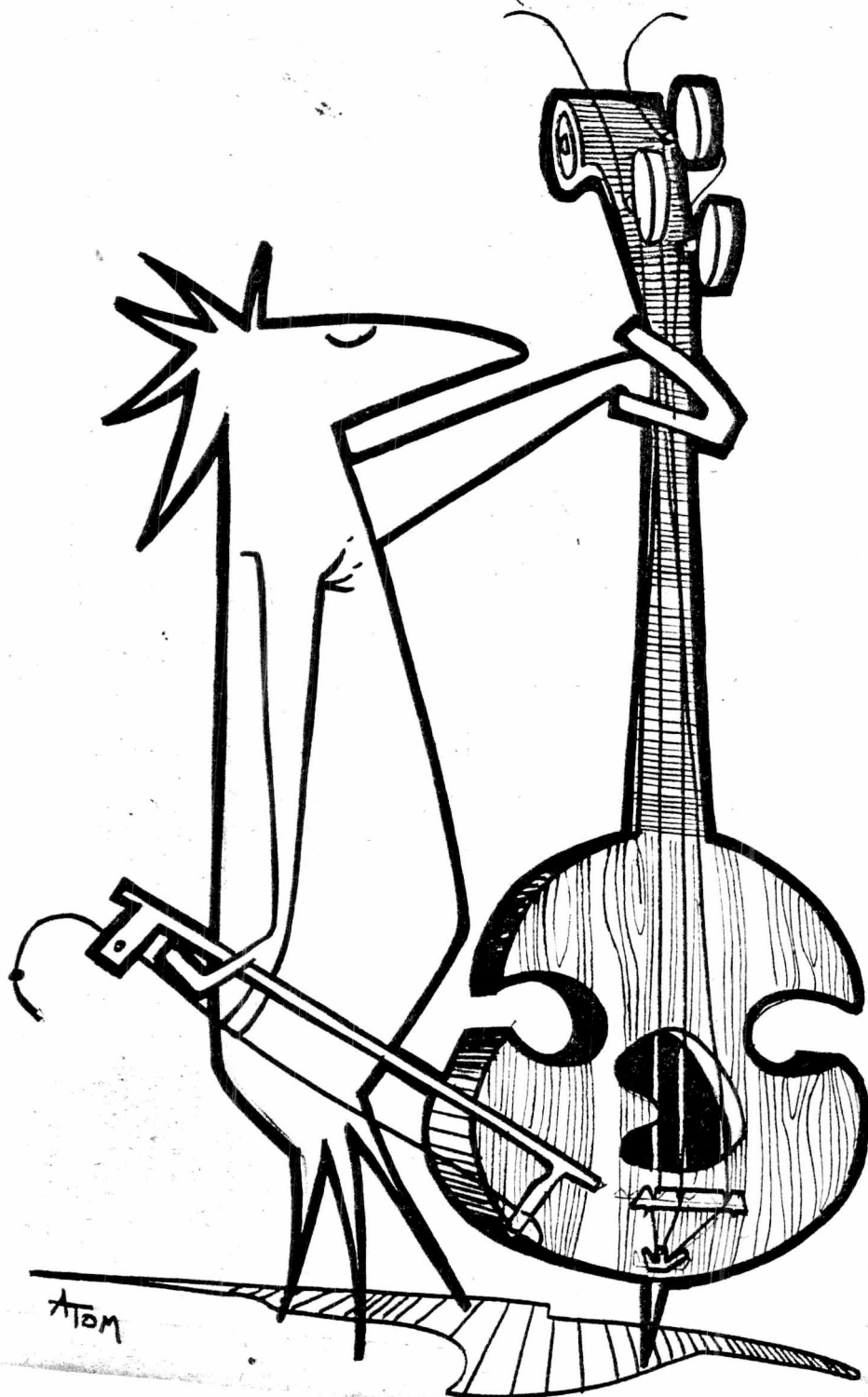
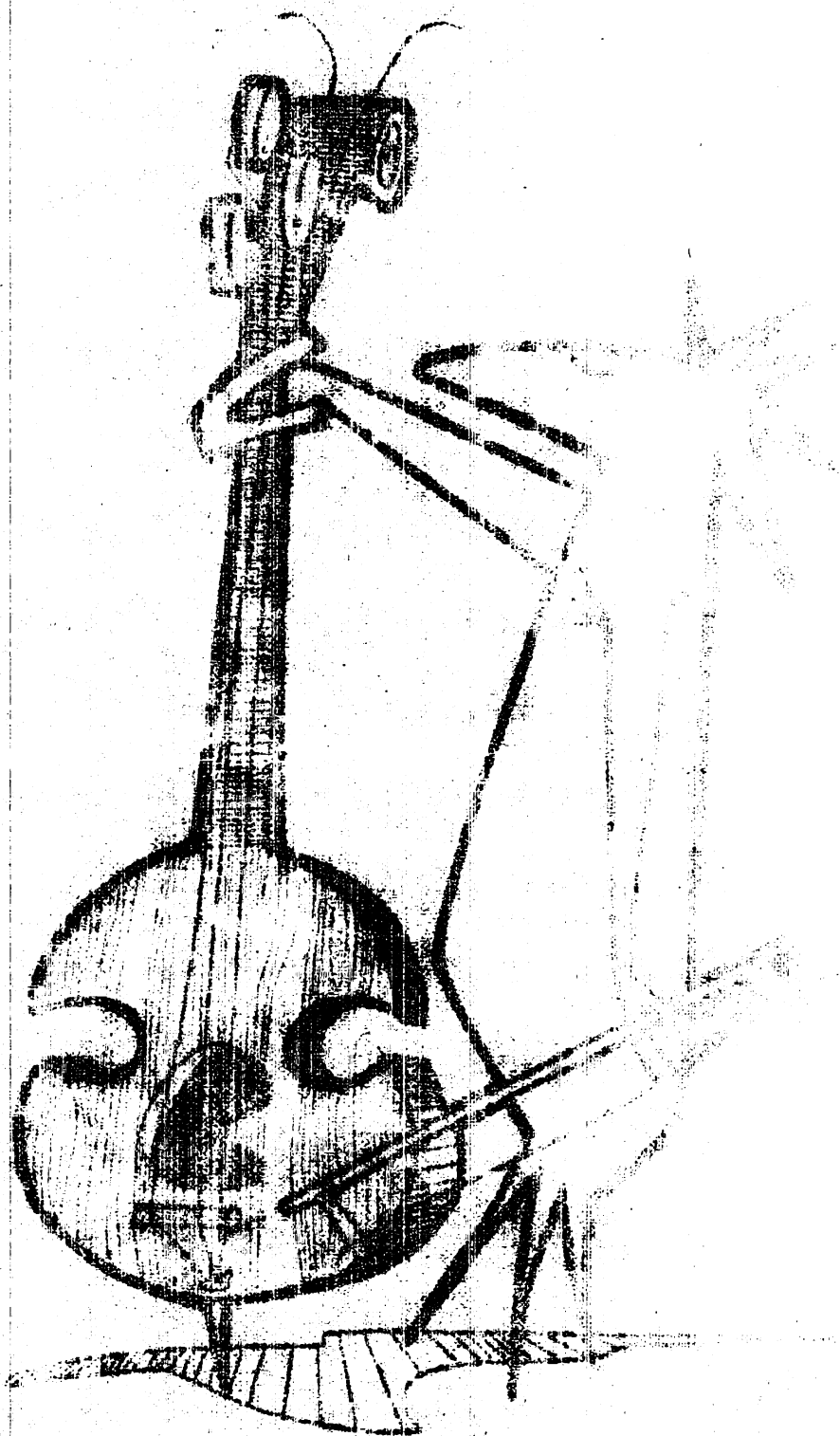


DIASPAR



AGZAR



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Conventions often seem to start early. I boarded a flight for London and as I wended my way down the aisle two familiar voices said, "Hi, Terry." They belonged to Ted and Jayne Sturgeon, and while we exchanged pleasantries I found myself wondering how many other sf people bound for Seacon '79 were on board; casual scanning of faces when I went on to my own seat yielded no more that I knew, though there were any number of sensitive, intelligent faces behind which might have lurked minds that would have understood Sturgeon's latest dictum, which he'd just quoted to me: "People who say 'sci-fi' are really hep."

And as it developed, there evidently were at least three sf fans on that plane, for when we exited in New York City for a two-hour layover we heard someone behind us saying, "Obi-wan Kenobi was right in what he said about traveling..." Glancing over my shoulder, I saw three young women I didn't know; two of them were wearing Iguanacoon tee-shirts. I didn't remember what M. Kenobi had said, though, so I let the moment pass and the Sturgeons and I headed off to grab some breakfast.

Along the way, another familiar voice asked, "Can you tell me the way to Brighton?" We looked around and discovered William Rotsler, who'd been visiting publishers and touristing for a week in the Big Apple. We all breakfasted together, learning that William was to be on our plane too, though we were seated in different sections. At Heathrow, William exited early to grab a room at an airport hotel for the night, while Ted, Jayne and I caught a shuttle bus to Victoria Station: they transferred to a train to Brighton at 11:00 p.m. while I got a cab to The White Hall Hotel, where Hilary Bailey had booked a room for me. Having left Oakland nearly twenty-four hours earlier, I landed on my pillow after glancing at a note from Peter Nicholls saying he'd drive me down to Brighton the next day.

Peter arrived not too early the next morning, thank God, along with Susan Wood, who'd been touristing and visiting family in the Isles for

six weeks. She was in the process of trying to recover from a flu or something; Peter was battling a siege of bronchitis. I congratulated myself on my own good health, which I'd guarded carefully prior to the trip, remembering all too well a couple of conventions whose delights had been minimized by the illnesses that so often accompany late-night partying with much adrenaline and alcohol in the system. Peter and Susan were in good spirits, though, and we enjoyed the early-afternoon drive through countryside that seemed to me much like California in spring except that the grass looked newly-mown everywhere. (Actually, they keep sheep.) I was briefed on all the latest social notes about people who were so far only names to me, and we chattered a lot about the sort of things that interest people who read etymological dictionaries. I told Peter my fantasy of publishing such a book with the advertising slogan "Betcha Can't Look Up Just One."

Once in Brighton, a small seaside city featuring lovely Regency architecture (much of which had decayed beautifully) and sunny but blustering weather, I checked into the Bedford Hotel two blocks from the convention-center Metropole, then spent an hour or two talking with people in the Metropole's lobby. Fred Pohl introduced me to the Soviet sf critical theorist Kagarlitsky, who seemed a trifle defensive because he didn't actually Write the Stuff, and I ran into people like Bob Tucker and Bob Shaw, each of whom I see about as often as I see the other: though Tucker lives in this country, on those occasions when we attend the same conventions Tucker always seems to go to parties other than those where I am.

Met Dave Piper, who's been a fan long enough to have been a LIGHTHOUSE subscriber but has only recently begun writing for fanzines (like MAYA) himself; he said he loved my best-of-the-year anthologies but thought the latest one was a bit of a drag: "Not a good year?" he asked. Then he got all embarrassed and apologized for making criticisms of my work at first meeting; I explained quickly and truthfully that his criticisms were more than welcome, since by the nature of things the readers who approach me at cons are almost solely those who have nothing but good to say of me -- it makes for great egoboo but rather inadequate feedback. We discussed the latest Best SF of the Year and he told me the stories he'd least liked had been precisely those that had most pleased me. Oh dear.

While I was talking with Piper, a young man with a book in his hand came up and stood quietly waiting till we'd finished our conversation. He wants an autograph, I thought, so at the first reasonable pause I turned to him. "Sorry to be standing here so long," he said. "Well, you have to stand somewhere," I said in my most reasonable fashion. He handed me the book he'd been carrying: it was the British SF Book Club Edition of Cirque. "I thought you'd like to have this." Indeed I did want it, especially since I hadn't even known for sure that the book club would reprint it: I'd had a letter from them six months before expressing interest, and had replied tardily; the news that the sale had come to fruition hadn't yet filtered through my British publisher, my British agent and my U.S. ex-agent. The young man's name was Paul Begg, and as we talked I found myself liking him very much; we subsequently spent much time together on various occasions during the convention. Among other things we discussed here and there was a project he was organizing for an original-stories sf anthology; he asked me for tips on how to get top authors to contribute and evidently

I told him all I could think of, for every time I saw him thereafter he reported some new success with an author. In the heat of the event-horizon of a convention lobby, though, I neglected to remember what advice I gave, so later on I was constantly asking, "How did you get him?" "Oh, I just did what you suggested...I seduced his wife." "What?!"

Came time for dinner, which developed into a bit of disaster. I'd solicited recommendations of restaurants and gotten directions to one a few blocks away, but a block from the hotel a very thorough cloudburst dumped from the sky. If you wear glasses, you know the difficulty of reading street signs in a rainstorm. Naturally we got lost in the streets of Brighton and wandered for fifteen minutes feeling like the Flying Dutchman trying to find his way around Cape Horn. Soaked literally to the skin, we ducked into the first restaurant we found, where the first thing we ordered was a towel. The food (Greek) that followed was pretty good, but I'm sure the downpour hadn't helped Susan Wood's attempted recovery from her flu; she was seen only sporadically for the rest of the convention.

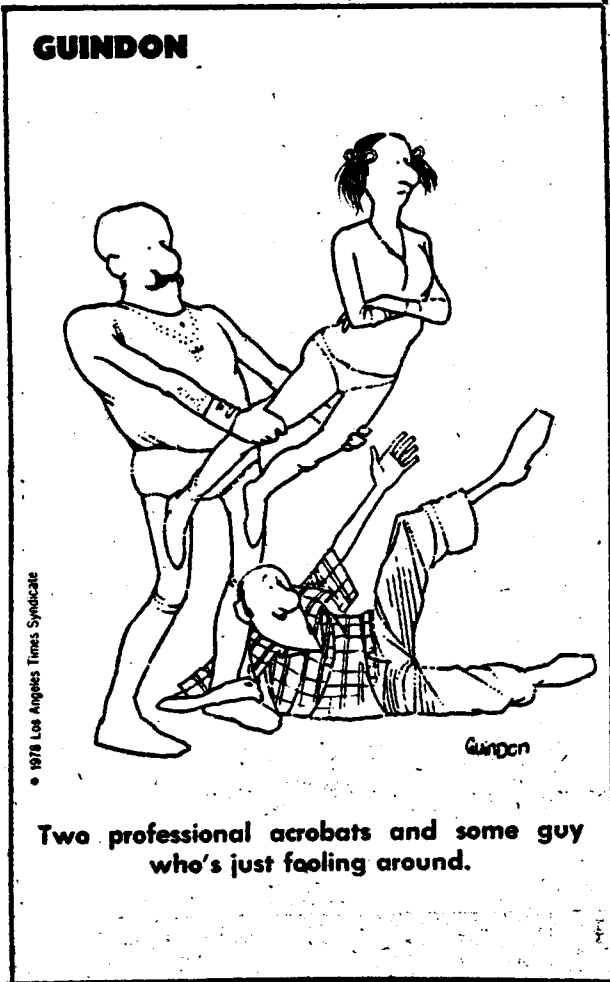
The big party that night was in Dave Hartwell's suite, where as usual most everybody in the pro ranks gathered to blow smoke in each other's faces and try to shout above the din created by other shouters. (Dave had already retired to the hall when I arrived.) I talked with Tom Disch, whom I hadn't seen in ages, and with Ted White, Alex Panshin, Norman Spinrad, Ginger Buchanan, John Silbersack... What? Had I traveled all the way to England to speak with a bunch of Americans? Dave told me he'd invited at least a dozen British writers but not a one had shown up; evidently the fame of Dave's con-parties hadn't yet crossed the Atlantic. ...Well, I did get to meet John Bush, the distinguished editor of Gollancz, whose appearance and demeanor matched his accomplishments. He told me the recession in publishing that's already hitting U.S. publishers hadn't yet struck in England, though the signs were on the wall, particularly in the government's cutting back on funding for libraries. The sf gravy train is slowing drastically, friends: all but the most talented and/or loud among us will have to go without truffles, at least.



I met Colin Murray of Sphere Books, too,

"We knew you'd be safe, but we had no idea you'd be a plus!"

though this happened before the party, when I was leaving my hotel after stopping to hang up my soaked jacket to dry: I ran into Ted White, Greg and Joan Benford at the door of the lobby as I was leaving, and Ted introduced me to Colin Murray. I said cannily, "Ah yes; I know you under another name," a remark that didn't bring the response I'd anticipated. I was thinking of Colin Middleton Murry, who writes as "Richard Cowper" (pronounced "Cooper," I'm told). Oh well; uh...so it goes.



Perhaps I should interject a note here to explain that I'm likely to forget some names and get some others quite wrong as I write here. It seems to be unavoidable when trying to reconstruct from memory the events of a chaotic convention. Last year, for instance, in my report on the worldcon in Phoenix, I mistakenly reported the presence of Terry Hughes at dinner one evening even though he hadn't attended the convention; noticing my error within a few lines but being in a great rush to get the report finished, I put in the next paragraph the name of Dan Steffan, hoping to make up for having confused him with Hughes. However, the person who'd really been involved in the second anecdote was Brad Balfour. (You may be sure I had a confused letter from Terry Hughes after that convention report appeared.)

The Hartwell/Pocket Books party did provide me a chance to talk with Charles Platt, a real live English author even if he did live in New York

for a while. I've always liked him, even though deploring some of the things he's done. Speaking of which, I asked him straight out if it had indeed been he who'd taken out a contract to have a pie thrown in Ted White's face a couple of years ago at a Lunacon; he said, "Actually, it wasn't so much a contract as a shareholders' agreement...and I could have sold three times as many shares as I did." "Charles, that was a damned tacky thing to do, you know." "Well, it wasn't as serious as people thought. It was a continuation of a British convention tradition: Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss, who are good friends, had thrown pies in each other's faces at a couple of conventions." (This was true, as Peter Roberts' article on British conventions in the Programme Book testified.) "It was a rotten thing to do anyway," I said. "Ted's clothes were ruined and he had to send them to the cleaners." Platt nodded. "I wish Ted had sent me the bill; I'd have paid it."

Friday morning came up sunny and warm, so a bunch of people decided to walk to the Royal Pavilion for a tour of that fabled pleasure palace. Let's see: there were me and William Rotsler, Boyd Raeburn, Susan Wood, Len Wein, Joe Staton and a few more. When we came to the edge of

the Pavilion's grounds, half a dozen of our group unholstered their cameras and began shooting film of the Indian-style architecture (which looks a bit better from a distance, by the way). Then we went inside for the tour, which took us through room after room exquisitely decorated and appointed in Oriental style: chandeliers with gold-sculpted dragons curling over them, teak cabinets in the form of pagodas. Continental styles were in evidence too, like the domed ceilings painted with sunlit clouds. Not everything was superb art, of course, since a great amount of wealth doesn't automatically confer a great amount of taste, but the total effect overwhelmed nitpicking. The Royal Pavilion struck me as a combination of Versailles and Hearst Castle.

During the tour, by the way, we ran into Fritz Leiber, who introduced us to Justin Leiber and his bride. Brighton and its Royal Pavilion struck me as a Very Good Place for newlyweds to visit. (Fritz later told me that Justin, his son, had met his bride-to-be [I told you I'd forget names] while he was on vacation and writing the beginning of a science fiction novel; she was vacationing and writing a novel too, so they fell to talking, and to reading the days' outputs to each other, and...)

I was scheduled to moderate a panel at 1:00, so after the tour I left the group and went back to the convention hotel. The panelists were Jack Williamson, Manly Wade Wellman, Ted Sturgeon and Alfred Bester, and in my introduction to the audience I said I'd been chosen as moderator because I was the oldest. (Har har.) Our topic was "Fifty Years of Science Fiction," because the term had first appeared in print in 1929, having been coined by Hugo Gernsback -- "the man after whom the Nebula Awards were named," I said brightly, chuckle groan. Actually, the panel went very well, largely because I realized early that if we talked about nothing but how science fiction got named we'd run out of things to say within fifteen minutes; so instead I steered the discussion to additional anniversaries, like the fortieth anniversary of the first world convention, which Williamson and Wellman had attended, and the fortieth anniversary of the first sf sales of Bester and Sturgeon. It all came out rather neat and jolly, despite the fact that (as I later learned, and thank God I didn't know it at the time) two of the panelists weren't overly fond of one another.

My duty time over, I spent the afternoon in the bar, or wherever. Ran into a bunch of the Australians among whom I'd spent two and a half weeks in January: Robin Johnson, Allan Bray, Bruce Barnes, Merv Binns ...even John Foyster, the distinguished and acerbic GUFF delegate. I reassured them that even though likeable Scandinavian fans kept trying to paste SCANDINAVIA IN '83 stickers on my forehead, I always declined. (Actually, by this time it had occurred to me that though another Australian worldcon could be terrific, and even one in Scandinavia could be fine, with the way the dollar's been behaving internationally it might be impossible four years from now for many Americans to attend any overseas convention.) Mostly, though, I talked with whoever wanted to talk with me (usually old friends like Alex Panshin or the Haldemans) or who wanted an autograph, or whatever. Among the people who didn't want my autograph was Sid Coleman, my best friend, and I made a date for dinner with him and his companion, Diana.

This dinner too turned out to be a bit of a disaster, though I

suppose it was my own fault. We'd chosen a small restaurant on the seaboard, and Sid and Diana had sense enough to order seafood; I tried one of their "Scottish steaks," which was definitely a mistake. It was tough, and they'd tried to ameliorate this by marinating the steak in vinegar; then they tried to hide this with plum-sauce and mushroom gravy. The result was tough and tasted terrible. Never mind; I wasn't that hungry anyhow, and the conversation was delightful as it always is with Sid and Diana. She's an architecture buff, so I regaled her with descriptions of the Royal Pavilion. As we talked, sitting at a window table half a block from the con-hotel, numerous fans and pros passed us on the way to the Meet-the-Authors session, and most paused long enough to make gestures through the window; I was most delighted by Larry Niven's Regency dress, in which he looked splendid. (I'll bet the Meyer fans had a great time at this convention.)

While we were eating or not-eating, in my case, our dinner, we were missing the Meet the Celebrities Party, but oh well. I was told it had been badly organized, that the fans couldn't see the pros as they were introduced, and that instead of running the introductions session for two hours as announced, the Committee let the disco dance start after one hour, thereby totally nullifying any opportunities for mingling between the famous and the people who wanted to meet them.

Jerry Pournelle reportedly stood up and shouted over the disco music something to the effect that this was an affront to the pros in attendance. Right on, Jerry, though in my view it was a slap in the face of the fans much more than the pros.

This was the only time I ever heard criticisms of the Committee's planning during this convention, which tells a lot about how well-run the convention was. Really, I haven't seen such a good job done by any Committee since the Torcon. (And the Torcon had its problems too, such as the Hugos that were presented sans rocketship at the banquet.) Pournelle himself said about the same at the end of the convention. Considering the fact that there were about 3200 attendees, five times the largest number that had ever filled a British convention previously, this speaks well for science-fictional foresight.

The parties that night began with the Seattle in '83 bidding party, which Sid and I visited for a while. There were few people we knew there, though, so we went along to the Berkley-Putnam party, hosted by

Vicki Schochet and John Silbersack, etc. It was probably even more crowded than the Hartwell/Pocket Books party the night before: I remember that at one point I was driven out onto the balcony in search

The Now Society

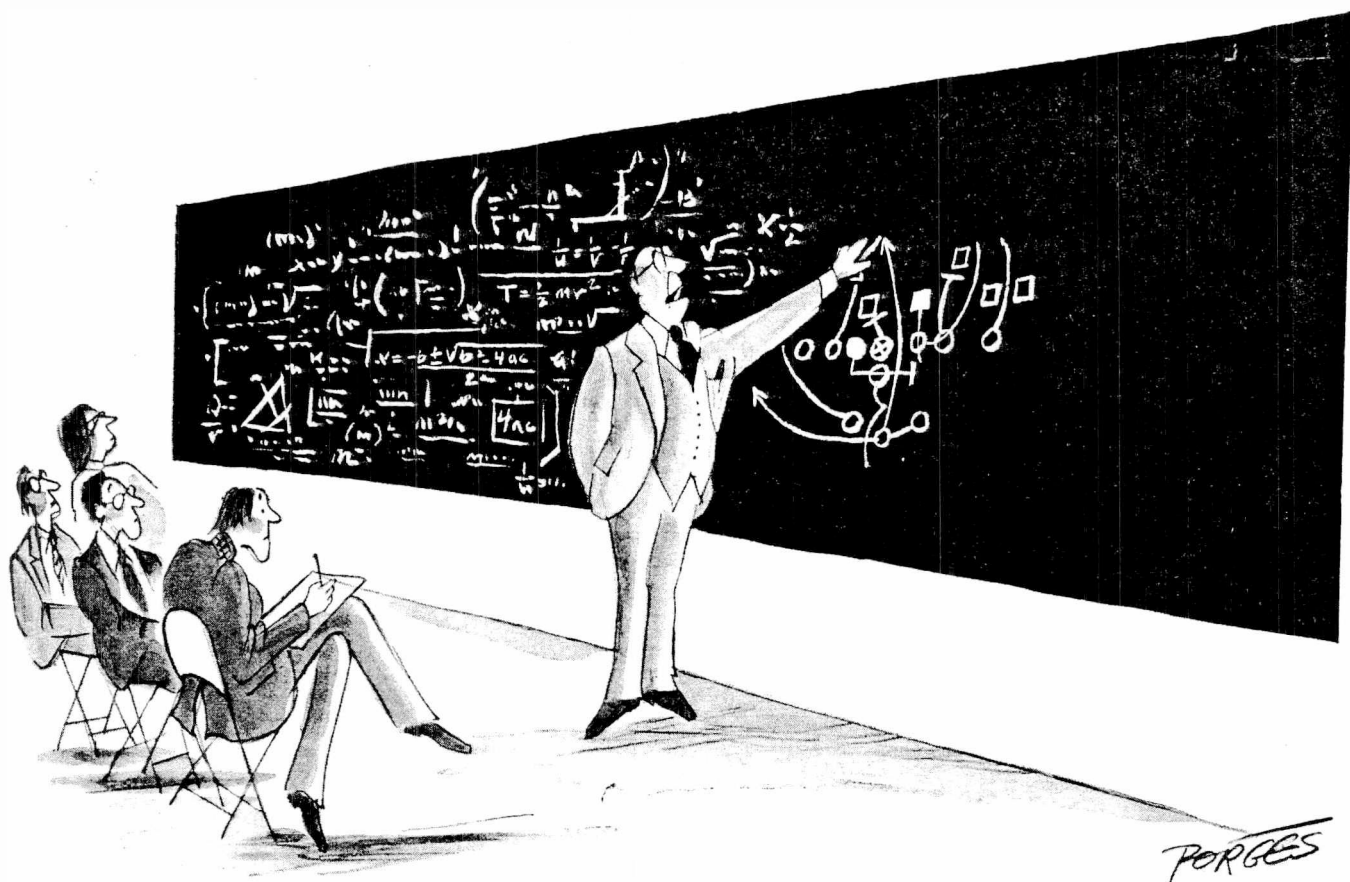
By WILLIAM HAMILTON



Normally, I'd love to, but I sprained my ankle on some Greek island

of air. There were so many people trying to get out onto that balcony that I suggested people be given numbers that would be called out whenever anyone came back inside (or jumped). Ben Bova was out there; he told a KGB joke that I loved, so I responded with my currently favorite "How many _____s does it take to screw in a lightbulb?" Nobody jumped. ("How many Jewish mothers does it take to screw in a lightbulb?" "Dunno." "None, because 'I'm all right, don't worry about me, I'll just sit here in the dark.'" [Even WASPs have Jewish mothers.] Talked with Asenath Hammond for a while, then went back inside ("Number 58!" someone called), where I met Ramsey Campbell, talked with Norman Spinrad, Hilary Bailey and Ted White, who handed me one of his spiffy embossed silver business cards for his new position as editor of Heavy Metal. Ted is now one of the most highly paid sf-related editors in the business, a distinct contrast to his history of zilch-money editorial jobs; one of the most frequent questions asked during this convention was "Will success spoil Ted White?" Nah, nothing could spoil Ted White.

Saturday effectively began with lunch with Vicki Schochet, Berkley/Putnam's main editor, who would be a good person even if she weren't important. She told me much about the current recession in U.S. publishing, sales being down 12% or whatever, but since we'd agreed this was to be a social conversation rather than a business one we quickly segued to being Silly. I excused myself rather early on the grounds that I had to go off and be a fan for a while: I was scheduled on a panel on British fandom in the fifties



"But I digress."

on which I'd join Bob Shaw and Eric Dentcliffe as the token foreigner. It was my first visit to the Fan Room, which was surprisingly crowded, though I shortly discovered this was partly because the Committee had at the last minute been forced to switch venues for this so that in one (large) room we had a sneakers' table, audience chairs, a bar, a few fan-hucksters' tables and a number of computer games. The atmosphere was a little like trying to discuss Seventh Fandom in a Las Vegas casino.

Not that the audience was unreceptive; there were maybe thirty or forty people listening with varying degrees of fascination, from comparatively new fans like Dave Langford and Dave Piper to the more blasé older fans like Boyd Raeburn and Ken Bulmer. One young fan even came up to Bob Shaw before our panel and asked him to autograph a copy of The Enchanted Duplicator. "I understand this is famous," he said. "Walter Willis wrote most of it," Bob said as he signed; "the idea was mine."

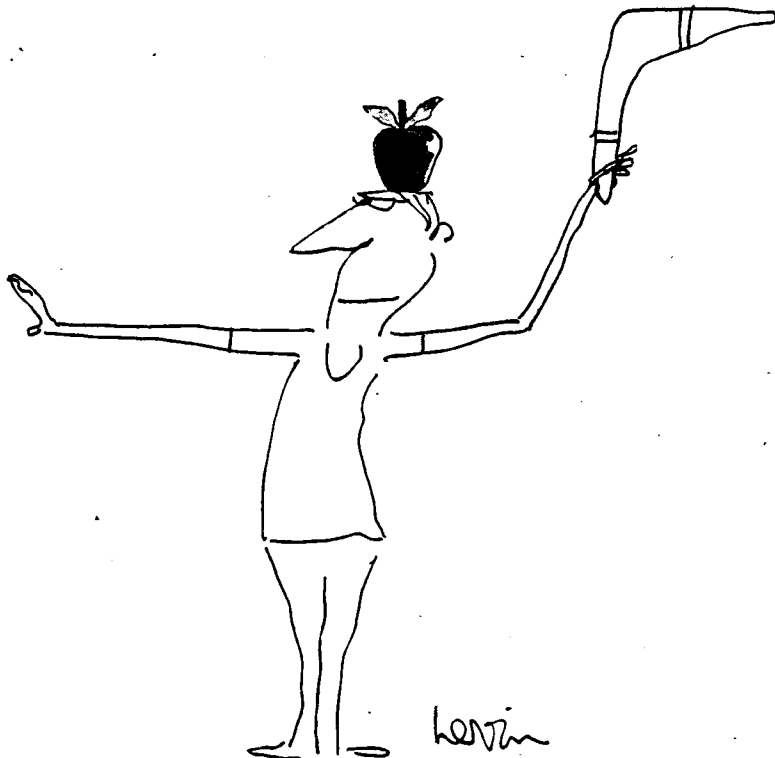
Then, expertly guided by moderator Peter Roberts, Bob and Eric and I proceeded to do the obligatory reminiscence number about HYPHEN and TRIODE, SuperManCons, Operation Fantast, FANAC and Brian Burgess. I always wonder why audiences sit still for this stuff, especially since it's always punctuated by "Uh, I think that was in 1952, or was it in Leeds?" and "Then the funniest thing happened, but I can't tell you about that!" But Terry Hughes beamed happily throughout, and even Boyd, whose A BAS we forgot to mention, didn't shuffle his feet much.

Afterward I signed autographs -- how nice to have INNUENDOs thrust before me instead of copies of Warlord of Kor, especially since the fellow with the INNUENDOs mentioned that he'd paid eight pounds a copy at the auction for them. (Wish I'd saved the stencils.) As I was leaving I ran across James White, who inducted me into Average Height Fandom, i.e., people six-feet-two or over. He mentioned that there was also an Average Girth Fandom, and though I'm not yet eligible he added helpfully that one can belong to both organizations simultaneously.

I spent the rest of the afternoon alternating between the bar and the County Suite, where first Bob Silverberg then Lisa Tuttle (who kept being called "Liza") were giving readings from their works. I listened to their introductory remarks (Bob, having been twitted by Susan Wood when she introduced him, for his well-publicized retirement from writing, promised never again to announce that he was quitting) then left when they began reading, because I don't believe being read-to allows me to judge anyone's work properly.

That evening was the occasion for the Gollancz champagne reception at the Royal Pavilion, for which one had to have an engraved invitation to get in. I walked over with Vonda McIntyre, and when we entered we were formally announced: "Miss! Vonda! McIntyre!" "Mister! Terry! Carr!" Then we went down the reception line of Gollancz people: "How nice to see you." "What a lovely occasion." I believe everyone should have at least one chance during life to be announced at the door; even if you're one of two hundred attendees, it's really a trip. ...During the reception, servers kept coming by with plates of caviar and those-little-sandwiches-with-the-crusts-cut-

off; also, our glasses of champagne kept being unobtrusively refilled -- so unobtrusively that some of us didn't always notice, with the result that some of us kept thinking we were still working on our first glasses and thus got bombed out of our gourds -- it was, after all, before dinner. The reception lasted quite a while longer than scheduled and I talked with lots and lots of real famous people let me tell you. The most delightful meeting I had was with a young man who wore a name-tag that said, "One of the McCaffrey entourage. (Lover of Anne McCaffrey's daughter)," which I thought was pretty up-front; he said it saved him a lot of time in explanations.



Toward the end of this I remembered that I'd arranged with Sid and Diana to meet them for dinner at a seafood restaurant that had looked promising, and that I was to bring a few people with me from the reception. I grabbed Bob and Sadie Shaw, and another couple, we all made our farewells to the hosts and proceeded to lurch several blocks to the restaurant, where we arrived only twenty minutes late. I don't name the "other couple" because one of them was, alas, even drunker than most of us -- those cursedly unobtrusive champagne refills! -- and as soon as he saw the prices on the menu he set up a howl: "This is bloody outrageous! It's outrageous, do you hear, outrageous!" Well, the prices were a bit steep, but after the high-style reception we'd just enjoyed I wasn't in a mood to protest, nor were any of the others in our group, including Sid and Diana, who hadn't been at the reception. "I won't put up with it!" cried our friend; but he did, calmed by Bob Shaw's remark that the prices were no higher than one would expect in a convention-hotel restaurant where we'd presumably get poorer fare.

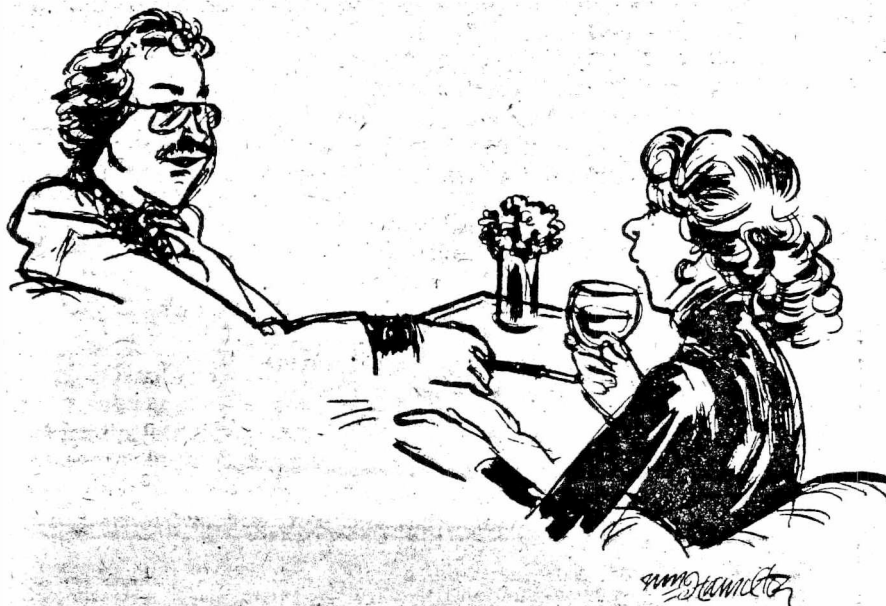
The food did turn out to be pretty good if not great, and while Sid was calming our friend with his irresistible combination of intelligence and wit, Bob leaned over to me and murmured in his wonderful Irish lilt, "X and his wife are well known for creating scenes, you see. Once when Harlan Ellison was giving a speech they heckled him so much that he had to stop and sit down." I regarded the gentleman with some awe thereafter, and as we all sobered up the table conversation became much more civilized; the dinner turned out to be enjoyable in the end.

(Later that night, Sid came up with a wonderful brief fantasy of someone asking X what he thought of Harlan: "Oh, a nice chap, though a trifle shy. But his table manners are quite good.")

Back at the Metropole, we milled around in the bar for a while. Joyce Scrivner came by and asked me if I wanted to be a supporter of the Minneapolis in '73 bid and I said I hadn't yet decided on how I was going to vote that far in the future. She said, "No no, not nineteen eighty-three -- this is for our bid for seventy-three, which we lost." "Then why should I pay you for a supporting membership?" "You don't pay me: I pay you one cent." I took the HULL-A pause, then muttered, "Best business deal I've made all day." She gave me a "post-supporting membership" card and a penny, and I wandered off wondering how to declare this on my income tax return.

Several of us decided to go up to the SFWA Suite to see what was happening there; we found a large room filled with tables, chairs, liquor and not too many people. We co-opted a table and stayed for the night's partying, our table being, um, chaired at various times by Sid, Ted White, Susan Wood and Elinor Busby; Frank Brunner, the artist, was there for a while, and Malcolm Edwards, etc. Mainly, this was the night we began hearing of Brighton's contribution to the tradition of closed-door pro parties: several publishers had thrown parties to which only their authors were admitted, or at best only people whose names were on a list held by a given public relations person who guarded the door(s) like Cerberus. Some truly startling tales reached our ears as one rejectee after another came to the SFWA Suite. Joan Vinge, a Hugo winner, had been turned away from the party of one publisher who'd brought out two of her books: someone had forgotten to put her name on The List. Ian Watson, no slouch himself as a writer, had been refused admittance to the Omni party; he protested that Ben Bova himself had invited him, but the pr person muttered, "Who's Ben Bova?" as she shut the door. At another party, several respected writers were turned away at the door and the pr person was heard to grumble, "More American riffraff." This led to quite a few people wearing name-tags thereafter with the legend AMERICAN RIFFRAFF.

The Now Society



I used to think maybe I was a phony—but then I started to think, hey, maybe I'm not!

Some heroes emerged from these encounters: people who left such parties in protest (Jacqueline Lichtenberg was one of these), and another, Norman Spinrad, who controlled his temper while he tried to explain just who these people were who were being sent away. In Norman's case, there was a somewhat happy ending because the Cerberus involved apologized profusely the next day and insisted on giving him a free ticket to the Banquet. I don't think any reparations were made to the rejected people, though.

Naturally we made jokes like "Arthur C. who?" and such. And I mock-proudly told everyone who'd listen that I hadn't been thrown out of a single party at the convention, mainly because I hadn't even heard of them.

Some more strange rumors came down from the Gollancz room-party. Reportedly Brian Aldiss had grown enraged at Charles Platt and chased him into another room, from which loud cries and thumpings emerged; when this blew over, Jerry Pournelle suddenly heard Platt's name and he took off after Platt, crying, "You called me a fascist in print! -- I'm going to sue!" This encounter too was quieted down, though Jerry was still threatening to sue. ("Fascist" is evidently an actionable word in the United States, even in literary criticism.)

That SFWA Suite party, despite or maybe partly because of the energy generated by such rumors, was much fun and lasted till quite late. As a result, Sunday began late for me: I ran into Norman Spinrad when the Metropole coffee shop was between breakfast and lunch set-ups; Norman was hurting due to food poisoning at a Chinese restaurant the evening before and he wanted a tender breakfast. Janet Morris joined us, said she knew just the place, and we went there. It proved to be as high-quality as she'd promised, and we had a most enjoyable brunch. Janet was chagrined because she'd just had a discussion with Bantam's representatives about what sort of covers to put on the reissues of her fantasy series; she hadn't been pleased with the covers on the first printings not only because they were poor art but also because they were sexist. "And the best idea anyone could come up with for the new editions was to hire the artist who did the Gor covers!"

She said she really just wanted simple covers this time, with a plain-colored background on each and maybe the titles or bylines done in embossed lettering, perhaps a small drawing. I thought about that, and suggested that they contract with the sculptor Dale Enzenbacher to let them use small photos of some of his fantasy figures -- this would certainly result in distinctive and attractive covers. She seemed to like this idea; but as to whether or not anything will come of it...

Back at the Metropole, I ran into Tom Schlueck, looking only slightly older than he did when he won TAFF a dozen years ago; these days he's a translator and literary agent in Germany. As we were talking outside the hotel a fellow came up to us and asked if the science fiction convention was a closed meeting or anyone could go in; Tom said, "Certainly you can join; just go right through the lobby to the registration desk on the left and sign up. You'll get to attend all the panel discussions and hear famous authors reading from their

works; there are lots of movies being shown, rare books and magazines for sale, and thousands of people to talk with. Don't forget to go to the art show." Tom pointed him in the proper direction and the fellow ventured inside, looking a trifle bewildered. Tom beamed after him; "Another one for our side," he said.

We went inside ourselves, and I came across Charles Platt, who

didn't look very happy. "Uh...was that true, what I heard about Jerry Pournelle threatening to sue you?" I ventured. He nodded. "It was so stupid of me to use that word. It was just in a letter to Dick Geis, but I should have known he'd publish it." "Well, why don't you offer to make a public apology to Jerry?" Charles looked even more morose: "I did, but he was too angry to be satisfied by that; I think he really will sue me." I thought for a minute and said, "Look, Jerry has a temper but he's a reasonable man. Try this: wait till after the convention, when Jerry's calmed down a bit, then write a public apology for Geis to print, and send a carbon copy to Jerry along with a private apology. I think that would take care of it." Charles looked slightly more happy: "All right, I'll try that."

The Now Society

By WILLIAM HAMILTON



I'm sorry it's over. I'm being very fair about you in my novel. I know you'll be fair about me in yours.

I went off to lunch with John Bush, during which we discussed methods that would allow him to publish The Best SF Novellas of the Year in addition to The Best SF of the Year, which he's been doing for several years; we worked out some simple logistics that should make

the system work. Then I asked him about his room-party the night before: "I know Jerry Pournelle was awfully angry at Charles Platt, but Brian Aldiss too? Brian's always been such a pleasant sort." John chuckled: "Oh, Brian and Charles were only kidding; Brian's rather a cut-up, you see. When I went into the other room where they were supposedly fighting, I found them stomping their feet and pounding on the walls. It was a send-up."

There was a SFWA Meeting scheduled about then, so when we'd finished lunch I dashed off to the booksellers' room, where I'd been announced as holding an autograph session at the same time; I put a message over the p.a. system canceling the autograph session, then hurried to the SFWA Meeting. These things, as I've mentioned in reports on previous conventions, are invariably long and dull, but matters of monetary importance to me and everyone else in the sf field are usually discussed and important decisions made, etc. --Not so this time, though: the current SFWA administration under President

Jack Williamson had pretty much cleared up past problems, and there was no new business of note. Each time someone rose to discuss an issue, Bob Silverberg would point out that we had a committee to deal with that and we should wait for its report. The SFWA Meeting ended in twenty-five minutes, much to the surprise of all, including President Williamson, who remarked, "This must be the shortest SFWA Meeting in history."

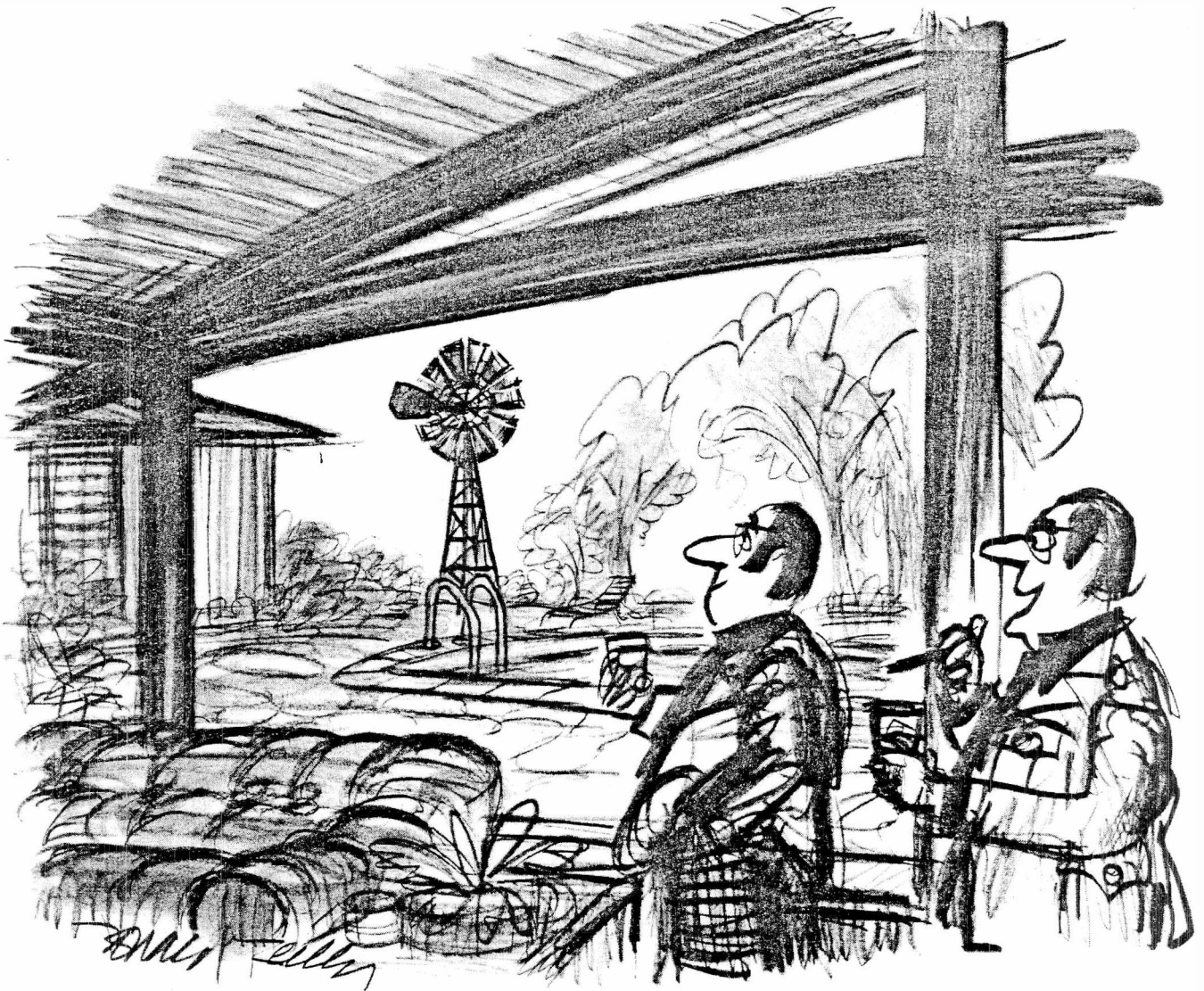
I thought of going back to the book room to sign autographs, realized this would entail another change-of-schedule announcement over the p.a. system, and went to the bar instead. I think this is known in pro circles as maturity.

In the bar I was approached by a pleasant Italian man with a couple of interpreters in tow; he introduced himself as Giuseppi Festino and I recognized him as the excellent artist who'd done a splendid cover and interior drawings for my novella THE WINDS AT STARMONT when it had appeared in the Italian magazine Robot. I'd written to the editor saying I wanted to buy the original painting but hadn't heard anything further. Festino managed to convey to me that the painting was on display in the art show but was marked Not For Sale because he was reserving it for me. I was amazed and delighted; I said I'd go look at the painting and if he'd meet me the next day after a panel on which I was to appear, we could discuss money then.

I think it was Ted White who gathered the dinner-party that night: he and I, Sid and Diana, Brad Balfour and Susan Wood trekked off to an Italian restaurant where Ted had eaten the night before. The food was good, and if the waiters were a bit rambunctious in their kidding of the patrons ("You want pepper in your soup? Okay, if you say so. There, that's enough? No? More? Okay, more pepper for the crazy Americans!") perhaps we were a bit rambunctious ourselves. ...I think I talked mostly with Brad Balfour, who tried to interest me in punk rock by using a lot of journalist-ese: "...cuts to the essence of the Weltanschauung..." etc. He couldn't help it, since he's working these days in such areas, but I kept finding it funny.

On our way back to the Metropole we passed a Lebanese restaurant in which we saw Ian Watson and his wife dancing around balancing water glasses on their heads while Greg Benford, resplendant under a red fez, clapped enthusiastically in time to the music. It was a very funny scene, and maybe our party hadn't been the only one that had become rambunctious that evening.

The Hugo Awards ceremonies were presented separately after the Banquet, and once again I got to exercise the one prerogative afforded Hugo nominees who don't have a prayer of winning: I had a reserved seat in the second row along with William Rotsler, Susan Wood, Malcolm Edwards and Pete Weston. William wanted to bet me that Harry Bell would win as Best Fan Artist, but I declined to bet in a category in which William was himself a nominee. He won the award, and when he came back to his seat beaming I tried to take advantage of his elation by conning him: "You owe me five pounds on our bet." But he brushed aside the gambit.



"So far, she's only powering the cabaña."

Bob Shaw was the toastmaster, and he was as usual delightful and witty. (He'd given a talk earlier that day that had kept about a thousand fans, all that could fit into the main hall, chuckling and chortling for an hour.) Bob is very popular in England and everywhere, so when Bob Tucker announced that he'd won the Hugo for Best Fan Writer he got a huge ovation. He jumped up and clicked his heels in delight.

The award for Best Fanzine wasn't nearly as popular. Charlie Brown, who'd had the grace to withdraw from Best Fanzine contention the magazine from which he earns his living, announced the award, and his slightly disgusted tone of voice when he opened the envelope and said, "The winner is...SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW" was worthy of a Best Dramatic Presentation nomination itself. Few people applauded the award, and when Charlie asked who'd accept for Dick Geis, no one came forth. Charlie began inviting people by name to come up and accept the award, but each shook his head. Finally, after three or four people had declined, Charlie called on Fred Pohl, and Fred,

probably fearing that the program would never continue if someone didn't accept, came forth. He said, "I'm pleased to accept this award for Dick Geis, a man I've always respected...but not much." (Laughter; cheers.) "But by God I do enjoy reading his magazine," Fred added. The perfect touch of grace, I thought: Fred deserves a Best Dramatic Presentation nomination too.

The Let's Trash Dick Geis Session didn't end there, though. Bob Silverberg was called to the podium to present one of the other Hugos; he mounted the dais carrying Geis's award and said, "Before I present this next award I want to take care of some unfinished business. Fred Pohl accepted the award for SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and then dropped it into my lap to take back to Dick Geis. I live in California; Geis lives in Oregon, hundreds of miles away. I don't feel like carrying this thing back in my luggage -- isn't there anyone here who's from Oregon who'll come up and take this?" Again there was a long wait, until someone did indeed come forth -- I don't know who it was. ...All in all, I think Dick Geis ought to heed the portents and withdraw before things really get out of hand: winning awards that are this publicly unpopular isn't likely to do him much good.

About this time someone pointed out to me that we were sitting almost directly behind Christopher Reeve, the star of Superman. I was startled and delighted: gosh, a celebrity from the real, or at least not strictly science-fictional, world! I hadn't thought the movie was any sort of exemplar of sf moviemaking, nor am I in love with Christopher Reeve (as so many women are), but I was glad to see that he's every bit as tall and handsome in person as he is on the screen. He's just as intelligent as his performance suggested, too, for when the nominees in the Best Dramatic Presentation category were read, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy got an ovation much greater than that for Superman, and when Superman was announced as the winner (by Gary Kurtz, the producer of Star Wars and its forthcoming sequel), Reeve began his acceptance speech by saying, "After hearing the applause for The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, I think this award must have been rigged; I salute the producers of that show."

The other awards? I applauded some, was chagrined by others; that's the usual state of affairs for all of us, isn't it? I did at least feel vindicated when Stephen R. Donaldson won the Campbell Award for Best New Writer, even if he did beat Lizzy Lynn: after all, I'd predicted it more than a year before.

Dave Hartwell was holding the Hugo Losers' Party, so after a quick trip to my hotel to pick up a fresh name-tag I went to the Pocket Books Suite. Rotsler had given me two new name-tags the first day of the convention; one said CURRENTLY SPEAKING TO: followed by ten lines to be filled in, and the other was similar except that it said NOT SPEAKING TO:. I chose the latter as more in keeping with a Hugo Losers' Party.

When I entered I ran into a bunch of women animatedly talking about Christopher Reeve. "When I saw him, I just broke up laughing -- all I could think of was 'Superman has come to the convention!'" said Ginjer Buchanan.

"Vonda got invited to go and meet him at the Hugo winners' reception the Committee's holding," Suzle Tompkins said. (Vonda McIntyre had won the Best Novel award for Dreamsnake.) "When she comes back, let's tear her eyes out."

Janet Morris said, "I don't see why everyone's making such a fuss. Tall, handsome men are all assholes."

The Now Society

By WILLIAM HAMILTON



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4-19

Oh, incidentally, congratulations on the Nobel.

"Not true," I said. "Tall, handsome men are empathic, witty, terribly sweet and highly intelligent."

She fixed me with a withering little smile. "How would you know?"

(Actually, I was thinking of Fritz Leiber.)

I went inside, got a drink and wandered around talking with Sid Coleman, Sherry Gottlieb, George Scithers and George Turner. Charles Platt and I went out for more ice, but there was none to be had at that hour. Returning to the party, I cornered Dave Hartwell and sold him three books. ...Doesn't that sound impressive? In truth, I just asked him if he'd like to publish the three volumes of New Worlds of Fantasy as a Gregg Press omnibus; he said sure and gave me two Brazil nuts as a down payment.

Charlie Brown was talking with someone who spoke a line he wanted

to quote in Locus, but she said no, no, who'd care about what she said? -- whereas if Ben Bova had said it... Charlie nodded and went to the other room to find Ben. "Ben, I have to borrow your name-tag for a minute. Trust me: it's important." Ben somewhat bewilderedly handed it over; Charlie went back and pinned it on the woman with whom he'd been speaking. "Now say that again." She did, and he wrote it down. (Then he retrieved the name-tag, took it back to Ben and said, "Hell; even with this I couldn't get into the Omni party.")

I was about to crash from lack of sleep, but on the way out I met Cherry Wilder, whom I'd wanted to meet for years. (People never believe that's her name, and to some extent they're right: it's her "maiden name." Her married name is Cherry Grimm, and do you believe that?) She's Australian, now living with her husband in Germany and enjoying a growing career as an sf writer. I somewhat blearily said hello and let's-talk-a-lot-later-when-I'm-awake, but she'd have none of that; she drew me down to a seat and proceeded to chat away with so much energy that I found myself waking up for a while. Cherry Wilder is a delightful person. (She introduced me to

someone as the first U.S. editor who'd published one of her stories -- "And the book didn't sell at all. I ruined his book for him!")

Monday began late for me again, so my breakfast with Peter Nicholls was really lunch. After that it was back to the Metropole for a panel on which I appeared with Bob Sheckley and R. A. Lafferty, with Ian Watson moderating; our title was "Madness and Metaphysics," which Malcolm Edwards had told me was really just an excuse to put four somewhat individualistic writers on the dais and find out what we'd say. I didn't feel that this panel ever really got off the ground, due partly to the fact that none of us seemed able to get a good handle on the subject, nor could we get much interplay going between us because the p.a. system, which perhaps had been altered for the Hugo ceremony the night before, made it difficult for people on the dais to hear each other (though the audience could hear us well enough). Lafferty in particular seemed to be saying interesting things, but he was at the other end of the speakers' table and I couldn't make out more than every third word; Watson was a little closer to me, so I heard every second word from him, barely enough to enable me to answer his questions with remarks that were somewhat close to the subject.

The whole program was taped by the Committee, who hope to issue a book in which the convention's proceedings will be transcribed; if they manage to get it out, I'll be interested to read what the other panelists were saying.

(There's some problem involved in this, however, because although the person doing the taping had been provided with 90-minutes-per side tapes specifically so he could record each panel or speech without interruption, he chose to "save tape" by running each to the end and turning the tape over during the proceedings, thereby losing a minute or two of most. Malcolm, who's a perfectionist, told me after the convention that this lapse might make the transcriptions so spotty that such a book would never be published. A pity if that happens, because there



"What's that you're reading, Walter—fiction?
Well, everyone to his own taste."

were lots of program items that I missed attending and I'd like to read what was said.)

In any case, the "Madness and Metaphysics" panel evidently wasn't a total success, because Bob Silverberg, who'd been in the audience and thus had heard all of it, came up to me afterward and said, "You know, that panel had great potential..." "Little of which was realized," I finished for him, and he nodded.

After that panel I was swamped by people looking for autographs -- no doubt a result of my aborted autograph session the day before. I led them into the next room, where a bar and refreshment stand was set up, and signed my name a lot, noticing that here at the end of a five-day convention my signature was becoming noticeably less recognizable. Giuseppe Festino appeared with interpreters. I'd visited the art show and found that I liked his WINDS AT STARMONT painting in the original almost as much as in reproduction; I'd also noticed that he had two standard prices for those paintings that were for sale, so I offered him the higher price and he accepted. He also gave me, free, my choice of either of the two interior illustrations; I chose the one of the protagonists flying up Starmont because it was just as well done as the other and impressed me because I'd described their artificial wings as being one molecule thick and he'd followed that description so faithfully that the fliers seemed to have nothing but the wing-struts to keep them aloft. It's an odd-looking drawing, but completely realistic for the story -- most artists would have drawn butterfly wings or something, but Festino reads the stories he illustrates.

I went back into the main hall to listen to the "Future of SF" panel, which featured Joe Haldeman, Jack Chalker, Norman Spinrad and Bob Silverberg. I found it very interesting, largely because they were talking about the recent spate of "illustrated novels" and such as an indication of the illiteracy that's taking over the world, so I stayed for the duration. Chalker had some particularly good comments on this, though they were slightly undermined by his own shaky grammar.

For dinner that evening I went back to the Italian restaurant where I'd been the previous evening; this time I was accompanied by John Foyster, Jenny Bryce and Terry Hughes. Egad, the GUFF and TAFF delegates at the same time! Their reputations certainly aren't undeserved: I think this was the most enjoyable dinner/conversation I had during the whole convention. (Jenny Bryce is a favorite person of mine too: she has a lilting, almost sibilant accent that's a delight to hear; I do believe she could read The Book of Job and make it sound like a lark.)

Returning to the Metropole, we found seemingly everybody milling around in the bar and lobby, awaiting some word on who was going to put on the dead dog party. Brian Aldiss had invited me to one earlier, but he seemed to be having second thoughts. Eventually Jon Stopa said what the hell, I'll throw a party, and that news must have spread like wildfire, for when Brad Balfour and I went up there ten minutes later we found his not very large room completely packed with people. I spent most of my time there in the foyer, where I ran into...Bob Tucker! He does exist after sundown! He even had a

bottle of Jim Beam with him, and I got to share the "smoooooooooooooth" ceremony with him for the first time (and the second, and the third...). I'd been initiated into this seven months earlier in Australia by Merv Binns and others -- Tucker had left a cultural legacy behind him -- but this was my first time with The Master: he has more precise moves than his followers.

One of the people at that party was Cherie Wilkerson, who'd been one of the writers I'd taught at Clarion last year; she seemed a bit puzzled by this ceremony but she managed to take part pretty well. Since this was the third convention at which I'd seen her since the workshop, I indulged my curiosity by asking her what her aims were in attending conventions; she said she was trying to get a feeling for what sf fans are like and what they want to read. "I did some research on fandom first, like reading the article you wrote for F&SF fifteen years ago, and The Immortal Storm. I'm a little puzzled, because everybody seemed to be saying fans are much more intelligent than most, but they seem to be just people, with maybe more weirdos than most groups have." Naturally I got defensive: "Well, a convention's no place for a lot of extended intellectual conversations. Besides, I wrote that article before the barbarian invasion of Trekkies and UFO nuts." (Cherie, by the way, has the taste to pronounce her name "Sherry.")

When that party began to approach critical mass, I decided to try my luck at the Aldiss party, which I heard had started by then but was limited to just a few people. My last chance to get thrown out of a party at Brighton, I thought -- but Brian welcomed me in to a large room where perhaps ten people were chatting quietly (quite a contrast to the Stopa party). I talked with Joan Benford, and with Greg a little, then with Drew White of Galileo. Charlie and Mary Ryan of Galileo were also there. It was very late by this time, though, so the party wound down before long and I toddled off to sleep.

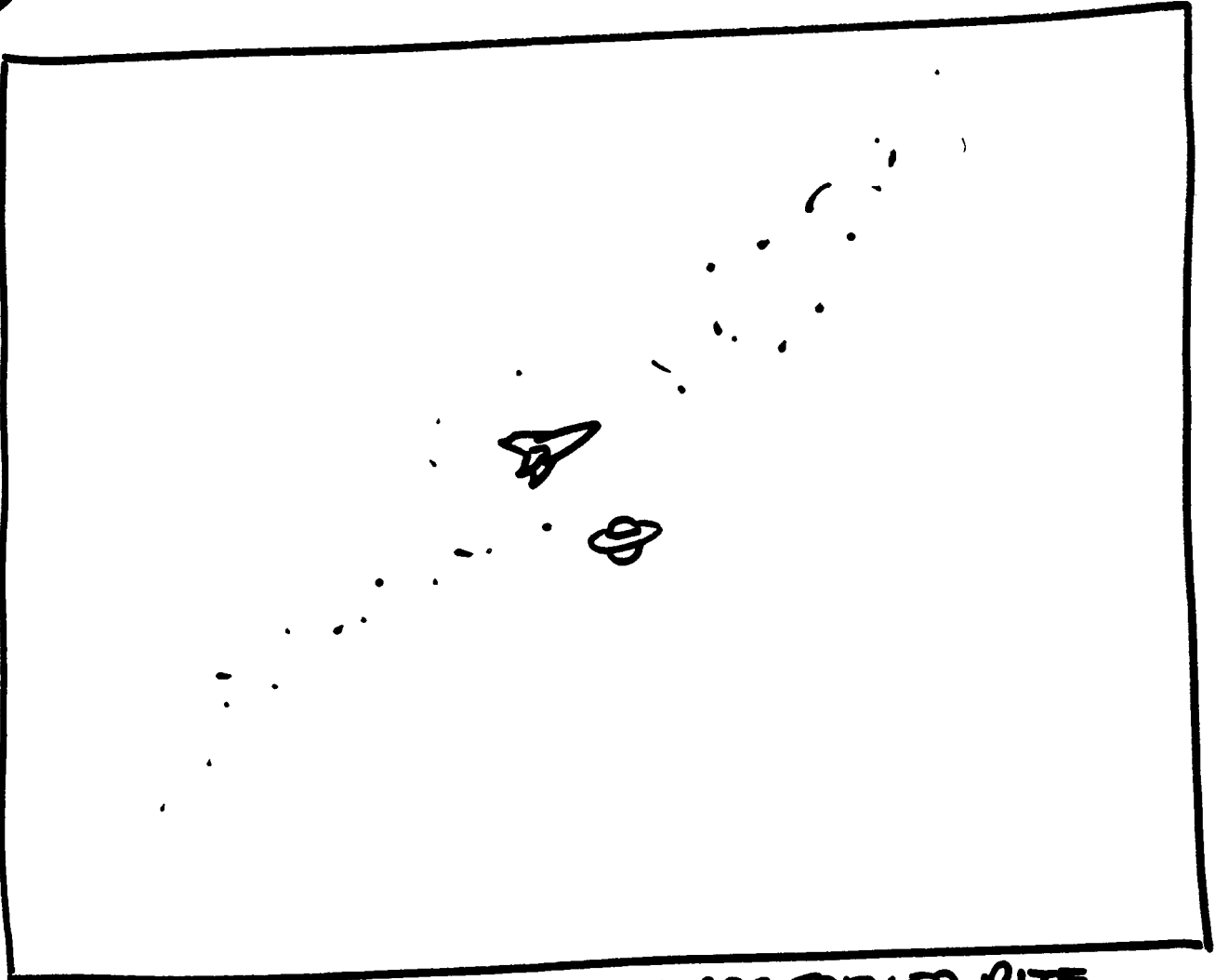
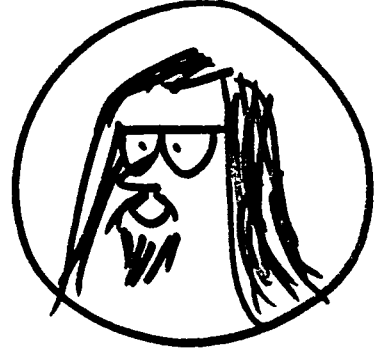
...Which is essentially all he wrote about SeaCon. Monday I checked out of my hotel, took a walk on the one Brighton pier (of two) that wasn't yet condemned as unsafe, and drove up to London with Malcolm and Chris Edwards, at whose house I was to spend two days while I chatted up London editors and publishers, did a little touring, etc. Unfortunately, the first evening there I came down with one of those 36-hour killer flus, so I missed most of Chris Priest's "canine zombie" party, and a big luncheon for editors and writers the next day, and never got any touring at all done. So much for my earlier self-congratulations on my carefully maintained good health. Thursday morning, the first time I felt halfway competent to live, I caught a plane for home.

(Before I became unbearably ill Tuesday night, Chris did take me through the garden behind his apartment to the vast field beyond a line of trees. "This is where World War II was won," he said. Remembering a little history for a change, I asked, "You mean this is the playing field of Eton?" "No, I'm afraid it's only the playing field of Harrow, but Churchill mentioned both, you know." So I guess I did get to see one of the historic sights of London after all.)

I read an issue of Analog on the way home, but it struck me as pretty dull stuff after the excitement of England's largest convention.

COLLECTOR'S
EDITION

Jerry Carr's SCIENCE-FICTION



GOOD STUFF WITH ALL THE WORDS SPELLED RITE

"... peachy skiffy"
c. hoffman price