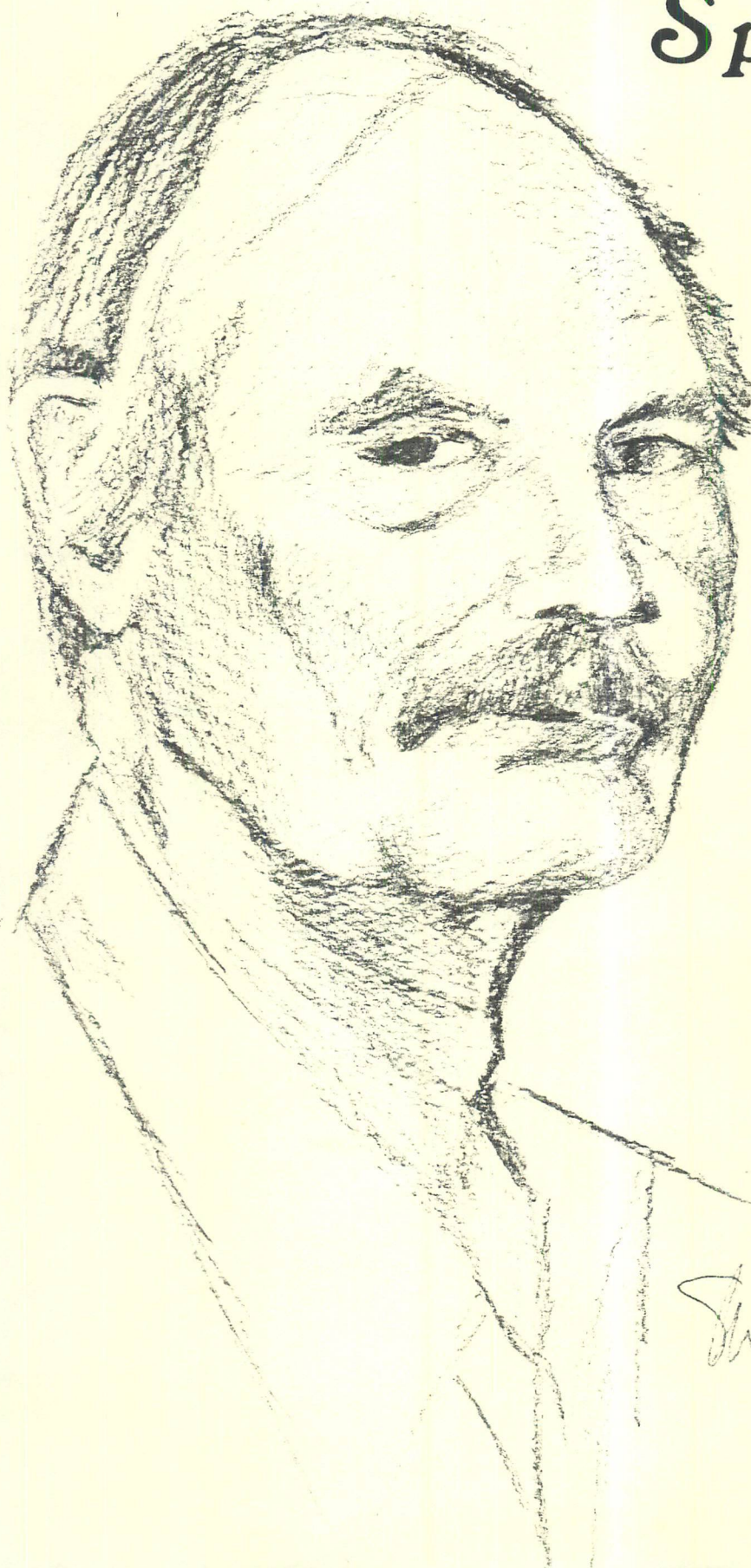


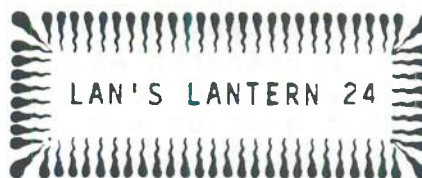
A Frederik Pohl *Special*



John



A Frederik Pohl Special



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To Fred.....Gregory Benford.....7	May they give us another fifty years of reading pleasure.
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Why You Are Receiving This

- ☐ You have a contribution (art, article) in this issue.
- ☐ You've sent me a contribution (to be published in a future issue).
- ☐ Loc received (to be published next issue).
- ☐ Trade ☒ You wanted one
- ☐ We're in an apa together.
- ☒ I would like you to contribute to the next special issues (1988: on William F. Temple, Lester del Rey and Arthur C. Clarke; 1989: Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, Fritz Leiber, Ted Sturgeon, A. E. Van Vogt).
- ☐ This is your last issue unless you send me something.

Frederik Pohl.

I've known the man almost as long as I've been in fandom, for almost twelve years. The first time we met was at a CONFUSION in Ann Arbor. Shortly after that we were both at a meeting of the Science Fiction Research Association. I was one of the few fans there, and that gave us a bond that the other people didn't have.

On and off for the past twelve years we have encountered each other, usually just saying hello, sometimes pausing to talk longer. The most time I spent with Fred was at one of Jim Gunn's SF Teachers' Seminars. I spent three weeks in intensive study of science fiction, talking to other readers and teachers, to authors and editors, Fred among the likes of George Scithers, Ted Sturgeon, Jayne Tannehill, Thomas Disch, Lloyd Biggle, Gordon Dickson and James Gunn himself. It was like a three-week-long convention. And Fred was part of it.

He talked about stories. He talked about the John W. Campbell Award for Best Novel (Thomas Disch won that year for On Wings of Song), about editing, about introducing SF to young people. He mentioned his own writing habits -- four pages a day, minimum. Sometimes they were good, sometimes not. What counted was that he was doing some writing every day -- and in four months time he would have a good-sized novel. Or several short stories. Or a few novellas. He took his typewriter wherever he went. Indeed, as I passed his room one morning, I heard the clack of typewriter keys.

I've found his writing extremely interesting. I recall checking out of the library a collection of his short stories when I was about 14. They were good, very good. I moved on to

his novels -- Preferred Risk, Drunkard's Walk, Wolfbane, The Age of the Pussyfoot, and others. These were all right, but his writings after an extended period as editor of Galaxy and If were better. Man Plus, Gateway, and Jem are among my favorites.

In his extensive travels around the world, Fred has been gathering SF authors from a variety of countries to join WSF -- World Science Fiction, an international organization of SF writers. Fred has tried to be accommodating to fans. I've asked him on several occasions to write an article of appreciation for my special issues. Unfortunately he has been too busy writing and traveling, to do so. However, he was able to write a piece on L. Sprague de Camp.

In preparation for this special issue of Lan's Lantern I asked Fred if I could interview him. We arranged to meet on Sunday of WINDYCON in November of 1986. He had to fly in from Philadelphia where he was a special guest at PHILCON for their 50th anniversary. I can't say that I know of too many authors who would make that effort. (To be honest, I think he wanted to hurry home to be with his wife, Betty Ann Hull, who couldn't go with him to PHILCON.)

Fred and I haven't sat and talked very often, but when we do, it's a pleasure. The novel The Way the Future Was which contains his memoirs, is a delight to read, but he has so many more stories to tell in person. Get him talking, and you'll laugh until your sides ache, or cry, or argue, or become thoughtful at one of his personal stories.

I'm glad to know Fred Pohl. I hope to get to know him better as we both continue our journey through fandom.

Frederik Pohl

Literary Agent

by Larry Nowinski

Although Frederik Pohl says vociferously in his memoir, The Way the Future Was, that he has no desire to be a literary agent, and on some days wishes that he could remove that block of time from his life, I think it was an important time for the SF field that he was an agent.

Mr. Pohl wanted stories he could sell, stories that were good enough to sell. Writers did not always write good stories -- many times only competent ones, and oft-times poor ones. To make things easier for the writers to write without tying them down to specific formulas or aiming for particular markets, Pohl arranged to buy whatever they wrote, and find the market for them afterward. Could you imagine the freedom a writer had with this arrangement? He could allow his imagination to soar, write things that he wanted, and stretch the limits of his craft, style and abilities. He was assured of some sort of remuneration.

This might not sound like much in today's market, when so much garbage seems to be published under the heading "Science Fiction", but back in the late forties and early fifties, this was like a dream-come-true for those writers. Too many times a writer would like to stretch himself but couldn't because he needed money to make ends meet that month. Even if he was married and his wife worked, he still had to do something to add to the household income. Writing to formulas was one way, becoming a "hack" and writing for series or writing-to-order was all well and good, but the talents he has can atrophy if not used. Knowing that any competent story he turned out would be bought was a comfort, and knowing that he could try things that

haven't been tried before and still be able to make a sale was heavenly.

As a result, Pohl got a lot of very good stories, many of which appeared in the anthology he edited, Star Science Fiction. Working under Ian Ballantine's direction for his paperback line, Ballantine Books, Pohl was able to ask writers to submit stories for this original anthology, the first of its kind, and many did. Again, the writers stimulated their literary and science fictional imaginations and came up with some very good stories.

Frederik Pohl was also able to bring new talent into the field. When he can take the credit for the likes of Robert Sheckley and A. J. Budrys being published, he has a right to a certain amount of pride. And getting Isaac Asimov's first novel published? Which agent nowadays would like to have that in his credits! Or being responsible for getting Jack Williamson's The Humanoids into hardcover book form for the first time!

The unfortunate thing about Pohl's methods was that he needed a large outlay of capital to make it work. He had some, but in the end he overstretched his resources and had to quit. He paid off his writers and let them go, making cash settlements with many of them. This left him with a debt of some \$30,000, not a small chunk of money, particularly in the fifties.

Pohl then turned to his first love, writing, to earn the money and pay back that debt. It took him nearly ten years to balance everything. He took the responsibility and never once considered filing for bankruptcy.

I think that says more about the man than anything else.

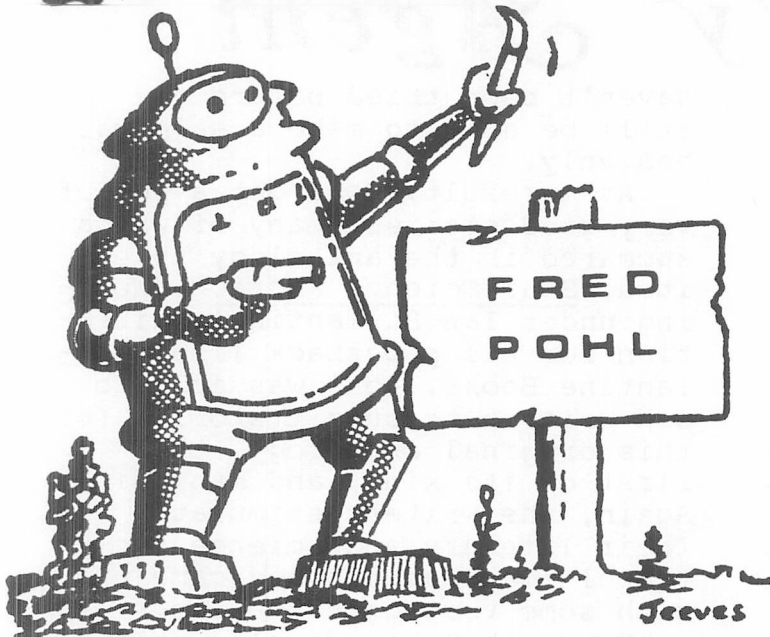
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BEYOND THE

BLUE EVENT

HORIZON

A book review by Jean Lamb



Frederik Pohl is one of that group of science fiction writers known as "old pros", which means that he's been writing for the last forty years. After reading this book, he can go on writing got forty more as far as I'm concerned. Beyond the Blue Event Horizon is actually a sequel to his award-winning novel written in 1977 entitled Gateway, which first introduced us to the alien race known as the Heechee and to the improbable Robinette Broadhead.

It helps to have read Gateway before reading this sequel, but not absolutely necessary. For those who didn't, the Heechee are an advanced alien race who have disappeared from the galaxy, leaving nothing but their mysterious artifacts, including some very odd starships. The Gateway Corporation offers various premiums on different voyages, depending on the danger and the

possible return. Robinette Broadhead is a man who made it big on one of the voyages, which involved traveling closer to a black hole than any sane person would be likely to. All the crew except Broadhead were swallowed by the black hole and are stuck in the "event horizon" of the title -- including Broadhead's true love.

Now, as far as this book is concerned, the people of Pohl's future Earth are starving despite all the technological advances that have been made due to the Heechee. Broadhead, realizing that starving customers are bad for business besides being a nice guy in his own right, invests in an expedition to check out rumors of a giant Heechee food factory roaming the fringes of known space.

A family group (the Herter-Halls), suckered in by the incredibly high premium the Gateway Corporation puts on this voyage, volunteers to go. After two years, though, they are suffering from a case of cabin fever that would cause the Waltons to hate each other.

This first appeared in The Arkansas Gazette in the Spring of 1981. Used with permission of the author.

And they're not exactly the Waltons. Peter Herter, the oldest, is an ex-Hitler youth with delusions of grandeur (which he sensibly keeps to himself). Lurvy, his daughter, is a pilot who wants a successful mission above all else. Her husband Paul Hall is a structural engineer who's wondering why he ever came along in the first place. Janine, Lurvy's half-sister, is fourteen years old and is ready to give Lolita a run for her money.

It's hard to talk about this book without giving away too much of the plot. Some of the concepts such as a program called Full Medical, however, deserve further examination. A mechanical monitor is present at all times to check on the person's current condition. The client is put together piece by piece if necessary if an accident occurs, and explains why Peter Herter is still alive. It's the closest thing to immortality around, even if the cost makes Blue Cross look like a band-aid.

Another thing the author has fun with is the way a computer can be programmed to display various personas. One of them, "Albert Einstein", does most of the scientific explanations, as Robinette Broadhead is just as technologically innocent as the rest of us. Although our hero is intellectually aware of the computer's programming, emotionally he treats the computer personas as real, especially his psychiatrist persona "Sigmund Freud". All these personas are controlled by his wife through the command program "Polymath" (which makes it very easy for her to keep track of him).

Pohl also speculates that there is a black hole at the center of our galaxy, conjecturing that the amount of known mass in the universe is not enough to fit the otherwise-successful Big Bang theory and that the postulated black holes may have the missing mass. Pohl supposed the

Heechee may be trying to contract the universe and start another Big Bang to remake the universe more to their liking -- and the only good place to survive that kind of mess is another black hole. Of course, he throws in a nasty little surprise right at the end of the 4 book, but I'm not going to give that one away.

Although this book really doesn't have the impact that Gateway had -- the many viewpoints of this book are not as intensive as the single one of Gateway -- it's nothing to sneeze at either. I personally would recommend that anyone interested would read both books. They're worth it.

THE ONLY THING THAT CAME IN
THE POST IS ANOTHER "HEECEE
CLEARING HOUSE-WIN A STARSHIP
TO SOMEWHERE CONTEST"
BULLETIN.

I THOUGHT
THEY HAD GIVEN
THEM ALL AWAY
BY NOW.



Thanks, Mr. Pohl

from Timothy Nowinski

It was a dark and stormy night.

Well, it was, really. I got home from work and picked through the mail that had come, and two books were in a box from the Science Fiction Book Club. The one I remember -- the one I sat down to read -- was Man Plus by Frederik Pohl. Yes, I barely remembered to put a TV dinner in the oven, much less eat it, so engrossed I was in the story.

A man designed to live and survive on Mars! Yeah, that was a damn good plot. So it sounded a little hackneyed; it was still good, and it made my dreams rather strange that night.

Man Plus was not the first Pohl story I had read, but it says something about his writing. It takes a person in, it drags him along and makes him interested in what's going on. The same thing happened to me with Gateway. And Jem.

God, was Jem depressing. So was his disaster novel Syzygy. And Terror. I wondered why his later novels were like that. Maybe something happened in his life to make him bitter and that came through in his writing. But the rest of the Heechee books were fine. So I figured that he is just following trends or extrapolating the thencurrent trends toward disaster.

I don't recall which of Pohl's stories I read first. I do know that at one point I started picking up his books because of his name. Many of the early short stories seemed to have some

light-heartedness to them. His novel written with Cyril Kornbluth, The Space Merchants was fun to watch unfold. I always secretly hoped for a sequel, and recently one has appeared. It was as much fun as the first one, though it's too bad that Kornbluth wasn't alive to help Pohl along with it, or at least to see what he did in extending the story.

The other stories written with Kornbluth were very good. And those done with Jack Williamson were excellent. The juveniles those two wrote together were very appealing, and I'd let any kid read those at any time.

Some of the books I bought because of Pohl's name turned out to be anthologies he edited. Those Star readers were very impressive; it makes me wonder how many new writers he started on their way to being published authors.

Of the other "Pohl books" I picked up, some were novels, some were collections of his short stories. I was very pleased to find he had versatility using the story length. I dislike authors who pad books, who write a trilogy when they have barely enough story for a single novel, let alone three. Pohl hasn't done that. He's done the reverse. And Starburst is a good case in point.

I was doing a lot of overtime at work when Starburst came out. I checked it out of the library to read, and didn't have time to finish it before I had to return

it. Yes, I wanted to finish it, I was aching to finish it, but I came home from work too tired to concentrate on anything more strenuous than some vegetable matter from the TV. So only half-finished with it, I took Starburst back to the library. The next day came the offer from the SFBC for a copy. Two months later, I finished it, rereading the first part again.

With that novel, Pohl did something that few authors can do well -- take a short story they have written and find enough threads in it to expand it into a novel. From "The Gold at Starbow's End" to Starburst is a nice leap, and a logical enough development that it's hard to believe that it had been a short story first.

So thank you, Mr. Pohl, for giving me so many pleasant hours of reading. I haven't read all your books, yet; I still have a few on the shelf waiting to be cracked. Cool War, Black Star Passing, The Coming of the Quantum Cats, plus some rather early novels (Age of the Pussyfoot, Drunkard's Walk and a few others) and the collections will have to wait till I get through this with new one -- Chernobyl.

SOME COMMENTS ON

FREDERIK POHL

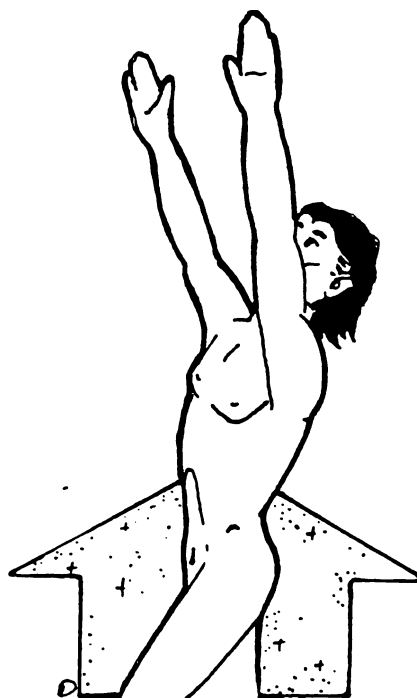
by David Palter

Frederik Pohl, if he had never written anything after his 1950's satirical collaboration with Cyril M. Kornbluth, would still have been remembered forever as one of the all-time great SF writers. Yet he has gone on to write a whole slew of astonishingly good novels in the 70s and 80s. He is a treasure.

To Fred

From Gregory Benford

Fred Pohl is arguably the most brilliantly representative of all American SF writers. He spans the entire evolution of SF in this country, and has steadily evolved with it to rank with the best, and certainly the broadest. From early pulp cardboard, he has learned and grown, and had two novas of innovative eruption: the mid-1950s, with Kornbluth, and then as the synthesis of New Wave lit'ry values and hard SF, with Gateway and Man Plus in the mid-1970s. No one else has managed such a repeated remolding at the highest level. He embodies the practical American attention to how things happen (whether they be matters of financial sleight-of-hand, engineering, astrophysics or ward politics) with a worldly knowledge of our all-too-common cultural myopia. There's nobody else like him on the planet, and he keeps getting better.



A CONVERSATION WITH *Frederik Pohl*

Conducted by Ian

Fred Pohl is a writer, a fan, an editor. He was all these things and more in his earlier days, but now he remains a fan, writing is what he does, and an editor is what he is on occasion.

We have talked briefly at various conventions. At WINDYCON in November of 1968, we met in the lobby of the Hyatt Regency Woodfield and discussed his career. Drawing on those conversations, material in his memoirs, The Way the Future Was (Del Rey/Ballantine, 1978), and Damon Knight's The Futurians (John Day, 1977), I've put together this collage of Fred Pohl.

Fred found fandom at age 15 when he joined the Brooklyn chapter of the Science Fiction League. He moved from one club to another, editing the fanzines that each published. This sort of fanac carried over to his work on the Flatbush Young Communist Yell, the newsletter of his chapter of the Young Communist League. Fred was the only one to use his own name; all other contributors used party names. He quit the League in 1940 when the Germans marched on Paris.

His fannish writings weren't very good, Fred admits. "Of all the fanzines I published and edited, my favorite was Mind Of Man. I really got some good discussion going in that one."

In 1937, he settled in with the Futurians.

"I was impressed with the people in the club. Some were very good writers. Don Wollheim had already sold fiction and

various Futurians collaborated to write stories."

Fred himself wrote with various combinations of the Futurians to produce not very memorable stories. His first published piece was a poem, "Elegy to a Dead Planet: Luna".

"I wrote the poem in 1935. Sloane [editor of Amazing] accepted it in 1936. It was published in 1937. And I was paid for it in 1938.

"Funny thing. I never had another line in Amazing, from that day to this."

In 1939, at the age of 19, Fred became ghod. He was appointed the editor of two SF magazines: Super Science Stories and Astonishing Stories. Because of a shoestring budget, he tapped the Futurians for stories and



art; his wife at the time was taking art classes, and he asked her friends for illustrations. The magazines were marginally successful until World War Two put the pinch on supplies.

Since those early days, Fred has edited many magazines and books, including the Star Science Fiction series, Galaxy and IF, International Science Fiction, and several anthologies. He is proud of the work he did for Star and Galaxy/IF. For the latter pair, he took tottering sales and turned them into successes, from bi-monthly to monthly, with incredible stories. Fred should be proud. The number of awards earned by the writers during his editorship surpasses most of the other magazines. For award-winning novels whose first appearance were in the magazines, Galaxy still holds the record (see "Who's Winning Science Fiction's Awards?" by Robert Sabella in the upcoming Lan's Lantern #25).

"I enjoyed editing -- I still do. You put more time into that sort of job, and you get a regular paycheck. It's smaller than selling a couple of novels a year, but its steady work."

As a writer, Fred Pohl has tried many different styles and genres. Poetry, horror and mystery, even mainstream. His attempted novel about the advertising business in New York didn't work out, but many of the ideas were carried into The Space Merchants written by him and Cyril Kornbluth. He has also written advertising copy, which gave him the inspiration and background for the novel. "One likes to flex one's muscles on a new form," Fred says, "and also one likes to eat."

One notable trend about Fred's writing is that his recent work is very depressing. Fred himself is far from being a depressing person. When I asked him about this, he replied:

"I really don't want the stories to be that way, but they still turn out like that. There are some books, like Jem that I am compelled to write because they interest me, and this could not logically have been written in any happy way. If you think about one possible direction that the future will take for the world we live in today, like the struggle over resources postulated in Jem, and the political battling of nations, there isn't any happy ending. If that trend continues, we're all dead.

"When I was editing Galaxy, Robert Silverberg was writing his suicidal stories about the future, talking about the grim, gritty existence of the next couple of hundred years. I sent him a check for one of them, and included a note: 'For Christ's sake, cheer up. Think of something happy!' After Jem was published, I got a card from him saying, 'Glad I converted you.'"

However, throughout The Way the Future Was, Fred notes how things have changed. Where he grew up, where the Futurians met, the places he's lived, all of them have changed for the worse. His favorite movie of all time is Things To Come, mainly because of its optimism; things will get better. It seems as though reality has tarnished those feelings. I too hope, as Fred does, that the visions of the future he has extrapolated do not come to pass.

"I don't mean my stories to be predictions, and I have some optimism about the future, though I can't account for it -- I can't think of any reason to be optimistic, but I'm hopeful it will all work out.

"Somebody asked Ray Bradbury if his stories were predictions, and he replied: 'I'm not trying to predict the future; I'm trying to prevent it.' I feel the same way. We all can do something about the future. One of the great things about science fiction is

that if you read enough of it, you have a shopping list of all possible futures. And if you know the possibilities, you can make good choices."

Fred reads for fun and information. He is the Encyclopedia Britannica's source expert on the Roman Emperor Tiberius. He learned number theory on his own. Although he never finished high school, Fred has learned everything he needed because he could read.

"One of the interesting things about reading fiction is that it can stimulate you to think. Science fiction in particular makes you look at things differently. A game I play is to think about what comes after a story I just finished. It's one way of getting ideas and inspiration for writing."

When I asked about where he got his ideas, he said that they mostly came from daydreaming. "In the morning, sometime after the second cup of coffee when the brain kicks into gear, the ideas start coming."

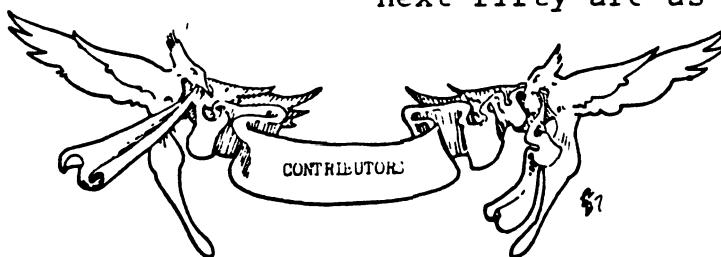
I asked him about the license plate on a car I saw in the parking lot. "The one with 'MAN PLUS'? That's my wife Betty's car."



Fred continues to travel around the world, making contact with authors in foreign countries for World SF. This international organization has about 100 members in 32 different countries. In spite of his travels (or maybe because of the inspiration gained from them), he continues to write and publish. When I talked to him in 1986, he was getting ready to travel to the Soviet Union to visit the Chernobyl area for the novel published this year: Chernobyl. He is also collaborating with Jack Williamson on a novel called Land's End which should be out soon. And he has several more in the works.

When asked about these past fifty years, Fred replied:

"They've been fun. I hope the next fifty are as enjoyable."



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