



NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2023, international edition

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Editor's corner

E d i t o r s c o r n e r Anders Gustavsson

Educator and Chairman of the Board Åsa Morberg informs about current events in Strömstad Academy.

Vice-Chancellor and Information System Scientist Per Flensburg informs about current events in Strömstad Academy. He also informs about the Science Festival in Strömstad on 22-25 May.

Teacher Educator and Education Scientist Carl E. Olivestam discusses current school issues in connection with the new Swedish bourgeois government's proposal for extended teaching time, digital teaching aids in relation to analogue and denominational free schools. At the same time, he warns of political overtures in the newsletter at the expense of scientific underpinnings. According to him, such tendencies have occurred in previous newsletters. I hope for a continued discussion in this matter in which several members of Strömstad Academy will participate.

Entrepreneurial researcher Bengt Johannisson highlights the importance of broad research communication outwards in society.

Pediatrician Gudmund Bergqvist warns of decriminalization of cannabis supported by the cannabis industry. He also calls for support for Ukraine's freedom struggle. As coordinator of the series Acta Academiae Strömstadiensis, AAS, he will be succeeded by **Cardiologist Peter Währborg** with address peter@wahrborg.se

Redaktör: Anders Gustavsson
Layout: Per Flensburg

Together with Business **Economist Per Staffan Bost-röm**, **Business Economist Rune Wigblad** is in the starting phase of a new research project on technology valuation.

Ethnologist Anders Gustavsson has in *ARV. Nordic Yearbook of Folklore* vol. 78 2022 pp. 111-155 published *The Consequences of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Norwegian/Swedish National Border*.

Scientific production is in Norway published on the *Cristin.no* link. What **Ethnologist Anders Gustavsson** has published in 2022 can be viewed from the attached link <https://app.cristin.no/persons/show.jsf?id=22909>

I want to urge a previous call for all members to verify and complete their personal information on the Academy website. Also try to recruit new members to the Academy, not least young scholars. Please, send suggestions to Vice-Chancellor Per Flensburg per.flensburg@stromstadakademi.se

I wish new contributions to the February issue of the Newsletter sent to my e-mail address with deadline on 24 February 2023: anders.gustavsson@ikos.uio.no. Send short articles, opinion articles and/or reviews of new scientific literature. Swedish contributions should have an English translation. Texts should be in Word- or Open Office format!

Please, also send contributions to the Academy's publication series *Acta Academia Strömsta-diensis*, AAS, to peter@wahrborg.se and the video series SAV to: gudmundbergqvist@hotmail.com

Chairman's report

January monthly report

By Åsa Morberg, Chairman of the Strömstad Academy Board

My predecessor as Chairman, Peter Frizell, wrote many interesting and thought-provoking monthly reports in the Newsletter. He informed about everything that happened in the Strömstad Academy. Of course I will try to make sure to write monthly reports. I have no problem writing. The members of Strömstad Academy have surely understood that.

I have written a lot over the years in the Newsletter and will now, with the help of our eminent Chairman of the Editorial Committee/Board, Gudmund Bergqvist, compile my contributions in a book about the Swedish school debate. The Editor of the Newsletter, Anders Gustavsson, sent me a friendly reminder about the monthly report and so there was already a script in my computer.

I myself have always read the Newsletter, pretty much every Newsletter from the first to the last page. They are solid Newsletters with many, long pages and it has taken and still takes time to read them. Through the Newsletter, I think I got to know Strömstad Academy, Peter's way of working as chairman, and I also got to know the members of the Swedish Academy in a good way. At least those who submitted contributions published in the Newsletter or those who were written about by others.

The month of January is almost over and it has gone by at a rapid pace. It is noticeable that the sun has turned back towards our dark north. The days are getting longer by the day and so it now continues forward. We have had a constituent meeting and a first board meeting.

I am now preparing for a first working/executive committee meeting. I have copied the statutes/by-laws and have them in front of me, as well as the record from the annual meeting. The by-laws state the following: "The chairman convenes a working committee (AU) consisting of chairman, vice-chairman, rector and pro-rector, who assist the chairman in managing the ac-

ademy's activities between board meetings." In fact, I have previously seen a text about the AU being advisory to the chairman, but that doesn't seem right? The secretary and treasurer are thus constantly attached/adjunct to AU. Should we write that into the by-laws? We should review the by-laws at the annual meeting.

For me, AU is a forum where we can discuss various things concerning the Academy. The division into a non-profit association and an Academy requires a kind of forum where both parties can meet on equal terms and propose measures for the Academy's development. The rector/Vice-Chancellor and vice-rector/Pro-Vice-Chancellor will take these proposals to the Academy, while the Chairman and vice-chairman/Deputy Chairman will take them to the non-profit association's board in Strömstad Academy.

I see our AU as a very important discussion forum that all members (including the secretary and treasurer) can use when they want to raise issues related to Strömstad Academy. At regular intervals we will have more formal meetings, when we prepare decisions for the board.

Going forward, I suggest, just as our Vice-Chancellor Per Flensburg has suggested, that we try to freely discuss our different ideas between meetings, whenever they come up and then we sum them up in our formal meetings. Per is convinced that the decisions will be better if we can discuss and sort things out over a longer period of time, via e-mail and other fora. I agree.

Per Flensburg, our wonderful and creative Vice-Chancellor, has written a letter to me and treasurer John Fletcher and in the letter he says he is going to be really mean and he apologizes for that. Per says as follows: "If you hadn't been so slow to use the discussion forum, these discussions could have been much more efficient and clear in a discussion forum. But all attempts to introduce one have failed so now I've given up! You are simply impossible! "

It was words and not rhymes, and Per is of course absolutely right in his statement. I completely understand his frustration. I want to tell Per that my proposal is that we revisit the discussion forum. Maybe we can get an introduction from Per? A common place for discussion fora is a learning platform and in a learning platform I have used discussion fora. Sometimes the corresponding function is also available on an organization's Intranet. Another option could be to use social media where a closed discussion group can be a good option in some cases. But now I think we should try again with Per's created discussion forum.

I have several ideas that would be suitable for discussion fora. For example, I want to initiate fundraising, or simply collecting money. I want to initiate a campaign for the collection of contributions to Strömstad Academy or why not the collection of contributions to some urgent activity/cause in Strömstad Academy. What could it be?

These days there is a letter from the Vice-Chancellor about the importance of paying the membership fee in Strömstad Akademi. Of course we will do that.

Vice-Chancellor's report

We have had our first board meeting and after that the well-known discussion about administration, bureaucracy, rules and rigidity came up. All businesses, all organizations have rules that they follow to achieve their purpose. There is extensive research into how this should be done in the best way, mainly in organizational theory and informatics. If wrong designed, the administration and bureaucracy become a burden; an obstacle in the business. Very often you see the business one-sidedly and from one perspective only. Then the bureaucracy becomes a burden. Some of the Academy's members seem to consider that it is a burden to follow the

statutes, that documenting the decisions made is unnecessary bureaucracy, that preparing the questions that are raised at the board meeting is excessive bureaucracy, etc. I hope that no one reading these lines agrees with this when it is phrased this way. Rules, administration and bureaucracy are different aspects of the same phenomenon: Governance and management. It should help the organization achieve its goals.

The question or rather, the claim that lies behind the protests, is that we have unnecessary administration, unnecessary bureaucracy. Is it unnecessary to follow the statutes, is it unnecessary to document decisions made, is it unnecessary to prepare the meetings? Of course not, on the contrary, it is a necessity and I think everyone realizes that. Why do you protest then? I think it has to do with the Academy's purpose, the Academy's vision. I have formulated several visions for Strömstad Academy, we have had several seminars about the future of the Academy and many good and reasonable proposals have emerged. But neither the Board nor the Annual Meeting has made a clear decision about either the purpose of Strömstad Academy or its vision. I believe that we must prioritize this work, to formulate these important steering documents in order to put these fruitless discussions about administration behind us.

I have written a 6-page document about bureaucracy, rules and such and published it in the free series (<http://stromstadakademi.se/FSS/FSS-32.pdf>). There I describe the conditions surrounding rules, bureaucracy and organization with a detailed system theoretical analysis of our dear Academy. Please read it, those who have already done so say it's brilliant! Maybe exaggeration, but let's say it is worth reading.

As Vice-Chancellor, I am expected to lead the Academy's activities, and the least that can be demanded of me is that I speak about what I consider these activities to consist of. I see three main areas:

1. To publish research reports, investigations, debate articles, popular science articles, etc. In short: to publish
2. Hold and participate in seminars/webinars where you can present different thoughts and ideas and discuss these in an open interdisciplinary environment.
3. Run research projects or other projects in collaboration with external actors

This is the Academy's core business and that is why our members have joined the Academy. This activity has its center of gravity in local and working groups that together form the Strömstad Academy. Control and management of this takes place through the association Strömstad academy. The Vice-Chancellor leads the Academy and the Chairman leads the association. The purpose of this is for the Academy to be able to devote itself solely to academic activities, while the association takes care of the administration in a broad sense. I think it is very important to distinguish between these activities. We have not done that and since most active members of the Academy are members of the Board, they have perceived the Academy's activities as administration of the Academy, which is completely incorrect. An important role in the Academy's activities is held by the Editorial Committee/Board, which in my opinion must become more active.

Finally, a comment about the writing style of Strömstad Academy. Completely informally and without any formal decisions, I have become the Academy's graphic designer. It's probably because, after almost 40 years of struggle, I managed to get Word to behave the way I want, not the way Bill Gates wants. Marylou, Carl and I have had many discussions about capital or small A in academia and we have managed to agree on the following:

- Strömstad akademi is spelled with a lowercase a, and no S after Strömstad in Swedish text.

- Strömstad Academy is spelled with a capital A in English text. Strömstad is spelled with "ö" whenever possible (and it always is!)
- If I mention Strömstad Academy in running text and cannot bear to print the whole name, I can write either SA or Academy with a capital A. If I write academy with a small a, I mean universities and colleges in general.

I have tried to consistently use this style of writing in the text above. It can then be a little strange, for example in the sentence: "The purpose of this is that the Academy should be able to devote itself solely to academic activities...". Academy with a capital A refers to Strömstad Academy, while "academic activities" refers to research and teaching conducted at the country's universities and colleges.

I just found out that one of the Academy members, Margareta Herrman, has passed away. She was Associate Professor in Ethnology and one of my friends from University West. At the time, she was doing film studies. We wrote a couple of articles together and as a tribute to Margareta I have posted one of them in the free series, FS-33.

Per Flensburg

Bengt Johannisson: Our Academy carries a societal responsibility

Our Academy carries a societal responsibility

Bengt Johannisson

As members of the Strömstad Academy we for sure consider ourselves as significant contributors to advanced studies of societal phenomena. A considerable share of our lives (so far) we have dedicated to provide the growing knowledge society with academically dedicated contributions. After our retirement from formal positions in the academic community many of us have broadened our outlook on the world without being tied to an academic vocabulary and conventional methodologies. I myself have genuinely enjoyed offering the general public the insights I have accumulated during and after my professional career.

Today academic research in the majority of disciplines appears as a mechanical process where Google Scholar is used as a supplier of references that invite support of and variation in established findings. When academic positions are filled, the number of publications rather than their qualitative contributions to the field is often used as the main criterion. As senior researchers we are privileged since we do not have to participate in this competitive race. Instead we have the time needed to independently reflect on down-to-earth situations that have caught our attention. The insights we gain during our post-professional life are different from those that our 'productive' formal career provided.

I thus argue that we as fellows of the Strömstad Academy have competences that our still 'active' colleagues in their formal positions are not able to mobilize. A dialogue with the general public – a third compulsory task in addition to research and teaching of any Swedish university - does however not benefit an academic career. As senior researchers we, considering our broad and deep life experiences, are well suited to take on the challenge to care for adult education. This is what is needed to make democracy work. The key question then is: How can we go about sharing our insights with others?

Let me tell you how I dealt with this challenge!

My field of research and education is entrepreneurship, which often, rightly or wrongly, has been associated with business administration. However, today it is a discipline of its own. Contrasting economists who only adopt a few understandings of entrepreneurship, we recognize a wide variety of images of the phenomenon. The variety of scientific journals in our field demonstrates this. Thus, instead of staying with one generic definition of entrepreneurship, an approach often adopted in education, we argue that it is important to recognize that entrepreneurship has many faces.

If a researcher wants to illustrate this diversity, Google Scholar is a very effective source. But for ordinary people who are not familiar with the research community this is not a practicable way. In order to connect to them it is necessary to both verbally and visually vividly communicate proposed shades of entrepreneurship. Explicit references to academic literature triggers a feeling of inferiority while stories about entrepreneurial persons and incidents reported in different media signal recognition and identification. If the text presenting each shade of entrepreneurship is brief and to the point, the reader feels invited to supplement it herself, thereby experiencing a feeling of smartness.

In a recently published book in Swedish – *50 nyanser av entreprenörskap* (50 Shades of Entrepreneurship) – I adopted the outlined approach in order to inform the general public about the many faces of entrepreneurship. Each shade is thus introduced by a drawing that is supplemented with a brief text (about 500 words, that is a bit fewer than what this article provides). In addition to general reasoning this text offers concrete examples from the Swedish context. Each is, though, not presented as a general truth but rather, virtually as well as verbally, as a paradox, that is as a question that can be answered both affirmatively and negatively. Rather than making herself dependent on a meddling researcher the reader is accordingly invited to reflect, thereby co-creating insight into entrepreneurship. In this way the reader's curiosity is aroused, her understanding of entrepreneurship enlarged, her self-confidence enhanced and her participation in societal development encouraged.

Isn't this approach something to stimulate? Please let me know!

Bengt Johannisson, professor

Carl Olivestam: School politicians come and go - the school problems persist

School politicians come and go - the school problems persist. Which models fit: digital or analog? Denominational or conventional?

Carl Olivestam, professor

Discussions and questioning about school and its design have been intense in Sweden since the Second World War and have resulted in frequent school reforms. At the latest, with the formation of a new government after the 2022 election, a new education minister has taken office, **Lotta Edholm**. She already declared on December 30, 2022 that the teaching will be prolonged with one hour per school day at the primary level. This hour should focus primarily on reading, writing and mathematics. Her initiative is based on comprehensive research that has long shown shortcomings in these areas. And if these skills are not trained early during school age, it inhibits the continued school development of the student and his life opportunities. <https://www.regeringen.se/sveriges-regering/utbildningsdepartementet/lotta-edholm/>

She formulates her basic attitude as follows:

"What happens in today's classrooms determines Sweden's future. We must once again establish a strong school of knowledge, where every student has good conditions to reach their full potential."

As part of realizing lifelong learning, she emphasizes book reading, something that current research also calls for, e.g.

In 2022, **Anita Sjölander** has compiled and discussed the research about school in her theses at Mid Sweden University: *Children's reading habits What importance do adults have for children's reading habits?* <https://www.diva-portal.org › get ›>

In her research inventory, digital teaching aids are also discussed in relation to analog ones, where the conclusion is that computers are not in themselves worse than books, but that it depends on what and how often students choose the former over the latter.

Personally, I can closely follow **my youngest daughter**, who is now in her second year of primary school in a municipal school. For her, computer time is pleasurable, while reading time requires stimulation from teachers and parents. I am deeply grateful that her teacher has undergone special training and that she prioritizes reading in books over the computer during school hours, and constantly urges us as parents to support this at home. Each leave is a "reading leave" which is followed up and noted upon return to school by this responsible teacher. But this strategy does not prevent the students from each having their own tablet where they are trained to achieve prescribed IT competence regardless of their home background.

Which models are best: digital or analog?

The actions of the Minister of Education have resulted, among other things, in the choice of teaching methods. And our new Chairman of Strömstad Academy, **Åsa Morberg**, threw herself directly into the debate with articles in the last issue of SA's newsletter.

I don't know to what extent the Academy's newsletter is supposed to be a forum for political preferences, posts in the latest newsletter give a feeling that the educational discussion has given way to the political one where the previous government stands for the ideal and the current one for the deviation. Education Minister Lotta Edholm calls the school's digitization an experiment and contrasts digitization with printed teaching materials (221230).

This Åsa's clear position is reinforced by yet another article by her in the same newsletter: The Minister of Education does not stop religious free schools, but the supervision of the schools and their owners is getting tougher.

The Editor of the newsletter makes this tendency even clearer and becomes even absurd: Åsa Morberg presents the current bourgeois Swedish government's religious approach to religious free schools, which can be compared to the previous social democratic government's approach.

I don't see that Åsa Morberg goes so far in her criticism that she claims that the government practices a religious approach! Moreover, the Editor has to deal with that rubbish.

Which form of school system is best: Confessional brooms or conventional?

In our Swedish society, freedom of speech and religion prevails. Prohibitions against certain forms are offensive, while, on the other hand, a consistent follow-up of the norms that apply to the school should be more consistent with the Swedish constitution, right? Åsa Morberg puts forward a somewhat thin argument in this context when she claims that the current education minister herself went to an independent school (and in addition sat on the board of

one of its organizations, I might add) would have some decisive significance regarding her view of denominational schools.

My view

With this post of mine, **I want to emphasize** that Åsa Morberg highlighted very current and fundamental problem areas for the future: Learning, the means, the methods and the forms of school organization. But the discussion must have a scientific and not a political anchoring. The fact that the agents belong to different governments and political parties cannot be at the center of discussions about vital institutions such as the Swedish school. In this way, our Academy's newsletter can also continue to focus on science and, not least, pedagogy and didactics without slipping into political positions.

An item on the agenda for the next board meeting?

It's great fun with some new angles on an insoluble problem. So let's hope that this stimulates school leaders, teachers, students and guardians to a conscious reflection on what the school is for. And it is, as I see it, necessary that Strömstad Academy contributes with outreach in the continuing school process, preferably in a joint outreach by the entire board and the Association towards the political powers both municipally and nationally. It requires a special group to take responsibility for such a business orientation, which I hereby propose. An item on the agenda for the next board meeting

Carl E. Olivestam

Teacher Trainer and Professor of Education

Gudmund Bergqvist: Editorial Board

Editorial Board

Gudmund Bergqvist

After 6 years as coordinator/convenor of the editorial committee, Gudmund Bergqvist is now stepping down and handing over the assignment to Peter Währborg, but remains a resource in the committee. New contributions to the AAS will thus be sent to peter@wahrborg.se. Everyone wishes him a warm welcome in this new assignment. Entries in other series broadcast as before until further notice.

Gudmund Bergqvist: Ukraine

Gudmund Bergqvist

Ukraine's struggle for its freedom and the defense of the liberal world order with democracy, respect for international laws and the rule of law. They need our support! Their fight is our fight. Hold on, Hold on! Anyone who wants to donate can look to United24 for opportunities to support in different ways.

Gudmund Bergqvist: Cannabis

Gudmund Bergqvist

In many states in the United States and throughout Canada there is a legalization for recreational cannabis which is allowed and sold in shops. It has become a great financial success for the companies that support this. In their campaigns they minimize the side effects of the drug and ignore the effects on society as increased costs for health care, disruptions of working life, etc. For society and state no good deal! In Sweden, there is now a campaign for decriminalization of Cannabis as in many other countries. Legalisation is supported by the cannabis industry with billions of dollars and American Cannabis companies see an upcoming large market in Europe.

From time to time articles in the daily press discuss the problem. The whole development is described well in [Drugnews.nu](https://www.drugnews.nu). Read it and support Drugnews

One of those who really got to grips with the problems is Staffan Hübinette who for many years lectured on drug problems and recently published a revealing book about the cannabis industry. He will soon be giving a zoom lecture, which everyone in the Academy will get a link to!

It will be February 3rd at 1800 CET

Title The Cannabis Industry and Legalization in Europe.

Per Flensburg: Science festival 2023

At the board meeting on 11 January, the formal decision was made that this year's Science Festival will take place on 22 – 25 May. The reason for this is that there was quite a lot of criticism of last year's festival because it was too close to Midsummer. Many members could not attend for that reason. But as the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, who is also the organizer, is away for the first two weeks of June, we had to move the festival to May. After Midsummer there was no option because everything is booked in Strömstad at that time. The movement must be considered as an experiment and we will evaluate the results very carefully.

New for this year is that there will probably be another meeting in Strömstad, around 10 December, to pay attention to this year's Nobel laureates. This is a result of this year's collaboration with Strömstad's high school. In connection with this, we will have at least one day of presentations by Academy members with the theme: This year's Nobel laureates. Tentative date 8-9 Dec.

A theme for this year's Science Festival in May has not yet been determined. As usual, we think that new members will give talks on their topics, but there may be room for other themes. So me and Anders are happy to receive ideas and suggestions as well as registrations for presentations. There have already been proposals to pay attention to last year's Nobel laureates and to have a discussion about the world's population development, but more proposals are welcome. As usual: 20 min lecture and 10 min discussion. We will be in Fars sal on May 22 and 23 and in Skagerack on May 24 and 25. Installation of new members will be in Skagerack and we hope for some form of musical entertainment.

Finally, it may be an idea to book a hotel or other stay if you intend to visit the festival. To be safe, you can book cancellable.