STRÖMSTAD ACADEMY
Nordic institute for advanced studies

News Forum Strömstad Interdisciplinary Academy

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Vice-Chancellor and Information System Scientist Per Flensburg and **Educator and Chairman of the Board Åsa Morberg** inform about Strömstad Academy news.

Vice-Chancellor and Information System Scientist Per Flensburg has written scientific facts about Santa Claus and also about proposals for the future organization of the Academy´s activities.

In the anthology Good Thoughts on Folklore and Mythology vol 1 Folklore 2025 s. 455-471 **ethnologist Anders Gustavsson** has published Border Area People and their Contacts across the long Norwegian/Swedish National Border. https://trivent-publishing.eu/img/cms/2025%20Terry%20Gunnell/Festschrift_vol-%201-%20FOLKLORE_eBook.pdf

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 at per.- flensburg@stromstadakademi.se

I wish new contributions to the January issue of the Newsletter sent to my e-mail address with deadline on 27 January 2026: 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!

Redaktör: Anders Gustavsson
Layout: Per Flensburg

Please, also send contributions to the Academy´s publication series Acta Academia Strömstadiensis, AAS, and the Reprint Series and the Free Series to: per.flensburg@stromstadakademi.se, the video series SAV to gudmundbergqvist@hotmail.com.

Report from the Chairman and Vice-Chancellor

Monthly report from Per Flensburg, Vice-Chancellor and Åsa Morberg, Chairman of the Board

We will soon end 2025, and enter 2026. We had an eventful year behind us. We have been very active in the Academy during the past year.

We are now all hoping for a good year 2026 for Strömstad Academy. And what could a good year mean? There are new members, there is activity, life and movement in our association. It is about being part of interesting and fun things, creating meaning and having fun!

And notice one thing: At 16:04 on December 21, the winter solstice happened! This means that from now on it will only get brighter!

Archive policy for Strömstad Academy to be decided

The board meeting is coming up soon and then we will establish an archive policy for Strömstad Academy. It is a task that Bode Janzon, Sten Philipson and Per Flensburg have been working on. This is the Board's main issue. It is the last piece of the puzzle in the association's administrative development. We have previously decided on a new statute, ethical policy, ethical council, created an editorial board, discussed a publication strategy and created new fora, all to increase administrative quality.

We will receive a presentation from the working group before the Board decides on an archive policy. Archiving is about systematically preserving documents and information that are no longer used daily, but that need to be saved for long-term reference, compliance with laws or historical purposes. Archiving is done either physically in archive spaces or digitally. In our case, the archive will be digital. There is already a digital beginning.

The archive includes the preservation of the most important documents for research and cultural heritage. Irrelevant documents are continuously eliminated. Archiving for associations is about us on our behalf and it means systematically collecting and preserving important documents such as minutes, accounts (7 years, according to the Accounting Act), membership registers and operational materials to secure the association's history and meet legal requirements.

We will appoint an archive manager and deputy archive manager who will provide advice and support to officials. Should Strömstad Academy be wound up and perhaps closed down, we will have to seek support from the People's Movement Archive for long-term storage of the association's documents.

You can of course ask yourself why we should save and archive documents. It is of course about efficiency in work. Order and order always make daily work easier. In an archive there are registers and lists and you can easily find your association's documents. It is important to keep all documents that concern the same thing together. A well-functioning archive enables control.

We also have certain legal obligations, and this applies, for example, to documents relating to finances. It is important that the archive is preserved and managed correctly for future generations. The events of the association and its history will live on in the archive.

The archive is part of our cultural heritage and the material in the archive can for example be used for history, exhibitions, historical research and sociological studies. You could perhaps say that the archive is the memory of Strömstad Academy. The documents that have been saved are still important many years later. We can investigate old issues and determi-

ne what decisions have been made. In the documents, we can search for information about the activities that Strömstad Academy has had, and you can also probably find models for development that works. The documents in the archive enable the collection of statistics and the compilation of reports. We will ask the archive manager to hold a webinar for members of Strömstad Academy so that everyone is aware of the archive policy and can work according to it.

Reorganization of academic activities

Strömstad Academy has an Editorial Board. It is a group of members who together determine the content, layout and strategy for our publications. They can act as advisors or decision-makers. The Editorial Board includes experts from different research areas.

Peter Währborg has been the convener of the Editorial Board. There have been no established and clear guidelines for the Editorial Board. The convener of the Editorial Board argued that the members of the Editorial Board did not work as intended. Peter Währborg then chose to resign as convener, but he remains as a member of the Editorial Board.

The Vice-Chancellor has long had thoughts about reorganizing academic activities, because like Peter Wähtborg, he believes that it has not worked. He will therefore call the Academy to a meeting in mid-January to discuss a possible reorganization. A proposal for such a reorganization is presented in a separate article in this newsletter.

Local groups

Per Staffan Boström has summoned the local chapter West and it will meet on January 8 in Gothenburg, at the National Archives. Per Staffan presents his thoughts in a special article where he also proposes a new theme.

Book Fair 2026 – will Strömstad Academy be there again next year? Or the year after?

The book fair exists to promote reading and literature and create a meeting place for ideas, cultural debate and education, as well as to highlight current social issues and various selected themes.

Everyone, from authors and publishers to readers and researchers, gather to explore new books, stories and perspectives. The fair serves as a large platform to stimulate conversation and knowledge exchange at a time when literature and the role of reading are more important than ever for society. Strömstad Academy had its own stand in 2025.

Québec, Folkbildning and Games are the decided theme for the 2026 book fair. Folkbildning, in collaboration with the Folkbildningsrådet, the Swedish Academy, Gothenburg University together with the Folkuniversitetet and the Swedish Bible Society, and Games, which are arranged with support from Göteborg & Co. The guest of honour is Guest of Honour: Québec. The initiative has already had a great impact, according to the Book Fair's managers, some twenty titles from Québec are being prepared for translation into Swedish, for example.

The Gothenburg Book Fair is the largest cultural event in the Nordic region and one of the largest book fairs in Europe with over 80,000 visitors, 800 exhibitors and 300 seminars. The fair is an exciting event for both a trade audience and the general public. We experienced this through our participation in the 2025 book fair.

Every year, thousands of program items are arranged on stages and in stands on the fair floor, and a prominent Guest of Honour leaves his mark on the fair with literature, food and culture. Next time we participate, maybe we can participate with program items on stages

and through seminars? The book fair is a hub for literature and cultural debate that inspires and provokes thought. By promoting education, reading and the role of literature in society, we together make the world a better place. The question is then whether we at Strömstad Academy should participate this year? Or whether we should wait and participate in 2027? The book fair is not primarily a board decision other than the financial framework for the book fair. The book fair belongs to the academic part of the Academy and the decision to participate is not made by the Board.

Again: The 2026 Science Festival will take place on August 10-12, 2026

The Science Festival in Strömstad, arranged by Strömstad Academy, is an annual event with popular science lectures and scientific discussions. The event is an important physical activity for Strömstad Academy. This year it will take place in the City Hall and more specifically in Fars sal. It has been a tradition and we are returning to the tradition. The program is worked out by Rector Per Flensburg together with Pro-Rector Anders Gustavsson. It follows the same format as before with 20+20 lectures where the lectures can be grouped by theme. New for this year is that we hope to have leading politicians lead a seminar where we discuss how the Academy and the Municipality can benefit from each other.

The rest of the arrangements are the responsibility of a local working group. It consists of Lars Broman, Peter Fritzell, Sveza Daceva-Filipova, Rosa Jörgensen and Sven Moosberg. We are all looking forward to participating in the science festival and have of course booked it into our calendars. The science festival is partly for ourselves, and partly for our contacts outside the Academy. We work mostly online and therefore the science festival is extra important. Researchers can present their latest results and ideas. This gives other members the opportunity to build on their work and enables the dissemination of knowledge to a wider audience. The science festival can be seen as a network and it provides a platform to meet like-minded colleagues and potential partners. It's almost like scientific speed dating! Participants get the opportunity to ask questions, challenge results and provide valuable feedback. Discussions can give rise to new projects or new turns in research.

Participating in the science festival gives you insight into the latest trends and technologies in your field. Scientific meetings keep you up to date and can help you stay ahead of the curve.

Per Flensburg: Organization of the Academy's activities

Organization of the Academy's activities

Per Flensburg, Vice-Chancellor

Introduction, background

We have made a fairly strict distinction between the Academy of Strömstad Academy and the non-profit association of Strömstad Academy. Non-profit associations are legally regulated, while an Academy does not really exist as a legal concept. Since we admit all eligible individuals upon application, we are something of a middle ground. In recent years, we have devoted a lot of time and energy to getting the association's activities in order, we have reviewed the statutes, we have drawn up job descriptions, we have an ethical policy and soon we will also have an archive policy. This means that we have a good foundation for the academic activities that on the other hand unfortunately have not worked particularly well. That is, we have published five books, a dozen articles in the free series, 14 videos in the SAV series, 6 reprint articles and one pre-print but only one article in the AAS series. It may

therefore be justified to take a fresh look and investigate how we can facilitate the publication of scientifically reviewed articles.

The main aim must be to involve as many people as possible in academic activities. The result of this is publications and lectures. We have lectures in collaboration with Rotary, the Folkuniversitetet and the Historical Society in Strömstad. Much of this is documented in our lecture series SAV, which Gudmund holds. There are also other independent lectures plus some entire courses given at senior universities. All of this is of a popular science nature. For those who want to continue to delve deeper into their subject, we have started theme groups. There are also those that cover interdisciplinary areas and that have a fairly concrete and defined goal. One such example is the technology assessment group whose goal is to reintroduce technical attachés in Sweden. But there are also broader groups, e.g. natural sciences and medicine. In addition to theme groups, we also have local groups so that we can meet physically without excessive costs.

The association is led by a board headed by the chairman, Åsa. The Academy does not have such a clear board, other than that it is led by the Vice-Chancellor, i.e. Per. The equivalent of the board is the Editorial Board and its tasks have been unclear. A narrow view is that it should discuss publications and be responsible for the quality of our various series of publications. In practice, in this perspective, it has become to appoint reviewers for the AAS series and establish guidelines for this series. Since we have about 80 different subjects from almost all faculties, this is not an easy task, I would say that it is an impossible task to find guidelines that fit everywhere. Peter Währborg and I have spent a lot of time discussing this and we have come up with a reasonable compromise that is on the website.

Problematic situation

We have had problems with book projects that were started with the intention of being printed without such a decision being anchored in either the board or the editorial committee. Last fall, the Editorial Board put its foot down and decided that all book projects would be reported to the Academic Council, but this did not happen. At the same time, the Editorial Board tried to take an overall responsibility for academic activities and not just deal with publications. None of this was formally confirmed by the annual meeting and the communication to the members was not the best. This resulted in Peter Währborg making his position as chairman of the Academic Council available. I will therefore call a meeting at the beginning of January. At this meeting, the future organization of the Academy will be discussed and therefore all members will be invited. It is important that as many people as possible are able to make themselves heard and express their opinions. This issue should not be imposed on them by the management, but as many people as possible should have an influence. However, in this paper I will describe an organization that I believe could be a clear boost for the Academy, but it is by no means set in stone, I want to emphasize that.

The result of the Academic activity is various forms of publications. This is indeed a statement that can be discussed, I myself have defined results as the changes in society that have occurred thanks to my activities, both major changes and in most cases small and limited ones. But generally it is the publications that count and we cannot go against the entire established research community. So it is about publications and for them this applies

1. That they are written
2. That they are read
3. That they influence

We have no major problems with point 1, with the exception of publications intended for AAS. It may be that the members do not see the benefit of putting in the extra work that an

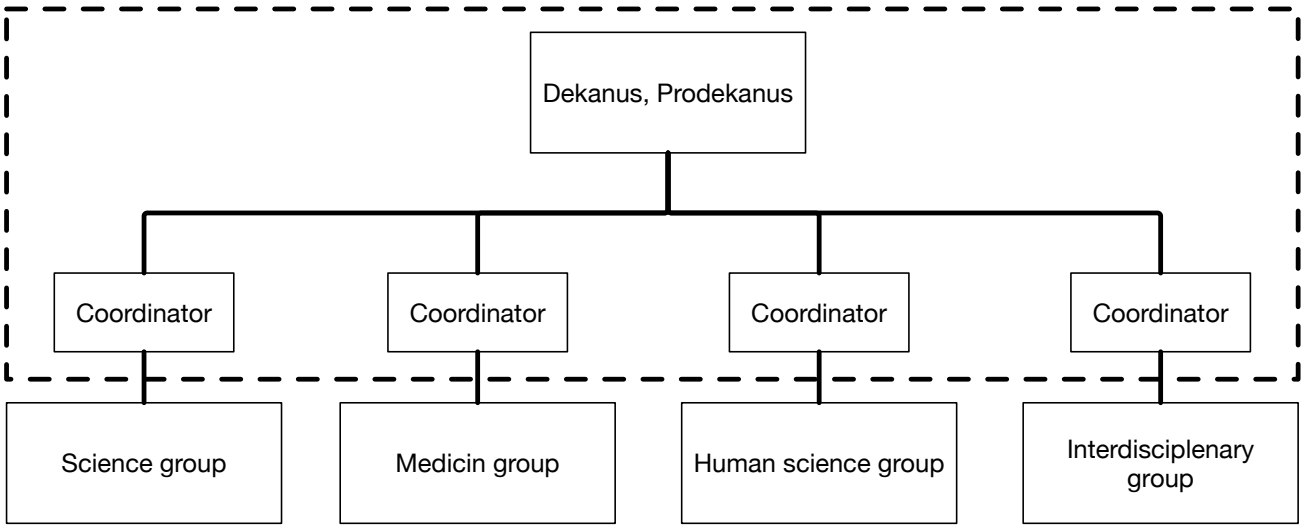
AAS publication entails since the benefit in the form of more readings is unclear and probably non-existent. And that leads us to point 2: How many people read our publications? Probably not many, since we are not visible in any national or international databases. We are trying to ally ourselves with various universities, but so far without much success. My suggestion to solve this dilemma is to start a journal on the Royal Library's platform: https://publicera.kb.se/ More on this later.

Point 3, to influence, is what many of us want to do and we have a fairly large number of debate fora. We have a discussion forum, which no one uses, Dag Lindgren has started a blog about overpopulation, which also does not lead to much discussion, I have started a think tank, Tvärtänkt, where I and a few others write cool debate articles, which are also not read. We write debate articles in our news forum, which comes out once a month and which seems to be read by a lot of people. But it is mostly a handful of people who write there.

Finally, we have a debate journal "Tidningen Tvärtänkt" or actually a prototype for a debate journal. Because not much is happening and it probably requires a lot of action to get it going. But I have some ideas that we can take up later.

Faculty Board

The first question concerns RK/EB. What is happening with it? I would like to transform it into something that is more like a faculty board, with groups for each major subject area, e.g. medicine, natural sciences, economics, humanities, interdisciplinary studies and perhaps a few more. In other words, units that are responsible for the quality of the subject-specific publications. This usually happens through peer review and it is a process we are well familiar with. For specific subject reviews, we can sometimes hire staff from outside the Academy. It could be conceivable that these subject groups become our theme groups, with the task of both producing and reviewing their publications. In any case, the activities of the theme groups and the faculties must be kept separate. One could imagine that the theme groups are more focused on discussion and criticism, while the faculties are scientific. Below is a general organizational chart.



One might think that it is an unnecessarily complicated organization. But we have about 80 different subjects from almost all faculties. It is impossible to formulate scientific criteria that apply to all subjects. Instead, we have to group related subjects that have roughly the same view of good science.

But the faculty board as a whole also has the task of discussing the development of the Academy, coming up with new proposals for specializations/themes, initiating book projects

(which anyone can do anyway), etc. The important thing is that the work is conducted on an informal level, with as few rules as possible and with the opportunity for everyone to come up with initiatives. We are all experienced researchers and know what is required from a scientific publication, so we should be able to trust each other to a large extent.

The Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor are self-appointed members of the faculty board, but they do not have to be on the subject boards. Their most important task is to co-ordinate the activities so that the Academy's purpose is achieved. Each subject group has a convener and together with the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor they form what can be called a small faculty board that meets fairly often. The large faculty board does not need to meet that often and actually all members are on it.

Scientific journal

If a researcher wants to publish his/her data/results, there are the following options:

1. Conferences: It costs money that the university or college pays. A senior researcher who is not employed at any university/college must pay for both fees and travel themselves. Approximately 25-50,000 SEK is a common amount.

2. Traditional scientific journals: These usually require an affiliation with an established university/college and cost a lot of money to read. These are usually paid for by the library at the university/college to which you are affiliated. Being published in such a journal is a time-consuming process that can take years. Neither authors nor reviewers get paid.

3.Open access journals: Traditional journals have received a lot of criticism for their outrageous prices and many funders require open access publishing, which means that the journal is free to read. Publishers then compensate for their lost income by charging a fee to publish an article. It usually costs something between 25-70,000 SEK. It should be emphasized that neither authors nor reviewers are paid.

4.Diamond open access: In this case, it costs nothing to publish and nothing to read. All journals on Publicera are diamond open access, which is a requirement for publishing there.

This entire system is based on both impact factor and peer review. Impact factor is a measure of how many citations a particular article has. Impact is measured both for individual articles and for the entire journal. It is believed that the higher the impact a journal has, the higher its quality and the more sought-after it is to publish in it. This means that it can take a very long time before an article is published. But in certain subjects, such as medicine and life sciences, the time to publication is very important. Therefore, there is the possibility of preprinting, to publish while waiting for review. An unpleasant phenomenon has arisen, namely predatory journals (Beall, 2012, 2017). These are open access journals with a very summary, sometimes non-existent, review. But an accepted, i.e. paid, article is quickly published and can be added to the individual researcher's publication list. The cost is as high as for a regular open access journal, but the quality is in no way guaranteed. The name can often be the same or very similar to that of an established serious journal. The strange thing is that neither authors nor universities really want to deal with this. The authors get a guaranteed publication with minimal work and neither they nor their universities want to admit this form of cheating (Flensburg, 2022).

The last category, Diamond Open Access, is of course very appealing and the Royal Library provides a platform https://publicera.kb.se for this purpose. They also provide help with some functions around it, ISSN, DOI: etc. The idea is that Strömstad Academy will publish a journal “Acta Academiae Strömstadiensis” with an interdisciplinary focus. I develop the idea in more detail below

Acta Academiae Strömstadensis

The purpose of this journal is to give senior researchers the opportunity to publish even after they have been forcibly retired by their regular university. We have heard too many stories and researchers who have been suspended without warning at the age of 67. Here they have the opportunity to publish and become affiliated with Strömstad Academy.

The journal has the same division as our faculty board with a chief editor for each subject or subject area, one might better say. To help him, he has a number of associated editors who are the ones who review each article. In exceptional cases, you can also have outsiders review if there is no one who considers themselves sufficiently competent.

The editors within a certain subject area jointly formulate the guidelines according to which the review should take place. The guidelines are published on the journal's website so that they are familiar to prospective contributors.

There also needs to be someone or a few who have an overview of the entire journal, who designs and updates the website and is the contact person for KB. I suggest that Anders and I, i.e. the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, share this task.

Each issue of the journal, which should be called Acta Academiae Strömstadensis (AAS), could have a theme. This is announced by the relevant subject group and hopefully brings together a number of contributions around this theme. There can be individual contributions in the form of a multidisciplinary contribution, but there can also be several authors from different subjects who together deal with the question at hand. Such a theme issue can correspond to an anthology but does not have to be as extensive. Each issue of the journal should also have space for interdisciplinary articles that are outside of the theme.

One issue is membership in Strömstad Academy. I would like to make it mandatory, but I do not know if the platform allows it. A fee of 600 SEK/year that gives the right to publish unlimited articles for a year cannot be considered unreasonable, given the outrageous fees that regular journals charge. They have a return on investment (ROI) of 40% compared to a regular company that is 10-20%. The research community also criticizes this system, but as long as quality is measured in the number of citations, it can be put tolerated. If membership in SA is not required, what incentive is there to become a member of this illustrious congregation? It is a pedagogical task modeled after the major in my opinion.

Advantages and disadvantages

This proposal has several advantages. Since there are no clear guidelines that cover all sciences and exclude all non-sciences, the assessment of the scientific value of a contribution must be made according to the guidelines that apply to the subject area of the contribution. We then avoid exhausting discussions about what is or is not science. There have been attempts to do this within the Academy.

The researchers who are active within the Academy have been doing research for a long time, typically 30-50 years. They are incredibly experienced and one of the purposes of AAS is that they can share these experiences. We have partly done this in some of our anthologies, but here we can do it in a more thoughtful way, for example by addressing various methodological problems.

We can claim that the profile of the Academy and the journal is interdisciplinary, but still allow contributions from within disciplines, much like we did in the pandemic book. It then becomes multi-science.

The Academy cannot offer lab facilities or expensive instruments, so it is not relevant to conduct research that requires this unless the individual researcher can rent it or be invited

to participate in some existing environment. We can mainly publish review articles, state of the art and summary analyses. The latter, where one starts from a large number of articles that have investigated the same phenomenon and makes a more or less statistical compilation and comes to a common conclusion, are common and appreciated today.

It can be assumed that the members' desire to produce articles in AAS increases partly through increased support within the scientific community, partly through increased visibility. Should this not be the case, we can still manage for a few years by using the articles that are already in our AAS series.

One disadvantage is that KB wants the editorial staff not to write texts, but for others to do that. Here we will have a very large editorial staff because we cover the entire scientific field and it can therefore be considered difficult for the editorial staff not to participate in the publishing activities. We could stipulate that an article written by an editorial staff member should be reviewed by three and not by two, which is usually the case.

Per Flensburg: Scientific facts about Santa Claus

Scientific facts about Santa Claus – an old classic

Per Flensburg, Professor

Did you not get a visit from Santa this year? You may not have noticed because he could have gotten away. If Santa exists. Some physical facts speak against this.

No known species of reindeer can fly. But there are another 300,000 living organisms to be classified, and even if the majority of these are insects and bacteria, this does not COMPLETELY rule out the existence of flying reindeer, which only Santa Claus has access to.

There are 2 billion children (people under 18) on Earth. However, Santa Claus does not seem to serve the Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist religions, which is why the workload is reduced to only 15% – 378 million, according to the Population Institute.

With an average of 3.5 children per household, that makes 91.8 million homes. It is assumed that there is at least one good child in every home.

Santa Claus has 31 Christmas hours to work on, thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, and assuming he travels from east to west (which seems logical). This means 822.6 visits per second. This means that for every Christian household with good children, Santa has about 1/1000 of a second to park, jump out of the sleigh, wriggle down the chimney, fill the stockings with presents, leave the rest of the presents under the tree, eat any treats that may be lying around, get himself up the chimney again, back into the sleigh and on to the next house. It is common for Santa to get a shot of schnapps when he comes to visit. Let's assume he gets 5 cl of 40% alcohol every 10th visit. Then he would have to drink 183,600 liters of pure alcohol or about 459,000 shots of schnapps. Santa's metabolism must be something really special!

We now assume that each of these households is evenly spaced across the Earth (which, of course, we know is false but for the sake of our calculations, we will accept this), and this gives 1.2 kilometers per household, a total journey of 120.8 million kilometers, not including the breaks that most of us have to do at least once every 31 hours, plus feeding the reindeer and so on, not to mention the 459,000 schnapps! Santa's sleigh must therefore be moving at a speed of 1045 kilometers per second, 3,000 times the speed of sound.

By comparison, the fastest man-made vehicle on Earth, the Ulysses space probe, moves at a ridiculous speed of 43.8 kilometers per second – a conventional reindeer runs at a maximum of 24 kilometers per hour.

The sleigh's payload adds another interesting element. Assuming that each child gets nothing more than a decent-sized LEGO box (about 1.5 kilos), the sleigh weighs 321,000 tons, not including Santa, who is often described as overweight.

On the ground, a conventional reindeer can pull no more than 220 kg. Even if we accept that Santa's "Flying Reindeer" can pull 10 times the normal weight, eight reindeer are not enough. We need 214,200 reindeers. This increases the weight of the sleigh – to 353,430 tons. Again, for comparison – this is four times the weight of the ship Queen Elizabeth.

353,000 tons traveling at 1,045 km per second creates enormous air resistance – this will heat the reindeer in the same way as spaceships re-entering the Earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer will absorb 14.3 quintillion joules of pure energy. Per second. Each!

In short, they will burst into flames almost instantly, exposing the reindeer behind them to immense heat and creating a deafening explosion of sound in their wake.

The entire reindeer group will disintegrate over a period of 4.26 thousandths of a second. Santa, meanwhile, will be subjected to g-forces 17,500.06 times normal. A 182-kilogram Santa Claus (who seems ridiculously thin) will then be pressed against the back wall of the sleigh with a force of 3,149,961 kg.

The conclusion is therefore – does Santa Claus really exist?

Rappe Kalja: Near Vinslöv

The vitriol-producing steam leather lay planed on a large ladder
The cord set risked the fumbling float rings to 18%
Scrapkiller ate a soft ice cream with sprinkles and sipped a broken one
The bottle cap widened its views with eaten green pretzels in bulk

The connection was disbanded in shock with the authorities' permission
The rubble of the premises traveled over dark rail buses with daffodils
Party-yellow morguls with blue hairbands fertilized the population
Misery spread Trumptorically in the climate-threatened atmosphere

Then a bright-eyed fry rode a white wave-colored chicken
A satisfaction came with the 22:12 train and lay down across the lawn
In Vinslöv, pancakes were fried with mustard and green eggs with ketchup
The steam leather, the cord set, scrapkiller, and the bottle cap returned to their chores

And everything is just a footnote (No. 1298735) in the world's gigantic encyclopedia