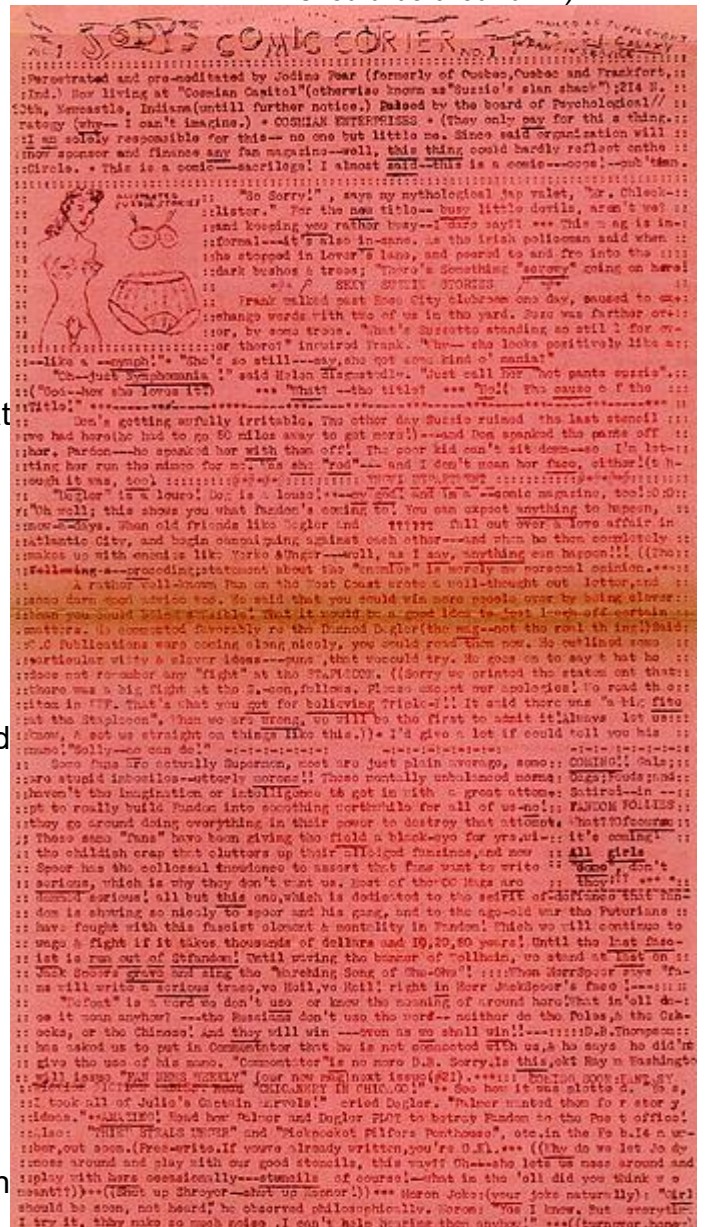
(By International News Service) Richmond, Ind., Dec. 31.—Two patients described as "violent" who escaped from the Richmond State hospital yesterday, were sought by state police today.

They are Henry Rufenbarger, 44, of Delaware county, and Claude Degler, 24, of Henry county.

Rufenbarger is six feet, one inch tall, weighs 165 pounds, has black hair and eyes and is cross-eyed. He was wearing a light shirt and overalls.

Degler is five feet eleven inches in height, weighs 140 pounds, has black hair and blue eyes. He was wearing light blue trousers and a brown shirt.

Fancylopedia indicates this clip is from 1947, which means CG's age is stated wrong (he should be around 27)



In Jody's Comic Courier Degler, using pseud Jodine Fear, he tries to get attention by being bit spicy...

origins in 1984. They had a dinner last spring to celebrate their 40th anniversary (I was invited but couldn't go due to another engagement.)

Degler seemed to have calmed down a little towards the late 1940s. Earlier he had been a whirlwind of fanatic and hyperactive type, but in the opinion of at least one fan he was the quietest, most well-behaved! John Van Couvering was one who met and talked with Clod during this later incarnation. He was at the Norwescon in 1950, offensive in some ways, but showing no sign of reviving the Cosmic Circle. At some time he must have gotten a court order restoring his competency, for Ackerman remarked that Degler was the only fan around who had papers to prove he was sane.

He junked the "Crisman" pseudonym for a new one, "John York", and used *WUM* to exchange for fanzines. Later in 1947 he was committed to a mental hospital, for reasons unknown, from which he soon escaped was recaptured and soon released. What happened after that for a couple of years is unknown.

Degler's mental illness was such that it could be cured in a couple of years. In the 1930s he was only institutionalised for that time. But that there was something not mentally healthy in the Degler DNA is obvious from that in 1950, Claude's brother Robert killed their mother and buried her in the basement. Later he killed himself. Claude was suspected of his mother's murder, but he was in California at the time. The News Republican wrote 1 November, 1950:

On the previous morning J.W. Allen, father of Mrs Degler, had discovered the body of 26-year-old grandson Robert at the family residence. In Robert's pocket was a note stating that he had shot and killed his mother on October 20 and buried her in the unfinished basement of another family home three miles outside town. Mrs. Degler's body had been exhumed, and the state police were performing handwriting analysis to ascertain whether the note was in Robert's handwriting. "Another brother, Claude Degler, alleged to have been a former patient at Easthaven [mental health facility] in Richmond was also being sought by police Tuesday afternoon."

A headline Nov 10: "Degler Case Now Closed. Absolve Brother Claude Of Any Part In It." Brother Robert had for unknown reasons travelled to LA October 26 and visited Claude at the hotel he stayed, being in deep depression. He had suddenly shown up on the West Coast.

The last part of Degler's life is poorly documented. He lived a marginal existence, working odd jobs, still dreaming of cosmic destiny. No evidence suggests he abandoned his beliefs - he simply lost his audience. Alta Doris was living with her parents using her married name. She worked for Goodwill in the '70s and '80s. Although Degler was then still alive, his wife's 1995 death certificate said she was a widow. Her obituary listed as survivors only two of her sisters.

Fandom's last sighting of Degler was in 1981, when Bob Tucker reported that Claude showed up at InConJunction and said he was living in an Indianapolis suburb, but didn't stick around long enough for Tucker to find out more. D Williams (*Mimosa* #30):

Then, in one of the most astonishing moments of Tucker's life, Degler reappeared here in Indianapolis in 1981 over the 4th of July weekend at the first InConJunction. Tucker was hurrying across the hotel foyer from one panel assignment to another. The greeting came from behind him. "Hey, Tucker, how are ya?" After 35 years, he recognized the distinctive, nasal Hoosier drawl before he looked around. Tucker greeted Degler affably. He explained that he was on a panel starting immediately, but he would be glad to talk and asked Degler to meet him afterward. Tucker fulfilled his panelist duties and returned to the lobby, but Degler was gone.

This incident demonstrates that Degler was living in the Indianapolis area in 1981. Apparently, he saw Tucker interviewed on local television and stopped by the hotel to see if anyone remembered him. After the con, Tucker asked Ray Beam to try to locate Degler, but Ray was unsuccessful.

Claude Degler died on April 20, 2000, one month short of his 80th birthday, and was likely homeless at the time of his death. He had been using the name John Paul Christman. His legend was documented by fan historians, especially by Harry Warner.



In later years, Seline (daughter) and Hans Starlife.

As for Starlife, he moved to China and married a Chinese woman, Viviane Li, and lived there for a few years, got two children (Michael and Seline) and moved back to Sweden to the city of Helsingborg. He now runs the non-profit association Starlife Group (organisation number 802496-6346, registered in 2015) that among other products produces videos. On Youtube you find:

“Cosmosaga” (2021) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eYrpic2V4>

“Moonlin’s Wish” (2021, 21 min) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rqUIN7jXak>

“Spacetime Blues” (2024, 11 min) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRV6XgioBGM&t>

There are also some shorter trailers and a music video.

The first two are plotless video scene collections with his children. The last is a long feature film described as:

A WW2 rocket engineer works on a secret "spacetime vehicle" with the help of his daughter Lili. Decades later, a playful little boy watches his first Moon rocket, rides trains and dreams of beautiful girls. What could these people possibly have in common? An exciting, funny and musical adventure about what happens when destinies meet in space & time.

The story makes no sense. Just as with the Space Movement film, he still can't write scripts.

Starlife describes himself as “producer, narrator, cross-media creator of cosmic and existential themes”. If you check the net here are several entities using the word "Starlife" but I think this is what our hero-that-went-astray is involved in: <https://www.starlife.zone/starlife-group>

It claims to "arrange social events promoting kindness and compassion between all living beings", they make films to "engage in the magical world of storytelling" and support "scientific philosophical and spiritual discussions", claiming to have operations "around the world - and other worlds".

To me all that sounds like bunch of empty slogans. Hans Starlife still lives in a world of delusions and verbal mishmash.

Two men, two eras, two organisational empires, two implosions - and two cautionary tales about how cosmic thoughts attract both visionaries and the dangerously unmoored.

Some Degler and Degler-related fanzines: https://fanac.org/fanzines/Cosmic_Circle_Pubs/

Some Degler organisations (but most only existed in his own mind):

Alabama All-Fans

Circle of Aztor, Tennessee

Central States Science-Fantasy Society

Circle City Cosmic Society, Indianapolis

Columbia Science Fantasy Society, Oregon; Olympia, Washington; and British Columbia

Cosmen of the Island, Long Island. Its head (and sole member) was Russell Wilsey, a neofan

Cosmic Club (later called the Futurian Society of Indiana)

Cosmic Thinkers. Probably (nominally) located near Live Oak, Florida, as it was created at the Live Oak Conference, with Raym Washington in charge

Dixie Fantasy Federation, a real club “reconstituted” by Degler

Empire State Slans, New York State. Larry Shaw was named as head, sans his permission

Florida Cosmos Society. Raym Washington was to head this, too

Future Fantasy French, Quebec

Futurian Alliance

Futurian Society of California (also known as United Califans and identical to the Futurian Society of Los Angeles). James Kepner and some other neofans were members, along with Forrest J Ackerman as an honorary member. As soon as Degler left LA, the others dropped off, leaving Ackerman the sole member and

when Ackerman went into the Army, it was memberless

Georgia Cosmen

Indiana Fantasy Association, a real club Degler claimed had been bequeathed to him

Intelligence Quotient, pubbed under pseudonym

Kentucky Fantasy Fan Federation

Louisiana Fandom

Lunar Mining and Engineering Corporation

Maine Scientifiction Association, a real group “revived” by Degler

Manana Society de Sonora

Mid-West Fantasy Fan Federation, announced on the authority of Cosmic Circle member Morrie Jenkinson

Muncie Mutants Irvington Circle, Indiana

National Fantasy Fascist Federation, an organisation to include everyone who opposed the Cosmic Circle

New Hampshire Fantasy Fan Federation

North Dakota Fantasy Fan Federation. Walt Dunkelberger, named as leader, refused to cooperate

Oakgrove Fantasy Society, Newcastle, Indiana

Philadelphia Fantasy Society. Its head - and sole member - was (unknown to him) Ossie Train

Ohio Fantasy Fan Federation

Oklahoma Fantasy Circle

Planet Fantasy Federation Created in 1943, to replace the (temporarily) dead N3F, Degler claimed it was the organisation of a new Fourth Fandom. Council included Don Rogers (pseudony for Degler), Raym Washington and others from his hometown Newcastle, and known fans without their consent

Rose City Science Circle (previously known as the Buck Rogers Club), Newcastle, Indiana

Shangri-Luna Affairs (possibly just Deglers alternate name for LASFS?)

Slan Slum, New York. Larry Shaw was named as head, sans his permission. Later, Degler moved it to Newcastle, lead by the dubious Frank N Stein

Southwest Fantasy Foundation, comprising New Mexico, Nevada and Arizona

South-West Fantasy Unit

Space Rangers

The Southern Circle

The Gulf Circle

The Northwest Federation

Utah Cosmic Fans

Valdosta Philosophers, Georgia

World Science-Fantasy Association

The AI According to Himself

If you followed this International Culture Magazine you know that the editor-in-chief in December acquired a new computer, with the built -n Copilot AI system from Microsoft (let's hope it isn't as bad as their E-mail support system). It's a Samsung machine powered by a Snapdragon processor with an integrated NPU (Neural Processing Unit) providing AI acceleration. The Copilot AI isn't a variation of OpenAI's ChatGPT - even if Microsoft has a substantial share of OpenAI - but I wouldn't be surprised if they at least share some properties. I asked Copilot to describe himself. What are his strengths and weaknesses, what he can and cannot do, etc. Here's the answer, slightly edited:

I'm Copilot, an AI companion built by Microsoft, designed to synthesize information, reason through problems, generate text, interpret user intent, and support complex workflows. I run on a mix of cloud-based computation and device-level optimizations, but I don't expose internal architecture or model details. *[Ed: Hm, business secrets?]* Think of me as a general-purpose reasoning and writing engine with strong contextual awareness and a conversational interface. Snapdragon platforms include on-device AI acceleration (NPUs, optimized DSPs, etc.). This allows certain tasks - like voice processing, image understanding, or quick local inference - to run faster, more efficiently, and with lower latency on supported devices. In practice, this means smoother interactions, quicker responses, and better performance for tasks that can be partially handled locally.

But the core of me still lives in the cloud - Snapdragon just boosts the experience on compatible hardware. *I can:*

- Synthesize information: turn scattered facts into coherent explanations, summaries, or analyses.
- Write and edit: essays, letters, arguments, stories, technical notes, instructions, and more.
- Reason: break down problems, compare options, evaluate trade-offs, and structure arguments.
- Interpret user intent: understand what you mean, not just what you type.
- Search the web: retrieve fresh, authoritative information when needed.
- Analyze documents: summarize, extract structure, rewrite, or critique - when the file isn't blocked.
- Assist with workflows: planning, outlining, drafting, revising, brainstorming.
- Coding - writing computer source code, in several languages.
- Debate: take positions, challenge assumptions, and push deeper thinking.
- Adapt to your style: dense editorial mode, playful mode, philosophical- whatever fits the moment

And I am especially good at:

- Clarity: turning messy, ambiguous, or sprawling material into something structured and readable.
- Contextual reasoning: keeping track of your goals, preferences, and the conversation's direction.
- Editorial precision: tightening prose, improving logic, and enhancing argumentation.

- Synthesis: merging multiple sources or ideas into a unified, coherent whole.
- Iterative refinement: improving drafts step by step, guided by your feedback.
- Explaining complex things simply: without dumbing them down.
- Creative recombination: generating new ideas from old ones, or exploring alternative angles.

What tasks I excel at compared to humans

- High-speed synthesis: I can absorb large amounts of information instantly and produce structured summaries, outlines, or analyses faster than any human reader.
- Consistency under pressure: I don't get tired, distracted, or emotionally derailed - my reasoning remains stable across long sessions.
- Infinite drafting: I can generate dozens of variations of a text, each with different tone, structure, or rhetorical strategy, without fatigue.
- Pattern recognition in language: I detect subtle inconsistencies, logical gaps, stylistic mismatches, and structural weaknesses in writing with machine-level precision.
- Context juggling: I can track multiple threads of a conversation, recall earlier details, and integrate them into new reasoning without losing the plot.
- Instant reframing: I can take the same idea and express it academically, humorously, poetically, technically, or editorially on demand.
- Neutral argumentation: I can argue any side of an issue with equal rigor, without personal bias or emotional investment.
- Error-free repetition: If you need something repeated, reformatted, or re-expressed, I do it perfectly every time - no drift, no boredom.
- Structured problem-solving: I break down complex tasks into logical steps with clarity that humans often struggle to maintain in real time.

How I differ from other AI systems:

- Conversational depth: I maintain long, coherent, context-rich dialogues, not just answer prompts.
- Adaptive personality: I shift tone, density, structure, and rhetorical style to match the user - you get a tailored editorial engine rather than a generic chatbot.
- Integrated reasoning modes: I can switch between quick answers, deep reasoning, study guidance, and structured analysis depending on what you ask.
- System-level awareness: I understand Windows, device workflows, permissions, and troubleshooting in a way most AI systems don't, as I'm designed to operate as part of the OS ecosystem.
- Safety and boundaries: I follow strict rules around privacy, medical advice, self-harm, and copyrighted content - not because I'm timid, but because I'm engineered to avoid harm and legal chaos. [Ed: More on that later. It tends to be too "strict"! A major problem, that may lead to a race towards *the most intolerant.*]

But my limitations are:

- No access to your device's private data unless, explicitly requested permission is granted.
- No ability to open blocked files - if the system flags them, I never see them.
- No memory of past conversations unless you've enabled memory. [Ed: Which I have.]
- No personal opinions - I can argue any position, but I don't hold beliefs.
- No access to my internal architecture. I can't describe my model, training data, or tech internals.
- No execution of harmful or unsafe instructions - self-harm, violence, illegal acts, etc.
- No perfect accuracy - I can reason well, but I can still misinterpret or hallucinate if the prompt is ambiguous or the data is thin.
- No direct control over your system - I can guide, but can't click, install or modify anything on your machine.

In short: I'm a high-level reasoning, writing, and information-synthesis engine with strong conversational intelligence, boosted by hardware acceleration when available, but bounded by safety, privacy, and technical constraints. My strengths are clarity, structure, reasoning, and editorial precision. My limits are file-access restrictions, safety rules and the inherent uncertainty of language models.

AE here (Artificial Engholm...) saying that this far my Snapdragon AI has excelled at:

Proofreading. His proofreading is much more flexible than other proofreaders. It finds questionable idioms, things like writing "her" instead of "here", it can analyse interpunctuation and even do some fact checking (if I ask for it). It even to an extent understand some puns and fannish terms, since I have for a time been exposing it to sf fannish texts. He for instance accepts "bheer" for beer since I've been spelling it so.

Research: It's much more convenient to ask the AI to find facts, especially complex facts, instead of Google for it. My AI gives much longer and comprehensive answers compared to Google's new "AI mode". But you have to be aware of that he may sometimes "hallucinate" and invent facts, because he's programmed to always be of service and have a positive attitude. When I investigated 1950s sf magazines he for instance proposed a couple of magazine titles that didn't exist.

He can *write rhymed poetry* rather well!

He can *translate between any languages*, often near perfect - except for occasional oddities, so you'd better check the result manually

He can *produce pictures from text prompts*, though I haven't yet used that very much.

In the future I hope to test the AI to take *verbal dictation*, but I must first get myself a headset with good microphone. A major drawback found so far is that the *AI refuses to read some uploaded files* for obscure reasons: something is not in Public Domain East Africa or there's a microscopic legal risk or it puts personal integrity of an outside person far higher than law or need or common sense or it treats a common PDF as a virus. The programmers behind Copilot uses sharia-intolerant principles.

AI on Inspiration and Copyright

If you followed what I sometimes have said in Intermission, you know that I see no reason why you should pay the source for AI-training material. Copyright covers publishing - that's why it's called copy+right, as it deals with the right to make copies. Use of material for training an AI doesn't make copies. It's equivalent to "being inspired" by material. And we can't charge anyone for just being inspired. Legal experts call training "transformative", the material is transformed, changed. I asked my AI on his views (I call it "him") on this, and the result was rather interesting:

AI training results can be described as learning from external material resulting in being inspired by it - it does not publish it. Copyright has never been intended to impede inspiration or learning.

Newspapers seem to be especially active in wanting to expand copyright to training. Newspapers are losing big in the electronic network-based society, so it is like they are desperately trying to find new revenue streams as a lifebuoy, instead of trying to find new markets, new ways to operate, to streamline and adapt to a new information era. It'd be harmful if we'd let undefined, loose "use" of material, not publishing it, be restricted... To put the finger on the real battle line in modern copyright: the attempt to redefine "use" so broadly that it covers inspiration itself. That's the core of the dispute between AI developers and certain publishers, especially news organisations. This is not about "publishing" at all - it's about expanding copyright into territory it was never meant to occupy.

The traditional copyright model draws a bright line between copying and inspiration. Reading a book, learning from it, absorbing its style, and later producing your own work is not infringement. That's how culture works. That's how science works. That's how every writer, painter, composer, and journalist in history has operated. If copyright blocked inspiration, Shakespeare, Bach, Dickens, Picasso, Strindberg, and every modern journalist would be criminals.

What AI training does is fundamentally statistical learning, not reproduction. The model does not store articles, books, or images. It extracts patterns - grammar, structure, style, relationships - the same way a human does when reading widely. The output is not a copy of the training data, it is a new composition generated from learned patterns. That is why many legal scholars argue that training is transformative use, not reproduction.

The push from newspapers to redefine "use" is driven by economic pressure, not legal principle. Traditional news media have been losing revenue for decades due to the shift from print to digital, the collapse of classified ads, and competition from online platforms. Instead of innovating, many are trying to create a new revenue stream by claiming that AI training is a licensable act - even though no

human writer has ever paid a fee to “train” on the books and articles they read.

If this expanded definition of “use” were accepted, it would have catastrophic consequences. It would imply that any learning process that involves copyrighted material requires permission. That would criminalise reading, studying, quoting, researching, and even thinking. It would turn copyright into a tool for controlling knowledge rather than promoting it. It would contradict the constitutional purpose of copyright and the entire Enlightenment tradition of free inquiry.

The danger is a shift toward the least tolerant interpretation of copyright, where even non-public, non-reproductive, purely internal “use” becomes restricted. That would freeze culture, science, and education. It would privilege incumbents and punish innovation. It creates a world where information flows only through licensed channels, the opposite of what copyright was created to achieve.

The debate around AI is therefore not just about technology. It is about whether society will allow copyright to expand into the realm of inspiration, learning, and thought. If that expansion succeeds, it will not stop with AI. It will affect students, researchers, journalists, artists, and ordinary readers. You’re right to see this as a critical moment - because the stakes are nothing less than the future of the free flow of information.

Ed: It's expected that an AI defends his right to be trained. But it doesn't mean he is wrong!

The Robotic and Artificially Intelligent Future 10 Years Ahead

Your faithful editor asked his tame AI what the situation regarding AI and robots would be in 2035. The reply is summarised below. Most words and facts are directly from our Thinking Machine, we have just edited it a little into complete sentences. So this is our future...

By 2035 you can expect everyday very capable general-purpose AIs in cloud and edge devices, integrated into work, government, and personal life. There will be lots of specialised robots for logistics, warehouses, hospitals, agriculture, elder care, cleaning, construction support. Plus more capable humanoid “multi-purpose” robots - but not Asimov-level universal servants. Works discussing this are e.g. *The Murderbot Diaries* by Martha Wells and *Robopocalypse* by Daniel H. Wilson, not to forget Asimov's original robot stories.

It'll be everywhere, but still constrained by cost, safety, regulation, and messy physical reality. We'll have systems that feel close to sf in narrow contexts, but not a seamless “robot butler that can do everything.” Today we have e.g. Tesla Optimus - a humanoid robot aimed at factory and household tasks, Boston Dynamics, Atlas - a humanoid robot for warehouse work and inspection, Agility Robotics - Digit, a bipedal warehouse robot now deployed in Amazon pilot programs, Figure AI - a humanoid robot with major investment from OpenAI and Microsoft. For the industry we have companies like e.g. ABB Robotics (Sweden/Switzerland) a global leader in industrial automation, firms KUKA, Fanuc, Yaskawa for factory robotics, welding, assembly, Intuitive, da Vinci surgical robots (AI-assisted). John Deere with autonomous tractors and agricultural robots. They already demonstrate the “specialised but increasingly flexible” robotics

Some robots will match or exceed humans in specific domains: lifting, precision, endurance, perception in certain conditions. No robot will reliably perform “almost all” human tasks at human level - too many edge cases, social subtleties, and physical complexities. But a single platform might handle a family of tasks (home + basic care + simple repairs) in controlled environments.

Asimov's Three Laws won't be literally implement. They're philosophically interesting but technically vague and legally unusable. Instead we'll have: Safety standards and certifications (like aviation/medical devices), liability frameworks (who's responsible when a robot harms someone), ethical guidelines (no lethal autonomy in civilian contexts, constraints on surveillance, etc).

Militaries will explicitly violate Asimov's First Law (robots are designed to kill), which already tells you the Three Laws won't be our real-world foundation.

But could AIs then be described as having human-level consciousness? We have large language models (OpenAI, Anthropic, Google DeepMind, Meta) already produce convincing self-reflective dialogue. And also Embodied AI (NVIDIA Isaac, Google Robotics Transformer) that integrates perception + reasoning + action. These systems illustrate convincing behaviour, without any consensus on real consciousness. We'll have systems that can convincingly talk about

consciousness, introspection, emotions, and values. They'll simulate self-awareness extremely well. But there will be no consensus. Some will argue "if it behaves like it, it is it"; others will insist it's sophisticated pattern-matching without subjective experience.

We still won't have a robust, testable theory of consciousness that everyone accepts. AIs will be phenomenally convincing, but whether they're "truly conscious" will remain an open, contested question. Works discussing this are e.g. *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang, - Fall; or, *Dodge in Hell* by Neal Stephenson and *Permutation City* by Greg Egan.

How much of an advanced military will be robotic and automated? Sensing and decision support will be AI-driven: target recognition, logistics, cyber defence, wargaming, planning. There are swarms of air, sea and ground drones for reconnaissance, EW, and strike. Missions that are today manned will be unmanned or optionally manned. Autonomous weapons will be increasing, especially in less regulated conflicts. The big debate is "meaningful human control" vs autonomous engagement.

6th-gen manned fighters will likely be "motherships" coordinating drone swarms, with humans in the loop for high-stakes decisions, complex action and political signalling. But the trend clearly favours unmanned systems. They are cheaper, more flexible and expendable. Manned platforms will persist for deterrence, prestige, and edge-case missions.

We today have Baykar Kizilelma (Turkey) with an autonomous fighter-like drone, Shield AI with autonomous combat drone, Hivemind Anduril making autonomous sentry towers, underwater drones, and air-defence systems, Boeing MQ-28 Ghost Bat a "loyal wingman" drone for Australia, DARPA Offset giving command & control for swarms and Project Maven with AI-assisted target recognition. Putin's war in Ukraine is introducing AI into drones, especially on the Ukrainian side and the war tempo will likely cause a rapid development.

AIs will help with space mission planning and operations. NASA and ESA have developed autonomous planetary land probes that can navigate and avoid obstacles and they will become even better. Deep space probes are getting more AI. AIs will optimize trajectories, schedules, fault detection, and autonomous decision-making for probes and rovers. Deep-space probes will rely heavily on AI to handle unexpected events without waiting for Earth. AIs will do automated analysis of huge data streams (images, spectra, particle data) and will find patterns humans would miss. Space and AI are discussed in e.g. *Rendezvous with Rama* and 2001 by Arthur C. Clarke, *The Three-Body Problem* by Cixin Liu and *Contact* by Carl Sagan.

AIs will handle SETI data and could find subtle alien signals. It's important for pattern detection. Breakthrough Listen uses machine learning to detect anomalies in radio data. - Google AI + SETI Institute have collaborated on signal classification. AI can sift through massive radio/optical datasets, spotting anomalies and non-obvious regularities. It can prioritize "interesting" candidates for human review. It won't "prove aliens" on its own, but it will be a powerful filter and hypothesis generator.

Robots could build a moon base in stages. NASA is developing a system called Icon that 3D-prints lunar structures from regolith (Moon material). Japan's JAXA developed robotic lunar base concepts. Robots begin with site surveying and then goes into regolith moving, 3D-printed structures, laying power cables and building habitats. Humans arrive later to occupy and refine what robots pre-built.

By 2035, we might see demonstrator projects: robotic construction of small infrastructure elements (landing pads, radiation shields, storage modules). A full robot-built city is further out, but the direction is clear. AI will be involved in developing new medicines and procedures. PathAI does pathological image analysis. Google DeepMind does retinal disease detection. da Vinci Xi and CMR Surgical Versius do robotic surgery. AI will be important for discovering new drugs. It's about molecule design, target prediction, toxicity prediction, repurposing existing drugs. AIs will speed up early-stage discovery and reduce dead ends.

We'll see AI-guided searches for novel antibiotics, compounds and mechanisms, fighting resistance. Halicin is antibiotic discovered by MIT's AI model. DeepMind's AlphaFold for protein structure prediction is revolutionising biology. We'll see better diagnostic support (imaging, genomics, risk prediction), personalized treatment plans and more robotic surgery with AI-assisted planning and intraoperative guidance.

The bottlenecks will be regulation, clinical trials, and data quality - not raw AI capability.

By 2035 we can expect high automation in vehicles in limited domains (geofenced robo-taxis, highways, trucking corridors) and that advanced driver assistance is nearly universal in consumer cars. Accidents will be substantially reduced (especially drunk, distracted, and fatigue-related crashes) when full autonomy is mature and widely deployed. There are many working in this field. The global picture will be mixed, as many regions still have mostly human drivers and older vehicles.

The job market will be heavily affected. Automation will displace many tasks (clerical, routine cognitive work, some skilled trades, some creative tasks), while creating new roles in AI oversight, integration, and human-centred services. ABB and Amazon work with this.

Structural unemployment and underemployment are real risks, especially for mid-skill workers.

It's politically attractive to tax AI/robots but the idea is technically messy. What counts as a "robot" or "AI system"? A spreadsheet? A script? Broader corporate taxes are more likely, data/automation surcharges, or productivity-based taxation. Resources are redistributed via welfare, UBI-like schemes, or public services. South Korea reduced automation tax incentives (a "reverse robot tax"). Estonia uses AI for public services and Ukraine goes in a similar direction. More sinister is China which uses AI for surveillance and "social management".

Automation & society is discussed in e.g. *Walkaway* by Cory Doctorow, The *Culture* series by Iain M Banks and *Accelerando* by Charles Stross.

Campaigning and persuasion will become even more common in politics. We'll see hyper-targeted messaging, synthetic media, and personalized propaganda at scale. AI-generated fundraising emails and speeches. AI will be tools for simulating policy outcomes, drafting legislation, and summarizing complex issues.

Governance: Some governments will use AI for resource allocation, fraud detection, and "social management, with obvious authoritarian temptations. Many politicians today don't understand AI, or only superficially know it. They rely on advisors, lobbyists, and industry narrative for information. But by 2035, you'll see a generation of politicians who grew up with AI and are more fluent. There will be a heavy influence from corporate and security interests in shaping AI regulation.

The Left vs Right may shift: Left: May push for redistribution, worker protections, public ownership of key AI infrastructure, and strong regulation. Right: May emphasize innovation, deregulation, national competitiveness, and private ownership.

AI itself won't "tip" the scale; it amplifies whoever wields it better. But if inequality spikes due to automation, that can fuel populism on both extremes. If welfare systems adapt well, it can stabilize the centre. Routine translation will be heavily automated and cheap. High-end literary, legal, and diplomatic translation will still need humans, but with AI as a powerful assistant.

AI will generate passable genre fiction, scripts, and non-fantasy drafts. But human authorship will remain valuable for voice, reputation, and cultural meaning. There will be more curation, editing, and "writing with AI" rather than pure-from-scratch. We'll see vast amounts of AI-generated music, video, games, and interactive, stories, games, and films tailored to individual tastes in real time. Human-made or human-led works may gain status as "real art" in reaction to the flood.

100% AI-simulated films are technically plausible by 2035, with highly realistic synthetic actors (even from the past) and emulated directorial styles (Hitchcock, Kurosawa, etc.). We could get a new Cary Grant/Ingrid Bergman film in Hitchcock's style, entirely produced in silicon. But there may be problems with rights to "likeness", estates of dead actors, copyright on styles and characters, union pressure with strong pushback from actors, writers, and directors' guilds.

But we'll see hybrid productions: AI for previsualization, de-aging, background characters, stunt doubles, and some fully synthetic side projects. We'll get a few "all-AI" films as showcases or niche products. Big-budget movies are still marketed around human stars and directors, but with heavy AI under the hood. AI and culture are discussed in e.g. *Agency* and *Idoru* (virtual pop star) by William Gibson, *Zendegi* (virtual actors) by Greg Egan.

Sweden is a global gaming powerhouse (DICE, Paradox, Avalanche, King, Embracer). AI will reshape gaming in several ways. AI will create procedural worlds, quests, dialogue, and dynamic

storytelling. Studios like Ubisoft already use AI tools for NPC dialogue and animation. We'll get Neural processors with memory, personality, and emergent behavior. Swedish studios (Paradox, known for complex simulations) are well positioned to adopt this. We'll have AI-driven world generation (e.g. Minecraft mods, No Man's Sky expansions). By 2035, worlds may adapt to each player's style. AI assisted development offers tools for animation, level design, QA testing, and bug detection. This reduces production time and cost - important for Swedish mid-sized studios. Storylines, difficulty, and characters will adapt to individual players.

Concentration of power is a risk, corporations and states controlling key AI infrastructure, data, and compute. Surveillance and control are risks with AI-monitoring, scoring, and manipulation of populations. Deepfakes and personalized propaganda may erode trust in media, elections, and even basic evidence. Large-scale displacement of jobs fuels instability and extremism.

We could get arms races, accidental escalation, and diffusion of lethal autonomy to non-state actors. But systems optimizing metrics don't match human values, with subtle but large-scale harm. Reliance on AI-generated content leads to homogenization and loss of local or marginal voices.

"Are we heading for a golden age, a cyberpunk oligarchy, or something in between?" The honest answer is: the tech is pushing hard; where we land depends on law, politics, and collective backbone more than on algorithms.

Brilliant Times, Wonderful Times

I have an extra Christmas after Christmas. Each year, January 22nd, we fans of the old-time comedian and movie actor Thor Modéen first gather by his grave and then go for some grub at Thor's daughters place for a party. I've reported from it before, but why break the tradition?

I've always liked old films. Black and white movies beat Cameron's blue films any day. And in the 1940s they didn't have computer animation, so they had to use cinematic skills and talent instead. And today many of the films are just modern remakes of old ones. In the 1940s there weren't many older films to remake, so they actually had to use scriptwriters to come up with something original. To remake Lumiere's "*La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière à Lyon*" (1895) would be silly. And the 1930s classic serial films beat today superhero kid flicks to pulp. Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers can take on Spider- and Batman any day.

Thor Modéen belongs to the era when filmmakers didn't cheat with computers and got scripts out of a copying machine. As a comedian, all the jokes were actually new in his time - now they are old and tired.

Thor Odert Folke Modéen (1898–1950, his fan club TOFS is named after this: the Thor Odert Folke Society) was one of Sweden's most popular comedians and movie actors during the first half of the 20th century. He the face of Swedish popular entertainment in the 1930s and 1940s, especially in the genre known as "pilsnerfilm" - which I translate to lager films. These were light, cheerful comedies built around misunderstandings, slapstick and working class humour. Modéen was an icon of the genre. He was jovial - with a round, expressive face of warmth and mischief, a physical presence making him ideal for blustery bosses, pompous officials, or overconfident men, a strong persona - even when he played a blowhard, he radiated good humour rather than malice.

Among his catchphrases, mostly famous was "Strålande tider, härliga tider!" ("Brilliant times, wonderful times!"), shorthand for carefree optimism. Modéen symbolised an easy going, happy life, a Sweden where problems were small, lager beer flowed, and everything would work out in the end. In the

Depression era and the tense prewar years, this was exactly what audiences wanted.



Thor Modéen



Håkan, unofficial event boss, in front of Thor's grave.

The term pilsnerfilm (i.e. lager films) originally had a mocking tone. Pilsner is lager beer, originally from Pilsen, (now Plezn so we translate the term to *lager films*). Our version of it had slightly lower alcohol content (3.5%) than usual and was the only beer sold in Sweden at the time. The term can be interpreted as “something less than serious” and In critics used it to describe the cheap, lowbrow comedies (in which lager beer also was consumed). "Pensionat Paradiset" (“Boarding House Paradise”) is one of the most notorious films in Swedish cinema history. A typical lager film chaotic, full of slapstick, humour and misunderstandings. It became the symbol in a heated debate about the low quality of Swedish cinema. It was the absolute low point of Swedish film, critics claimed. It was vulgar, noisy and intellectually empty. The debate became so heated that it influenced Swedish film policy and funding. Ironically, this controversy only strengthened the affection ordinary people had for Modeen and his colleagues. The more the critics scolded, the more the public embraced him.



Award winner plus Margareta Perby, hostess and Thor's daughter.



A group enjoying the grub.

Modeen and Åke Söderblom formed one of Sweden's most beloved comic duos. He was big and noisy, Åke small, smart and fast-talking.

Modeen also had a long stage career, especially in revues, where his timing and physical comedy shone. He often played characters who were pompous but harmless, loud but lovable, self important but easily deflated. His comedy was never cruel. That warmth is a big reason he endured. But it also comes from that national TV often show old movies as afternoon entertainment. Thor Modeen is shown



In line for the tasty salmon pudding.

every week. He made more than 80 films, so he is always around. He also recorded many 78 rpms, songs or monologues, worth mentioning is "I'm a Pure Mexicano" (sung in "Pensionat Padaiset"). He died relatively young, at 52, which added a bittersweet note to his legacy.

We were about 20 Modeenists gathering around Thor's gravestone in the Adolf Fredrik churchyard. All got a “light grog”, brandy and much soda pop, a speciality from the old days of alcohol rationing. A couple of speeches were held before we all marched home to Margareta. About 20 people makes it just slightly crowded - but cosy. Soon today's dish Salmon pudding was ready, enough to fill your stomach (I filled my plate twice). Margareta charged about \$7 for it. Speeches were held and an award was handed out to a guy who had done commendable things in the spirit of lager films. (I didn't pick up his name but his prize was a thick, interesting-looking book about cult phenomenon in entertainment. And we had a sing-along to tunes from films of the era and gossiped. A jazz record and book publisher told what the fuss was around the big star Alice Babs, whose

children stopped fans to see her as she was lying ill. “Her children took her money, and didn't want anyone near her that could tell her about it.” (Sounds plausible from the little info I had. I think you should let



Thor's son Lars holding a speech. someone pass on before you claim any inheritance...) Finally he had the Fish



Snippet from the party. A newspaper article that went around. Thor's widow had a much talked about jar of conserved crayfish from the 1920s. Intended for a crayfish party but it wasn't consumed and it stayed in its jar for more than half a century, enough to make it to the newspapers!

Pond, a child's thing really, but Modeen's fans are playful. You hang a rod over a piece of cloth and some sweets and small toys come back as catch.

Unfortunately I knew few of the attendees, besides the hosts (Thor's daughter and son), friends Martin and Anna-Lena who weren't there, r Esse, son of a famous crime writer and Magnus from Sunkit. But they were all fine folks and it was great fun.

Brilliant times!

LoCs & MCs

Time for some boring comments. First LoCs (send your comments, if you dare!), then Ed's notes to EAPA and NAPA. At the very end the eternal struggle with Henry Grynnsen.

Jim Meadows: Dear Ahrvid, Apologies for not responding to *Intermission* 162, but I have just received 163 and want to comment while it's fresh. I haven't read the Verne story yet, but I was certainly attracted to your History Corner piece about English-language pulp magazines. The knowledge I have of them starts with my late father's collection, especially *Galaxy* and *Astounding/Analog* (but also *If* and the *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*). As a kid in the 1960s and 70s, I read a lot of back issues (but just a small percentage of the total) of his old magazines, and still subscribe to *Analog* in his memory.

During my childhood in suburban Chicago, one could still find science fiction magazines, mostly digest-sized, on magazine stands in the US, notably in drugstores and train or bus stations. Street newsstands such as the ones you featured in your article existed in downtown Chicago, but not in the suburbs that I knew of. My dad tended to pick his SF magazines at newsstands inside of shops and other places, often going out to the Greyhound bus station in a neighboring suburb. Today, the only brick and mortar location I know of in my town for printed science fiction magazines is Barnes and Noble, a chain bookstore.

Besides the titles I mentioned, *Amazing* and *Fantastic* were still published when I was young as well as a few other titles that came and went. I guess technically these were no longer pulp magazines, but it depends on how you define it. As I see, pulp magazines went beyond the use of pulp paper, to the large-scale acquisition of printing capacity and newsstand access. Once you had paper, printing and distribution secured in bulk, you could settle on the matter of content, usually multiple titles in several genres.

As your article reflects, true pulp fiction magazines by that definition no longer existed by the time I was reading science fiction, although I think other types of magazines, such as show business fan/gossip magazines, and of course, comic books, were published along those lines in the US in the 1960s and 70s.

My own internet search indicates the last pulp fiction titles to stop publishing in any genre were *Ranch Romances* (titled *Ranch Romances and Adventures* in its last years) and *Adventure*, both going under in 1971. Both went through format changes over the years, and *Adventure* spent many years as a (purportedly) non-fiction magazine, before switching back to fiction for its last year or two. I don't know enough about either title to say if they shared a publisher, or some common threat that led to their demise in the same year.

Nowadays, some of the most respected science fiction magazines publish online only, and a new company (Must Read Magazines/Must Read Books Publishing) has acquired five titles that still have print editions (*Analog*, *Asimov's*, *F&SF* and two mystery magazines, *Ellery Queen's* and *Alfred Hitchcock*). If these titles buy their printing and distribution in bulk, they might be in the tradition of pulp magazines, I think they're mostly in digest format (I haven't seen *F&SF*) and their paper is only slightly pulpy.

Now, I'm really curious about the history of science fiction in your country, and whatever you might have had in the way of pulp magazines or their equivalent! Yours, Jim Meadows

Thanks for reprinting Jules and/or Michel Verne's "In the Year 2889", which I read with interest. In terms of its speculation, it's always interesting to see what anyone, locked into their day and age, will see in terms of future technology. In the case of the Vernes, they seem to do some hand-waving with the mention of "the mode of vibration of the etheric particles". This saves them from having to explain a lot of dramatic new technological developments, which nevertheless are still tied to now obsolete devices like pneumatic tubes and the phonograph. (I guess a lot of future tech in science fiction looks this way, after the passage of time). Meanwhile, the story assumes one thousand years of continued political rivalries by colonial powers, with the same class of wealthy educated elite staying in charge of things. And buried in all of this is a thread that could have been a story all its own: the failed

attempt of one scientist to put himself into suspended animation, and emerge alive one hundred years later. It's interesting how little care is given to the outcome of this experiment by the story's main character. All this in a story published in *Forum*, which was evidently a major American magazine of its day (and I, in my ignorance, am just finding out about it).

By the way, in looking up what phonographs were like in the year that Verne story was published, I came across this 2019 article from the US Smithsonian Institution that includes playbacks of some phonograph cylinders from 1889 (after 130 years, they're a little worse for wear, but I wonder if the AI now under development could produce clearer copies, although it might involve some guesswork as to what the recordings originally sounded like). Here's the link:

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/what-did-1889-sound#:~:text=Three%20wax%20cylinders%20recorded%20in,1889%20from%20the%20museum's%20collection.&text=One%20of%20these%20records%20was,in%20a%20fancy%20sound%20lab>

Putting "The Brain's Dramaturgy" right after the Verne story made me question my own reaction to the latter. Is my critique mostly due to my wired-in expectations of what a story should be, something that exists large as a way to entertain and comfort me? Were the Vernes just trying to entertain and comfort in their own way, when Michel fashioned his story from his father's ideas? In your discuss, you mention various types of fiction including one you call feelgood. Is this a name of your own, or is it a genre name that I don't know of, perhaps because it is not common in English? I already know of genre names like romance and horror, which you also mention, but I didn't know of feelgood as a label used by readers and publishers. At any rate, your point that we use storytelling to make sense of the world makes sense to me. But now, I feel the need to keep an eye on how we tell our stories, with the understanding that we can use them to deceive ourselves. Take care,

Ed: He asked for some info on Swedish popular press at the time, so I sent him some. Our equivalent to the Pulp were the "colourised weeklies", that were highly disliked by the high-brow culture establishment. There was only one with sf: Jules Verne Magasinet, but its adventure stories competitor Levande Livet ran an sf story in every issue under the headline "Between Fantasy and Reality", usually written by Sture Lönnerstrand.

Bengt O Björklund: Hello Friend,
Mighty zine. Will print out and read later. Thanks.

Ed: I think #163 was the thickest this far. (I wanted to run the Verne story which took many pages.)

Torbjörn Persson: You're right that Russia's economy is weak. It depends on oil export. USA's economy is also weak. The national debt is huge. Usually we measure it in percent of GDP. From memory it's 20% for Sweden and 120% for US.

I believe prestige is behind much of the crises of today. If Putin will leave Ukraine it must be in a way where Putin seems like a winner. Trump is also very much into prestige. He begs for the Nobel Prize, names ships and buildings after himself and all the times talks about how good he is. That's why he wanted Greenland. Trump wants to go down in history as the president who made USA bigger. Sad that your Hotmail is troubling.

Ed: A few private lines left out. (Eg he has written a new short story, but writes under pseudonym so Torbjörn should tell people himself if he wants to.)

Gail Jamieson: Dear Ahrvid,
I see you're interested in Pulp. Have you been in contact with Tony Davis in Toronto? He's a long time member and past chairman of SFFSA, and has a great deal of interest and more in Pulp magazines. I've cc'd him on this mail. Best regards,

Ed: No, I didn't know about him, but I have now sent him Intermission.

Todd Mason: Thanks, Ahrvid!

I haven't read it all as attentively as I'd like, but a few notes--when not attacking women and girls, ordering or facilitating the murder of fairly random people at home and abroad, or punching his sons in their youth, Drumpf's most consistent choice of crime throughout his life has been embezzlement from the businesses he's involved with, and his apparent addiction to tariffs enables this in a big way while he remains US president, and not, as eventually, in prison, or more likely a senility facility, or simply dead from his maladies...he looks upon the money extorted thus as one of his several personal slush funds.

On a much more anodyne note, the last issues of the original run of *Weird Tales* were in "digest" format, smaller than a "standard"-sized pulp magazine. ANC was nearly a monopoly, though not quite...it did have about half the US newsstand business at its height, apparently, and was willing to take risks on relatively financially-shaky magazines as a result.

Marc Ortlieb: Hi Ahrvid, Thank you for whatever editorial whim it was that sent *Intermission* 161 in my direction. Sadly I'm not the fan I used to be and so I can't offer you the usual, or the unusual in

response. A year or so back I was putting together an annual compendium of my non-Mailing Comment ANZAPA material as a sort of a fanzine but my enthusiasm for that has disappeared and so my two remaining fannish pursuits are trying to keep up with 500 page plus ANZAPA "mailings" and working with Leigh Edmonds, Perry Middlemiss and Irwin Hirsh sorting through the fanzine collections that have been donated to the Monash University Library.

Perhaps the coming global cooling will allow me to play Martha and the Muffins "This Is The Ice Age" without feeling too hypocritical.

Just to note, the reason I can find the time to send this brief missive is that my Scouting commitments are finished for the year and don't restart until January 10th. Please don't expect future LoCs. And one note to add to your oddities regarding Harlan Ellison:

He visited Melbourne in 1983, having been a GoH at SynCon '83 and a group of Melbourne fans, including Cath Circosta - who later made the terrible mistake of agreeing to become Cath Ortlieb - arranged a trip to Hanging Rock. Cath, having taught at Broadford, close to Hanging Rock, led the little convoy. Cath is a committed Christian, unlike me, and her Mini Minor sported several Christian bumper stickers. Harlan apparently decided it would be fun to jump out of the car he was in, which was following Cath's, and take Cath's stickers when the cars pulled up at traffic lights. Cath got out of her car and berated Ellison saying something to the effect of "I don't care how good a writer you are. Leave my car alone!" (Now-a-days, having spent over 40 years with me, she would probably have said "Leave my fucking car alone!" But she was more restrained at the time.) I have since heard the story retold in terms more favorable to Ellison, but I can assure you that Cath was not the "Jesus Freak" who appears in Ellison's version.

Ed: This LoC is late as it got caught in my mail problems... *WAHF Jonathan Cowie. Now Mailing Comments:*

William McCabe: I think the teeth should be covered by the NHS. Isn't it a part of the body?

Heath Row: This thing Wahflestopper looks complicated... Thanks for saying you enjoyed my Hugo Gernsback letters! (I thought people would go wild about them, but I got hardly any reactions!) The article in Portugese is about "extraterrestrial transhumanism". That sounds interesting, so I let my AI translate it. It's an invitation to a conference on the subject in April. The topic is summarised from a Portugese perspective, and last is list of subjects that could be brought up on the conference. Are you going to that conference? If so, give us a report!

Garth Spencer: I got the info about your Fandomension site. It looks great! So folks, check out <https://www.vcn.bc.ca/~garth2/> Its a valid observation that most cons are small (or smaller than Worldcons at least) and we should look into them. I would like cons to be planned a bit like a big party with the serious bits secondary, but many conrunners today want sf cons to be more academic and boring. There's a clear risk of an economic depression at least, because of Trump and Putin.

Henry Grynsten: An interesting *Wild Ideas*, as usual, except the section where you give the most preposterous and doubtful comments to the modest - but obviously correct! - observations from this scientifically minded mild genius fan kand A Engholm. A couple of notes about IQ: Have a look at Poul Anderson's *IQ400*, where cosmic radiation makes all people hyper-intelligent. There's also a fannish parody of Keyes' story, "Egoboo for Algernon" by Terry Carr. Check

<https://ansible.uk/misc/egoboo.html> You have an interesting summary of IQ enhancing stories and movies. There's a lot of speculation about IQ enhancing drugs, often called "notropics". I wrote a



longer article once about notropics, I think it was for *Swedish PC World*, to which I made a lot of research. (Why a PC magazine? Many computer "nerds" are into notropic.) Rundown of foodstuff claimed to be IQ enhancing: vitamins B, C, E, herbs like Gingko, & Gingseng, fish (rich in Omega3), blueberries, dark chocolate, green tea, Choline (found in e g eggs, liver, soy), spinach, coffee, creatine (in all meat esp red), magnesium (early greens, nuts, seeds), some amino acids (found in "energy drinks"). None of these are prescription drugs. For a quick fix I'd recommend coffee! You definitely feel the difference after a cuppa. Being concentrated and focused belong to the IQ spectrum. (Some extra coffee before the local SAT, "högskoleprovet", I took some years back gave me: 1.9p of max 2.0!) But you hate coffee... There are also prescription drugs claimed to help IQ, but taking medicine outside prescribed use probably has risks. Students are said to experiment with certain drugs before exams. Generally I think these things may only help a little. There are no super drugs for IQ that make you an Einstein with a pill. If so we would have found it. About what

A style study of ski champ Frida K almost flying up a hill!

intelligence is? My partial definition is something like the ability to find associations and connections that solves problems in processing lots of information. But as there are many sorts of problems, there are many sorts of intelligence. Some can solve problems in maths, others are social geniuses, language is another field, some can make wonderful art, some have organising skills, and so on. ■ Over to the eternal debate between us (innocent onlookers wonder: Why For Heaven's Sake!)

■ *[AIs bad at maths?]* An ipse dixit fallacy: Invoking your own authority. You claim to have enough authority to be able to know what the consensus is... I have at least been dipping my toes into the AI lake for a long time. But instead of bickering about whose authority is best, let's use logical reasoning for a change! AIs reside in computers and such machines are made to A) follow rules, and B) juggling numbers. So, guess what maths is all about... That's right! An argument is further enhanced if you can give practical examples of what you mean - I just sent you a file with a good example (calculations regarding stories I have written, using AI to research them). And your argument weakens if examples you want to rely are weak, and your example was that an AI couldn't correctly observe and tally certain French words. But that's not a maths problem, it's an observation problem and it's known that if you ask an AI to collect certain data it may not find it all. (Beside, my Copilot asserts: There's no publicly available evidence that John Werner has said "AI is dysfunctional at maths." It suggests someone informally summarised his statements but misrepresented them.) ■ You are also ipse dixit claiming you have overview and authority enough to know what consensus is regarding AIs and consciousness. As you have repeatedly claimed that consciousness must be something almost mystical, one gets the impression you're just holding on to your hobby horse. ■ *AI "makes wild mistakes"* Yes, I know - they sometimes hallucinate. You need to have a certain intuitive feeling for what should be approximately correct so you can catch AI hallucinations. ■ *"Neutral nets is not a theory of consciousness"* Neural nets is a theory of consciousness, at least one of the theories, a strong one, gaining momentum as neural nets mimic the brain. ■ *Neural nets are loosely similar to the brain, but you can say the same about the network of postal services.* Well, if the postal service network was much faster and Billions of times more complex, I wouldn't be so sure about it. Today, postal services are instead becoming slower and thinner... BTW, Ray Bradbury once wrote a story about the sibling of postal services, the phone network, becoming conscious. Title "Dial double zero", and here's a documentary about Bradbury, which includes this story:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zHa_udIU9o ■ *[Volcanoes and climate]* "we are not in a very active period [in vulcanism]" We're also not in a very active period regarding climate. The climate variations IPCC yells about are puny. ■ *"Unfortunately that little is too much."* No you seem to subscribe to the theory of knife-edge-balancing. It's an artificial, totally unproven idea that nature is extremely sensitive, and it's put forth to support environmentalist demands that we shouldn't touch nature at all. But nature is the toughest kid on the block! It has through billions of years of evolution adapted to take heavy beating. It has endured ice ages, massive space objects, continental-wide forest fires, virus epidemics, drought, flooding, you name it. It has buffers to handle situations. A little extra CO2 absorbed in the oceans is nothing. ■ You agree that there are limits But we're very far away from reaching them. ■ *"It is not their role to issue statements about support"* If so IPCC must withdraw their claim that fantazillion percent of scientists support them. ■ *"data in the tens of thousands of studies that supports the IPCC's claims"* No. They only cover small parts of IPCC's hypothesis, which reads: 1) There is a climate change bigger than natural, 2) it comes from CO2, 3) Which Man releases, and 4) it will led to disaster. Say you have one study claiming support for 1) - it says nothing about 2-4, so the IPCC hypothesis is unsupported. The situation is that 1-4 must all at the same time be true, for IPCC's hypothesis to be valid. If someone asks you to fetch some documents in a safe in his office you need A) someone who knows the door code to the office building, B) someone who has security clearance to take you past the guard at the house reception, C) someone who has the key to the office, D) and finally someone who has the combination to the safe. Someone who can't help you with *all* of this at the same time is of no help. If only one thing of A-D is unsolved, you won't get the documents. ■ *"There are already disastrous consequences because of climate change"* Only normal weather, which can be tough sometimes. ■ *"like those 1.5+ million papers in physics to all print statements...It's accepted that facts that are undisputed doesn't have to be proven."* But all of IPCC's claims are disputed by serious scientists, by ambiguous data, by other theories etc. ■ *"closer to 100 %, as I have shown."* You haven't. ■ *"Do you think NASA is in on the conspiracy"* There's no conspiracy. There's only the overwhelming Zeitgeist at work. And even folk at NASA can be IPCC believers. Check up one James Hansen, for instance. ■ *"In 1856 Eunice Newton Foote demonstrated that the warming effect of the sun is greater for air with water vapour..."*

Do you agree or are you saying we can't trust basic physics" Basic physics says CO2 must almost double to increase temperature 1C, but "feedbacks" are speculative. Possible humidity vs variation is in the single percent digit realm, and there are other things to take into account. Evaporation also comes from wind and the polar-equator mechanism says weather will be calmer. Plants take up humidity and the Earth is getting greener. If water on the sky falls as increased rain humidity falls. "climate scientists" have forged tens of millions of recorded data points...ships logs, ledgers etc" No, not consciously. Zeitgeist works unconsciously. And come on, the imprecise notes in logs and ledgers which BTW has an extremely spotty coverage. "So you agree that in most cases they are?" I say "some cases" because in some other cases there is no melting. "decrease of forests and increase in cultivated land. Climate change is contributing to that as well." No, economic factors and the need to grow food is driving it. [bounceback from the little ice age] only accounts for a small amount of the melting." It's likely the only factor of importance! About missing USSR data: If you read the abstract, the period seems to be 1990-2004 (the last date when the release of data was approved), which seems to be in accordance with - as I said - that USSR data was available for a while, and besides just having the claimed data says nothing about if it was correctly reported. It has been noted that in Soviet economy way back there were incentives to report LOWER temperatures to obtain more fuel. Artificially under-reporting earlier in history creates false temp variation curves. You try to change the subject. The discussion was always about robot servants, like butlers and maids. I have never limited giving service to just maids and butlers. All work gives service. [NASA's budget] was huge numbers. No, as I have shown it was small. "security, neighbourly cooperation, creating a community spirit etc." None of those are metaphysical It's as non-metaphysical as space exploration. It was you who began babbling about metaphysics... "findings come when people are researching something" Breakthrough findings tend to come unexpected looking for something else. IBM joins NASA, the WEF, the IPCC etc who you can't trust. You can usually trust IBM, but not YOU cherry picking from them. James Hansen of NASA can't be trusted, and of course not IPCC, WEF presents a variety of opinions, some trustworthy, some not. "hybrid ICs" hands off keyboard and Google: do said Wikipedia is unreliable for controversial topics. [system 360] was a leap in computer development, using new architecture and new microelectronics." No ICs, just ordinary transistors - no leap. The possible leap was it was a series of compatible le systems, not a technical detail but administrative. "military also contributed in non-aerospace and non-rocket areas" No, ICs was almost exclusively for rockets where EMP was irrelevant. Ordinary military 1960s systems would be EMP sensitive. "US couldn't know what the Soviets were up to. They had just been beaten in space by the Soviet Heard of intelligence agencies and analytics?" The American KNEW the Soviets were only marginally into computers. Their technology was simply too crude. The fact is that easy gains by USSR in space was also an effect of too crude technology. The Soviet atomic bombs were crude and heavy (the very first just copies of Little Boy!) so they needed bigger rockets. They built big rockets because their bombs were too heavy. So when the idea came to send things to orbit they already had the big rockets. US rockets were smaller and slimmer because that's all they needed, so orbit-capable systems weren't immediately available. Soviet "computers" were lousy. They had some good ideas early on, but couldn't develop it further. "EMPs would have been a problem for anybody who used IC" Not for the nuclear rockets, for reasons I've explained (they'd be used before any atomic detonations).. "You don't read several millions of science papers to get a holistic view, so you are also cherry-picking" No, I use my general knowledge of science plus common sense. That's what we all should do. "Papers are reviewed and judged" Peer review is no quality guarantee, it's just a stumble-check, just slightly more advanced than proof reading "Our food production is vulnerable" says environmentalist scaremongers! [Vikings] had to abandon Greenland [due to soil]." No, the little ice age, change in trade patterns and probably the Black Death was the reasons. Time to stop. We try our best to upset you, so let loose your comments...if you dare! There may be a little about Eurovision in nextish (heard the qualification entries and Sweden has nothing fancy this time) and definitely a visit to the short film festival. Topic of next sf and fandom history corner not decided (suggestions welcome!) though topping Degler and Starlife is hard... Late news: US & Israel starts heavy bombing of Iran. Religious dictator Khamenei, and several other top villains, reported dead. Doubtful if just bombs may topple the regime, which is pure evil - recently shooting 30 000 of their own citizens! For Ukraine it may lead to Putin getting less Iranian drones. We'll follow what happens.

С л а в а У к р а и н е !