

## **AnnMari Jansson, 1934-2007**

*By Karin E. Limburg, for the ISEE newsletter*

AnnMari Jansson passed away on Saturday, 13 January 2007 from intestinal cancer. She was 72. AnnMari is known to many people as one of the founders of the field of ecological economics, coming to this from her own background in ecology.

AnnMari was born in Stockholm, Sweden and attended university there. She met her husband, Bengt-Owe Jansson, while they were both students. She began her research in ethology studying pigeons, but as her husband went into marine studies, she realized that she would be closer to the sea than to the pigeon labs, and so re-focused her interests. In 1961 they, together with a couple of other students, were sent to reconnoiter a potential site for a field station in the Stockholm Archipelago. The old farm with its primitive outbuildings on a beautiful island was to become Askö Laboratory, built and continually upgraded over the course of the next three decades.

Askö Lab was dedicated to understanding the Baltic Sea ecosystem, through a combination of detailed field studies and syntheses through simulation models. AnnMari chose to look at the ecological community called the “*Cladophora* belt,” named for the dominant green alga *Cladophora* which attached to the rocky shore-zone and was populated by tiny invertebrates. AnnMari studied the energy flow from primary producers through the consumers, publishing her Ph.D. in 1974 as “Community structure, modelling and simulation of the *Cladophora* ecosystem in the Baltic Sea” as Contribution Number 4 in the Askö Laboratory’s monograph series. She did so while raising three young children, Eva (b. 1964), Olof (1966), and Per (1967).

In 1970 Bengt-Owe and AnnMari invited the American systems ecologist Howard T. Odum to visit Stockholm University. Odum was drawing attention with his systems energetics approach to ecology, and this appealed greatly to the Janssons and their colleagues. Odum invited the Janssons to his new academic home at the University of Florida in 1971, where they spent a year with their family and became immersed in systems modeling and energy analysis. It was also here that AnnMari became impressed with the logic of combining studies of Man and Nature, in part because her own fine-scale studies of the *Cladophora* community reminded her of societies with their complicated interactions, and partly because Odum was completing his landmark book *Environment, Power, and Society* (Wiley, 1971).

Although continuing her collaborations with members of the Askö team, AnnMari took the initiative to invite one of Odum’s students, Jim Zucchetto, to join a project with her to explore human-nature relationships. Zucchetto had recently completed his Ph.D. studying the energetics and economy of the city of Miami, Florida, so was well-versed in the subject. Together they began to study the island of Gotland, Sweden, as an integrated ecological-economic system. The choice of Gotland was three-fold: one, AnnMari knew it well from visits to her in-law family; two, as an island, its ecological boundaries were well-defined; and three, as a separate county, it had its own statistics – so the natural and socioeconomic boundaries were identical. Jansson and Zucchetto published their first major paper on the “Gotland Project” in *Ambio* in 1978: “Man, nature, and energy flow on the island of Gotland, Sweden” followed shortly thereafter by a more comprehensive

monograph in *Ecological Bulletin* the same year and eventually, a book (Zucchetto and Jansson, 1985).

The next year I, a young Master's student with Howard Odum, but with Swedish in my blood, joined AnnMari's Gotland team as a visiting stipendiate. AnnMari had also hired a young botanist, Tuija Hilding, and together we conducted field, modeling, and what would now be called meta-analytic studies of fisheries (me) and water resources (Tuija). As a mentor, AnnMari was both supportive and at the same time let one explore independently. She would provide resources when asked, but never was one to micro-manage. The Gotland project continued on into the 1980s; I re-joined for a year in 1981 to become part of a remarkable team that had by now grown to include an environmental economist, an environmental engineer, a regional planner, a hydrologist, an archaeologist, a geographer, and the ecologists. This is an example of how AnnMari fostered transdisciplinarity, by getting everyone into the same room to tackle a common problem.

In 1982, AnnMari, Bengt-Owe, Karl-Göran Mäler, and several others had the opportunity to host the "Wallenberg Symposium" at Saltsjöbaden outside of Stockholm. Mäler invited resource and environmental economists and the Janssons invited systems ecologists and economist Herman Daly, with the theme "Integrating Ecology and Economics." Several days of intensive meetings brought home the philosophical chasm between these disciplines, but also made it clear that there was some common ground to be nurtured. Over the coming years, AnnMari, Uno Svedin, and several students (including AnnMari's student Carl Folke) formed an "Eco-Eco" reading and discussion group. Bob Costanza spent a year working with AnnMari during this period, and the discussions strengthened and more international meetings were held. (See Costanza, 2003 and Ropke, 2004 for further details on the start of ISEE.) Finally, in 1988, AnnMari, Bob, Herman Daly, and others founded the International Society for Ecological Economics, with the journal introduced in February 1989. AnnMari served as one of the first Associate Editors, and hosted the second official meeting of ISEE in 1992 in Stockholm.

AnnMari played a vital role at Stockholm University, founding the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Research in 1990 and serving as its director until 2000. She was involved in countless outreach activities, ranging from service on international (e.g., UNESCO), national (e.g., WWF Sweden, Swedish Environmental Institute), and regional boards and review panels, to writing popular science articles about the Baltic, to having numerous radio and TV interviews, and even starring in a 1993 video about ecological economics that is still widely shown today. Her most recent service was on the jury of the Ramon Margalef Prize in Ecology and Environmental Sciences. She herself was the recipient of three prestigious awards, but the one that meant the most to her was the ISEE's highest award, the Kenneth Boulding Prize for Outstanding Contributions in Ecological Economics.

AnnMari had a wonderfully expressive writing style and an artistic flair. Even when creating the complex "energy systems diagrams" in the symbolic language developed by Odum, she illustrated the symbols with what they represented (e.g., fish, birds, trees, people). This not only made the model diagrams much more understandable, but readily engaged students and other professionals.

AnnMari's academic contributions numbered around 50 scholarly articles, book chapters, and books. She was a tireless teacher, organizing some of the core courses for the Department of Systems Ecology at Stockholm University, as well as several international courses. She mentored several Ph.D. students including ecological economists Carl Folke, Monica Hammer, Jim Nilsson, and Annika Carlsson-Kanyama, as well as many Master's students from Sweden and other lands. But her informal mentees included myself and, doubtless, others. She paid particular attention to fostering the careers of women scientists. Even in progressive Sweden, women often played second fiddle to men; AnnMari saw to it that women were given a fair chance to excel as well. She served as a role model for me and many, many other women scientists.

Those who knew AnnMari remember her warm smile, sparkling eyes, and how she would throw back her head in explosive laughter. She had a great sense of humor and loved to tell stories of places she went and people she met to us, her students and colleagues, so that we could be a part of things. She was generous with her time and with opportunities, opening doors for others to step through while she stayed out of the limelight. And she was very close to her family, in later years often found with a grandchild in her lap or hanging onto her hand.

AnnMari Jansson was clear-headed to the end, and so appreciated the many letters, phone calls, and flowers that were sent to her during her brief illness. She realized how many of us she had touched down deep in our souls. We miss her greatly, but were so glad to know her and see how she helped to change the world.



#### References

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