

## Dear friends

As usual, this year has been filled with strange adventures. I thought that my absent-mindedness would go away as years pass, but it looks like it is going worse. Also, I always try to be on time, but that too was going a bit too far this year.

## A miracle

This year, I have experienced a real miracle.

This fits quite well, as one chapter in the book I am writing deals with miracles from a scientific point of view. I am writing that chapter those days. Dealing with things like prophecies, Noah's flood, passage of the reed sea, walking on water, virgin birth and similar. Actually, very few of them really violate any known laws of nature.

But the one I experienced myself, definitely did.

Do you know what gives an aircraft the ability to fly?

The wings? No!

The engine(s)? No!

The surrounding air? No!

If you read the regulations given by the aviation authorities, you get the answer:

"An aircraft cannot fly unless the following documents are on-board: Certificate of registration and Nationality, Certificate of airworthiness, Certificate of insurance....."

Once a year, my aircraft has to be inspected, like my car. But while the car inspection is done in 10 minutes, the safety inspection of the aircraft requires full working days by very skilled experts. When this is done, a protocol is written, which states that the plane is allowed to fly one more year. This protocol has to be brought in the aircraft together with all the other documents.



Last year, when I replaced the protocol, I also happened to get the certificate of airworthiness and put that too into the garbage bin. The mistake was found this year at the annual inspection. During one full year, I have been flying without certificate of airworthiness. According to Transportstyrelsen (CAA), this is impossible. Without doubt a pure miracle!

## Correct - and yet wrong

In January, the members of our choir, Hemsjökören, got an invitation to her birthday party from Anna-Karin, one of the members. It was supposed to take part in the church house (församlingshemmet), with a fuzzy starting point around 15. So I went there and arrived about 15.15. Lots of people had arrived already, and I started talking to some of the other guests. Got some snacks etc, and had a generally good time.

Meanwhile, I was looking for Anna-Karin but could not see her anywhere. Probably, she was in the kitchen. But after 15 minutes or so, I started wondering where she was. No one else from the choir had appeared yet, and I still had the birthday gift in my hand. So I asked one of the guests if she knew where Anna-Karin was.

Anna-Karin? Who is that?

I was at the wrong party!

Had I made a mistake on location?

I went home and checked the almanac in the computer.

Everything was right, so I had to check the invitation mail.

Yes, the location of the party was correct, but not the day.

I had put the note one week too early in my computer.

One should always be on time, or a little earlier, but perhaps not one full week too early!

And one more thing: I had not understood how easy it is to sneak into a party to have a nice time and good food, if only you look innocent enough.

### **Not as fresh as usual**

When a toothbrush gets too old, one usually throws it away. But sometimes, it can be used for other purposes. When you have guests, they will need towels, soap, sheets, and why not a toothbrush? On the other hand, offering them one that is worn out, could possibly be considered less friendly.

But there are other purposes. At the table in the bathroom, I have an old toothbrush, that I use for cleaning odd places that cannot be reached with other brushes. Like narrow places in the basin, under the bathtub, and in the toilet.

Last Christmas, as usual, Annika and Gunhild spent some days in our house. They made great efforts to decorate the house at Christmas. On the second day of Christmas (Dec 26), I was on duty in church, and also was going to sing in a group from the choir. So I had to get up early that morning. As you might know, I am like zombie in mornings, so everything I do is more or less on autopilot.

When I brushed my teeth, I did not experience the usual freshness. When I cleaned the toothbrush afterwards, I suddenly woke up entirely. It was very dirty, almost black. Annika or Gunhild had thought that the table was not a proper place, and had put it in my mug for toothbrushes. Guess if I had to brush my teeth once more, this time with a brush that had not been used for cleaning the toilet.

### **A geysir in the garden**

This episode reminds on another that happened a few months later. Gradually, there appeared a stench of sewage in the laundry room (combined with the heater room). This has happened a few times at irregular intervals (separated by several years). The cause usually is that the water lock in the floor drain has evaporated, and it is easily fixed by filling water. So I did, but the stench only got worse.

In our house, there is one more floor drain. Under the floor, there is a pit containing the oil tank (not used any more) and the pump and pressure tank for tap water. One can get there through a hole climbing down a ladder. So I understood that this floor drain had gone dry. With a flash light and a bottle of water I climbed down the ladder. Stepping down from the ladder, I suddenly found myself standing in ankle-deep sewage water. I climbed up again and as a result, I spread the stench across the entire house before I had changed socks, slippers and trousers.

Obviously, the tanks for cleaning sewage water were blocked in some way. An inspection outdoors showed a wet patch on the ground close to the outlet of the sewage tanks. I started digging there, and as I came down into the ground, I could see water sipping up from the bottom of the hole. Then, suddenly, the bottom broke, and geysir of sewage water appeared. I was able to jump away just in time not to get soaked with that stinky water.

## **Keeping the house cold**

In summer, keeping the house cold might be a problem. In winter, it is not. Our main heating system is an air-to-air heat pump. For warm water and backup, we have a wood fired heater. This one can also be used as a backup in case of power failure. In the last years, I have installed an electrical heater there as well, so I can get warm water without having to start a fire.

One winter morning, when I woke up, the house felt cold. A glance at the thermometer told that my feeling was correct. 11 degrees indoors. Outside, it was -10. I started a couple electrical fans, but they are too weak to make it comfortable indoors when it is cold like that outside. So I was a bit desperate when I started troubleshooting the heat pump. It did not react in any way to commands. Totally dead. I checked the cables, and found that there was no electricity. The lamps worked, so there was power in the house. I checked the fuses, and they were OK.

So I decided to call an electrician, but first, I started the electrical heating for warm-water, and started the pump circulating hot water to the radiators in the house. After calling the electrician, my plan was to start a fire to heat the house. When I was under way to the phone, I noticed that the heat pump was working again. so I went stop the circulation of hot water through radiators. Coming back, I found the the heat pump had stopped again.

The house was cold because I had switched off current to the heat pump without knowing it. It used the same switch as the electrical heater for warm water. In the evening before, I had decided to save some money by switching off the water heater. The most common reason for failure of electrical equipment: Unplugged!

## **Allan, the saboteur**

The more files you have on the hard-disk, the slower the computer will be. So at irregular intervals, I throw away files that I do not need. In the beginning of the year, I made such a cleaning. First inspect a directory to check that it is garbage only. Then delete all the files, and finally the empty directory. While I was doing this, after I had erased all files in a folder, it was suddenly full again. The operation had failed somehow, so I deleted the files again. Suddenly, the folder filled up again, and with files that I did not recognize. I understood that I had some malware in my computer, and that this used my computer to store some suspicious stuff. Perhaps something illegal, that they did not want in their own computers in case the police would make investigations. So I erased the files once more, and started a scan for malware.

Then, the phone rang. It was Madeleine, our conductor in the Hemsjö choir.

"Allan, are you on Dropbox?"

"No", was my astonished reply.

"But", said Madeline, "we can see that you have entered dropbox, and has deleted the music files that I put there to assist the members in learning the scores."

I did not understand anything, and denied again. Until Madeleine mentioned names of some files, and I recognized.

Without me noticing it, my computer had decided to change folder while I was looking away for a moment. So I was in the Dropbox folder of the choir, in which the music for training was stored.

Destroying the work other were trying to do.

## **Friends - or what?**

As a member of Facebook, I often get friend requests. If I don't know the person, I use to ask who he/she is. If they appear be nice, I accept. Once or twice it has happened that the person is not as nice as I thought. Like once, when I had accepted a young lady, and a few days later noticed an ad on the time-

line. In a room there were lots of nude people obviously doing xxx exercises. Normally FB does not allow nakedness in the pictures, but here it was made like in paintings you can see in some churches. All sensitive parts were "accidentally" covered by a chair, an arm etc. And in the text below: Welcome to the extraordinary parties in our very open-minded club. You will find our hostesses extremely charming and cooperative. Do like nnn.nnn, nnn.nnn, Allan Emrén, nnn.nnn, nnn.nnn,.... Membership only costs \$\$\$ kr (a rather large sum).

Well, this ad was blocked quite soon. Just wonder how many of my friends were seeing that one before it disappeared - and what they are thinking about me now?

### **Music video**

A couple of weeks ago, I made my first music video. A lot of work, but an interesting experience. I put it on youtube and a link to it on Facebook. After a couple of days, Madeleine pointed out that the rhythm was a disaster. And when I checked at home, she had to agree that she was right - unfortunately. The reason was simple: The recording was made in two steps, vocal and "harp" separately. Then, they were mixed electronically. I checked that the starting point of each phrase matched the harp. I never checked inside the phrases. While recording vocal, I had to set the volume of the "harp" so low that I could hear it only while I was not singing myself. So every starting point was correct, but not the insides of the phrases.



The work had to be done over again, and done right this time. Now, the recording is completed. After mixing the two sound tracks, I had to tell the computer about size and properties of walls etc in Hemsjö church, so it could calculate what it would sound like there, rather than in my narrow office. The last step was to mix the sound with pictures. You may see and listen to the result at <https://youtu.be/OKkrpMVbkCY>

**Finally**, remember not to throw away important documents - or computer files, and be careful with "friends".

Now, God bless you, and

Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année!

God Jul och Gott Nytt År!

Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Fröhliche Weihnachten und ein gutes neues Jahr!

*Allan Emrén and Marisol del Mazo*