

Our 40th Anniversary!

This issue of *THE FUTURIST* marks 40 years of continuous publication. In some ways, it seems like only yesterday that we began; in other ways, 40 years ago seems like the Dark Ages, because so much has happened in the interim.

Some World Future Society members have been with us throughout the past 40 years, and

to them we offer a special salute! We also salute those who remained loyal members as long as they lived and even remembered the Society in their wills so that future generations could benefit from the foresight we provide.

Part one of this memoir describes how the idea for the Society came about and the events leading to its

founding. In upcoming issues of *THE FUTURIST*, we'll explore the early years of the Society and its projects and supporters.

We invite you to share your experiences with and reflections on the Society. Please write to managing editor Cindy Wagner at cwagner@wfs.org.



David Goldberg, Peter Zuckerman, and Robert Horn—three members of the steering committee that shaped a plan of organization for the proposed World Future Society—sit side by side while answering questions at a special meeting called to get outsiders' views of their project.

The Search for Foresight

How THE FUTURIST Was Born

By Edward Cornish

The World Future Society is now commemorating its fortieth anniversary. Here, the editor of *THE FUTURIST* describes the “wild card” events that awakened him to the importance of exploring the future and led to the founding of what is today the world's largest organization devoted to the future's exploration.

Back in 1960 I would never have dreamed that within a few years I would become something called a “futurist” and take a leading role in creating the World Future Society. As a future futurist, I failed completely to anticipate my own future!

My life in 1960 was rather idyllic. After spending six years working all hours of day and night as a United Press correspondent in five different cities of America and Europe, I had secured a nice quiet 9-to-5 job with the National Geographic Society in Washington. All I had to do was write feature articles on science, natural history, and geography. For me this was like paradise. I



Herman Kahn (seated) developed the scenario technique for thinking about future possibilities while he was working for the U.S. military at the RAND Corporation. His book *On Thermonuclear War* (1960) coolly described some of the horrendous consequences of a war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Here he is shown in the Society's bookstore with **Edward Cornish**, author of this memoir, about 1980.

got married, and my wife and I bought a comfortable house in the suburbs where we lived with our two young sons. We socialized with neighbors and friends.

But far away from Washington, the Soviet Union and its allies were threatening to overturn noncommunist regimes around the world, and the United States and its allies felt increasingly imperiled. In South Vietnam, Communist rebels menaced the newly independent government; in East Germany, the Communists were tightening their grip on Berlin; and, in Cuba, Fidel Castro's rebels had toppled a noncommunist government and were now allying Cuba with Moscow.

To make matters worse, the Soviet Union and the United States were in an arms race, focused largely on building nuclear rockets that could obliterate cities thousands of miles away. Both nations now had thermonuclear weapons, whose power dwarfed the horrors wrought by the atomic bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II.

John F. Kennedy was elected president in November 1960, and, as soon as he assumed office, he began responding forcefully to Communist expansionism. Kennedy went to Berlin to reassert American support for West Berlin's independence. He sent thousands of American military "advisors" to assist the South Vietnamese government in resisting Communist aggression, and he approved an invasion of Cuba to oust the Castro regime.

These moves demonstrated American determination not to tolerate further Communist advances, but they also antagonized the Soviet leadership. As tensions increased, both the Soviet Union and the United States accelerated preparations for war.

War between two nations armed with thermonuclear rockets was too ghastly even to think about. When an obscure physicist named Herman Kahn at the RAND Corporation *did* think seriously about the consequences of a thermonuclear war, he was roundly denounced as some kind of monster, like the half-maniac, half-bionic "Dr. Strangelove." True enough, Kahn's 1960 book *On Thermonuclear War* may well be the scariest book ever written, but only because the facts are so horrendous. The human mind has difficulty comprehending a war in which millions of people might die on the first day of the war—and most of the survivors would wish themselves dead.

My work rarely touched on politics, but it was impossible to be a journalist working only five blocks from the White House and a member of the National Press Club and not be aware of the increasing international tension. My office window looked out on the Soviet Embassy just across Sixteenth Street, and my colleagues and I knew that FBI agents were stationed in nearby buildings to monitor the comings and goings at the Embassy. When we crossed the street, we joked about the FBI eavesdropping on our conver-

sations.

When the Soviet Union sent a new ambassador to Washington, I went to the Press Club to hear him speak. The ambassador was a seemingly genial fellow named Novikov, who spoke excellent English and gave a friendly speech. We journalists applauded enthusiastically, so the event became a love feast of Soviet-American amity. Unfortunately, our friendly reception seems to have misled the ambassador into thinking that the United States would not go to war even if the Soviet Union supplied Cuba with nuclear missiles. In any event, this Soviet miscalculation almost brought about thermonuclear war.

During the mounting crises of 1961 and 1962, I experienced a personal crisis. I had to assume that the Soviets had one or more nuclear missiles aimed at Washington, and, at any moment, such a missile might be launched, either intentionally or accidentally. So what should I do? Just ignore the mounting danger?

I had no power to prevent the march toward Armageddon, but I could at least get my family and myself someplace far away. It would not be easy, but it was possible. I got literature from the Australian Embassy and began seriously thinking about moving my family there. I agonized for months over this question, but it became clear that my wife would not go with me, so if I did I would have to leave her behind and probably my sons as well. I was not ready for that, so I remained in Washington, hoping that the crisis would pass but continuing to agonize. The year 1962 was the darkest period of my life psychologically and perhaps also for my wife, who was very much affected by my own anxiety.

The 13-day Cuban crisis in 1962 has been described by historian Arthur Schlesinger as the most dangerous moment in history. Some of President Kennedy's advisors urged him to order an immediate "preemptive strike" by U.S. missiles to keep the Soviets from obliterating us first. Happily, we'll never know what would have happened if their view had prevailed, because the crisis was resolved after an extraordinary meeting—outside normal diplomatic channels—between a journalist whom I knew slightly, John Scali, and a Soviet contact who had the ear of the Kremlin. The Soviet leaders finally became convinced that the Americans might really be crazy enough to launch a missile attack against them, so they called back the ships carrying nuclear weapons to Cuba.

Sharing Fears with Friends

My intense anxiety slowly subsided, but the years of growing crisis left me with an obsession: Is there any way to decide what may happen in the future? We desperately need better knowledge of the future if we are to make intelligent decisions, but there seemed to be no way to get it.

I shared my concerns with various friends, partly because I hoped that they would help me in some way and partly because talking about it relieved my anxiety. I don't believe I really expected that one of my friends would enable me to find answers to the questions that obsessed me. But one of them actually did.

This friend was John Dixon, my oldest and most unusual friend. He and I met when we were 6-year-old schoolboys in New York, and through the years, we always stayed in touch though our careers took us in very different directions. I followed my father and grandfathers into journalism, while John went his own unique way. He always did.

One of John's "hobbies" was going after people doing interesting things. While we were still in school, John got Albert Einstein to solve a math problem assigned by one of the teachers. (No other kid came up with that solution to the homework problem!) After college, he persuaded the comprehensive designer Buckminster Fuller to give him a job, so John went around the world putting up Bucky's signature domes in places as remote as Afghanistan. Along the way, he made friends everywhere with people whose work interested him. Many of them, like John and Bucky, seemed to have their eyes on the future.

When John relocated to Washington, we renewed our friendship. He got a job setting up an office for the Xerox Corporation, whose new copying machines were far better than any other manufacturer's. John's special

task was to demonstrate to scholars the extraordinary usefulness of Xerox photocopiers. Once the scholars realized how much Xerox machines could help them in their work, they would demand that their institutions spend millions of dollars acquiring Xerox machines.

John's strategy was to get scholars and scientists to send him their papers. He would then select the papers sure to interest specific scholars. Then he would have his staff send out photocopies to the designated recipients. Since John had a keen sense of what individual scholars were most interested in, his system worked beautifully. Scholars around the world became entranced with Xerox copies, and John acquired countless devoted and grateful admirers.

In this unique way, John established close contact with Bertrand de Jouvenel, a French economist who had become interested in how we can know more about the future; sociologists John McHale and Daniel Bell; and scholars at the RAND Corporation who were doing pioneering work in the use of scenarios and Delphi polling as tools for anticipating and preparing for possible future developments in military and political affairs.

John also began sending me papers he thought would interest me, and, since he knew me exceptionally well, his papers proved priceless. If I hadn't had John's help, I would never have learned about these scholars working on the future, and I also would not have heard of de Jouvenel's book *The Art of Conjecture*, which was published in

Monaco. I immediately ordered a copy and, when the book arrived, read it with growing excitement. De Jouvenel opened my eyes to what should have been obvious but I had failed to see due to my misconceptions of the future.

The Future as Frontier

I began to see the future not as a totally impenetrable realm about which we can know absolutely nothing, but rather as an exciting frontier, offering enormous possibilities but also extraordinary dangers. We cannot possibly know everything that lies ahead, but with effort we can glimpse the possibilities of our future. This weak but incredibly valuable knowledge is critically important if we are to make wise decisions. Foresight is the secret ingredient of success.

Since I was a journalist, I began to think about how other people could be made aware of the possibilities of the future and perhaps could do a better job of dealing



French social scientist **Bertrand de Jouvenel** led the so-called "Futuribles" project in the early 1960s and wrote *The Art of Conjecture* (*L'art de la Conjecture*, 1964), one of the pioneering works in futurist literature. Standing over de Jouvenel is **John Dixon**, who played a unique role in the futurist movement.

with the innumerable problems that humans must confront. Perhaps we could even find better ways to avoid future wars.

By 1965, I was mentioning to friends that I would like to start a magazine about the future. I knew that the Ford Foundation had put up the money to launch a magazine for the social sciences called *Transaction*. One of my friends, sociologist Hans Spiegel, arranged for me to meet with Fred Crosland, a Ford Foundation representative, who was attending a conference in Washington. However, Crosland told me that Ford was extremely unlikely to fund another magazine and there was little point in my applying.

After that disappointment, as well as several other efforts that went nowhere, I had another idea. Perhaps there was an association somewhere that served the needs of people interested in the future. Arthur C. Clarke had dedicated his book *Profiles of the Future* to his "colleagues in the Institute of Twenty-first Century Studies," so I wrote to him inquiring about the Institute. But Clarke wrote back that the "Institute" was imaginary: He was simply referring to people like himself who were interested in the future.

I also wrote Dandridge Cole, a General Electric futurist who was forecasting future developments in space exploration at the company's Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, research laboratory. Cole would certainly know if there was such a society, but he wrote back that he knew of no such organization, though he thought there should be one.

Sadly, the day after writing me, Cole died of a heart attack while doing calisthenics in his office. News of his death stunned me. I knew of no one else who might take the lead in establishing an association for the future. It also occurred to me that, even if there were someone willing to take on the task, just how would he find others to help him? People interested in the future were scattered across the world and they worked in many different occupations. I had thought that Dandridge Cole would already be in contact with future-oriented people and could readily assemble them, but I began to recognize that it might not have been easy for him to do so. Even if he knew such people, probably only a few would be willing to do the practical work of creating a society.

So, for a time, I thought that I would just have to forget about my idea for a magazine and a society for the future. But I also began to brood about trying to get such a group going myself. I knew nothing about how organizations get started—my sociology professors never discussed that topic—but I was sure you had to have people in contact with each other. I could see how a group of people living in the same community or working together daily could form a group, but people seriously interested in the future seemed to be few in



Buckminster Fuller explains the triangular construction technique used in his famous geodesic domes. Fuller was one of the forefathers of the World Future Society.

number and scattered across the world. They also worked in many different fields. How could they be located, contacted, persuaded, and nagged into actually doing the organizational work?

The Birth of THE FUTURIST

Eventually it occurred to me that perhaps I myself could start a newsletter devoted to the future, and that would put me into contact with others interested in the future. Though I had failed to get funding for a magazine, I could afford to start a simple newsletter without any help from others. I knew only a few "futurists" to

send it to, but they might know a few others, and gradually a network of futurists would be created. Then perhaps we could organize a society for the future, especially if there were a few of us who could meet regularly and work out the details of setting up an organization. A key step would be finding people who could meet as a group. Perhaps there were other people beside myself in the Washington area to join in a Society-creating effort.

So I began preparing an initial newsletter and I also drew up a prospectus for a "Society for the Future." This typed and crudely reproduced prospectus, running seven single-spaced pages, noted the increasing pace of social and technological change was generating interest in the future and a need to anticipate future changes. As evidence, I mentioned de Jouvenel and his *Futuribles* group in Paris.

"At present," I wrote, "scholars and experts concerned with the future operate in relative isolation from each other. Yet the electronics engineer, the demographer and the sociologist are all talking about the same world. Hence it would seem useful for those interested in the future to have forecasts brought together in a regular and systematic way, perhaps through a journal. It might also be useful to have a broad-based organization devoted to study of the future. Such a society, open to anyone interested enough to pay dues, could encourage a cross-disciplinary approach to social and technological forecasting. It might provide a communications network for funneling ideas about the future to appropriate government agencies and congressmen. Its file of members would be a list of individuals in various fields who could be consulted by scholars and public officials.

"The study of the future might help the cause of world peace. Almost all the world's leaders share a common vision of the future: they all agree that their peoples must and will become more affluent, and this common ideology of progress seems to offer some hope for an eventual solution to present international political disagreements. As people become more future-oriented, that is, more conscious of the dynamic nature of human institutions and ideologies, they may become

less rigid in their insistence on time-worn customs and beliefs that have been largely outmoded. It should then be easier to find areas of agreement. Thus serious study of the future which all men will share in common may offer a kind of counterweight to the burden of traditional grievances and present fears. Perhaps the 'conquest of the future' may provide what William James called 'a moral equivalent for war.'"

The prospectus went on to describe in some detail the journal that the Society for the Future might produce, since I was still largely focused on creating a substantial publication devoted to the future. However, I also discussed the practical issues of operating a society: governance, recruiting members, funding, etc.

The prospectus, written in 1965, reflected my continuing fear of war and search for some practical means of dealing with it. Besides my dread of thermonuclear war, I had been outraged as President Kennedy and later Johnson sent increasing numbers of American soldiers into Vietnam. When I was a news correspondent based in Paris, I had the sad duty of editing reports from our correspondents in Vietnam when French—not American—soldiers were fighting and dying there. I had despaired over the sufferings of my beloved France, and now I was boiling with rage that we Americans had learned nothing from the French experience.

While I was pondering what to call my projected newsletter, *Time* magazine solved my problem by publishing an extraordinary essay entitled, "THE FUTURISTS: Looking Toward A.D. 2000" (February 25, 1966). This essay focused on precisely the kind of people whose work fascinated me, such as Herman Kahn, Olaf Helmer, Buckminster Fuller, and Bertrand de Jouvenel. By referring to them as "futurists" *Time* had validated the term. In 1966, *Time* was probably the best-read publication among serious Americans, so a *Time* essay devoted to a subject made it *important*, whether it really was or not.

Strongly encouraged by this development, I began preparing a prototype newsletter called THE FUTURIST based on my collection of newspaper articles, books, reports, etc., related to the future. I also developed a mailing list of people who might be interested in a newsletter about the future, but I couldn't come up with more than about 40 or 50 names. So I decided to enclose several copies of the newsletter and suggest that the recipients forward copies to anybody they thought might be interested.

To cast a wider net, I looked through directories of corporations and made a list of executives whose job titles suggested they should have an interest in the future, such as "Manager of Corporate Planning." I also went through the *Congressional Directory*, looking for government officials whose jobs suggested they should be interested in the future.

After typing up my final version of THE FUTURIST, I had it printed by a firm in Washington, and began the task of addressing envelopes to the people I had identified. By this time, my wife Sally was taking an interest in the project, and she got our young sons (now numbering three—Tony, Jeff, and Blake) to help stuff the newsletter into envelopes.



Charles W. Williams Jr. (left), the World Future Society's first Vice President, chats with **Senator Walter Mondale** after Mondale's speech to a group of Society members in Washington in 1967. Mondale, one of the first persons to lecture at a World Future Society meeting, later became Vice President of the United States (under President Jimmy Carter) and the Democratic candidate for president in 1980. (He lost to Ronald Reagan.)

The response to THE FUTURIST was extraordinary. Scores of people, many quite prominent, wrote back asking to be put on the mailing list, and many had strong words of support.

Buckminster Fuller said that he thought the newsletter was excellent and was sending the copies to his "most trusted associates." One of them turned out to be my old friend John Dixon, who showed me the copy Bucky had sent him. It had a handwritten note at the top: "John, I think this is something you should look into."

Olaf Helmer wrote saying the newsletter "photocopies well," and he was sending copies to his colleagues within the RAND Corporation. Herman Kahn said he planned to look me up on his next visit to Washington. Glenn T. Seaborg, chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, asked to be put on the list, as did U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman. Others who wrote in included noted authors like Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke.

Realizing the Vision

Most important to me were the notes I got from two people working in downtown Washington who said they were very interested in the proposed World Future Society. One was social psychologist David Goldberg, advance planning officer in the U.S. Office of Education's Bureau of Research. The other was Charles W. Williams Jr., a staff associate in the National Science Foundation's Office of Science Resources Planning.

I arranged to have lunch with each of the two prospective collaborators and discuss the project with them. Both seemed genuinely enthusiastic and ready to get started immediately on making the proposed World Future Society a reality.

Williams, in turn, discussed the project with his boss, Henry David, who agreed that a society such as we proposed could be a resource for NSF's Office of Science Resources Planning. David agreed for Williams to support the effort and gave Williams a free hand in doing so. As a result, we were able to hold our organizational meetings at the National Science Foundation,

though David himself did not attend.

At our initial organizational meeting, held on August 3, 1966, we constituted ourselves a steering committee to finalize plans for the project. Thereafter, we met about once a week during August and September to work out the various issues that arose. Early in these deliberations, I was contacted by Peter Zuckerman, a systems designer at the System Development Corporation, and he also became an active member of the steering committee.

Also participating regularly in these early meetings was Paul Mahany, a tall, bearded editor who worked for my friend Rowan Wakefield, head of the Washington office of the State University of New York. Mahany gave me considerable advice on editorial and other issues, but he remained mostly silent during the steering committee meetings.

Another noteworthy participant was Robert Horn, a political scientist who had developed "information mapping," a technique for displaying extremely complex information so people can understand it better. He later founded Information Mapping, a company now located in Waltham, Massachusetts. Other people participated in one or more meetings but did not attend regularly and had little influence on our plans.

Goldberg and Williams did most of the talking during these organizational sessions. Zuckerman, Mahany, and I kept pretty quiet. I think the three of us wanted to keep our project moving forward as quickly as possible and preferred for others to do the talking, except when we felt strongly about something.

The group was remarkably well agreed on what we wanted the Society to be: an independent, politically neutral scientific and educational association for people interested in serious thinking about the human future. We were not interested in arcane or esoteric methods of predicting the future, nor in idle fantasizing about the future. We insisted on approaching the future in a rational, scientific manner that would provide practical foresight for individuals, organizations, and even humanity as a whole.

Though we agreed easily on the basic philosophy and approach of the society, several points of disagreement surfaced. Williams envisioned a professional scientific organization with special qualifications for membership. Such an organization could maintain high standards and have credibility in the scientific and academic communities. I appreciated Williams's concerns, but I felt that everyone has a stake in the future and may have useful information and ideas. More practically, I couldn't see a reasonable way to qualify people for membership in the Society as I envisioned it. Whatever our prerequisites for membership, we would likely exclude people we would want to include. For instance, if a doctorate were required for membership, neither Williams nor Zuckerman nor I would qualify. If a college degree were required, neither my friend John Dixon nor Bucky Fuller would qualify. Were most of us to be disqualified from membership in the organization we were creating?

Goldberg, the only one of us with a doctorate (in social psychology), seemed somewhat conflicted on this ques-

tion: He had spent considerable time earning his "union card" in academia, but he also had been profoundly influenced by the student rebellions on U.S. campuses during the 1960s. In fact, he brought to one of our meetings a former University of California professor of English (Stuart Miller) who had decided the rebelling students were right and, as a result, had quit his post and gone into soul-searching and humanistic psychology.

After considerable debate, the steering committee worked out a compromise: There would be no prerequisites for membership in the Society, but the Society would provide special services for people with a professional or scientific interest in the future.

We also agreed that the Society would be completely international, and membership dues would be the same for people everywhere in the world.

A second bone of contention was the name "World Future Society." I had struggled with the name issue myself when I first began thinking about an association for people interested in the future. I came up with quite a few names, and eventually chose "World Future Society" as the best option. But I had been most uncertain of my choice, so I consulted with my friend Lewis de la Haba. Lew was a journalist in public relations whose judgment I respected. After I gave him a list of alternative names, Lew thought a minute and said, "Why not just call it the 'World Future Society'?"

De la Haba's endorsement seemed to validate "World Future Society," much as *Time's* approval had validated the term *futurist*. So I used the name "World Future Society" in my prototype issue of THE FUTURIST. But Goldberg objected strongly to that name, mainly because the word "future" was singular; he thought it should be "futures" (plural). In this way, we would be stressing that people do not have a single fixed future but a wide variety of alternative futures they can choose among.

Eventually a compromise was reached: The name would be World Future Society, but we would add a subtitle proclaiming our Society to be "An Association for the Study of Alternative Futures."

At that point we were ready to create a new prospectus for the Society summarizing our plans. This prospectus included a Statement of Objectives, which Williams prepared:

1. To contribute to a reasoned awareness of the future and the importance of its study, without advocating particular ideologies or engaging in political activities.
2. To advance responsible and serious investigation of the future.
3. To promote the development and improvement of methodologies for the study of the future.
4. To increase public understanding of future-oriented activities and studies.
5. To facilitate communication and cooperation among organizations and individuals interested in studies of, or planning for, the future.

The prospectus listed 21 programs that the proposed Society might undertake, including THE FUTURIST, a "scholars' supplement to THE FUTURIST," a "forum for futurists," book services, and conventions.



Robert Jungk addresses meeting called to hear the announcement of the forming of the World Future Society on October 28, 1966. This gathering of about two dozen people in a Washington restaurant was the Society's first formal meeting.

Copies of the prospectus were sent to a number of people we knew and respected, along with an invitation to offer their comments, criticisms, and suggestions. These people were also invited to come to a special "feedback" session on October 18 at the Institute for Policy Studies, a Washington research institute with a leftist orientation.

At this feedback session, there seemed to be relatively little objection to a society devoted to the future, but a number of people reacted very negatively to the name World Future Society. Other names were proposed; for example, John Caffrey of the American Council on Education, suggested calling the organization "the De Jouvenel Society," in honor of the French futurist whom he and I so much admired.

This disagreement over the name horrified me because I suddenly envisioned an interminable series of contentious and unproductive meetings just to decide what to call the society!

I kept quiet about my misgivings, and over the next few weeks, my worst fears seemed to be confirmed as more people reacted negatively to the name "World Future Society." On the other hand, the alternative names that were proposed failed to gain traction.

To resolve the dispute, Goldberg took it upon himself to poll people on what name they preferred. Since he had strongly opposed the name, I wasn't sure he could be trusted to perform this task fairly. But he did, and to his chagrin, about half the people queried liked "World Future Society" best. No other name attracted more than one or two votes.

So Goldberg admitted defeat, and we moved on to the question of who should be the initial officers of the Society.

I planned to edit *THE FUTURIST* and felt that would be a heavy responsibility in itself. I definitely did not want to be an officer as well. After all, I had set out to organize the Society merely as a means of having a sponsor for the magazine I dreamed of. I simply assumed that others would take on the organizational roles.

Zuckerman, who was a Certified Public Accountant, had already volunteered to be our treasurer. So the key is-

sue became who would be our president. Peter and I left it mainly to Goldberg and Williams to sort out this issue, but a dispute developed; and, as the wrangle dragged on day after day, I became increasingly exasperated.

To get around the impasse, I decided to claim the presidency for myself by virtue of having brought the group together in the first place. I saw my becoming president as a temporary expedient. I thought it would be easy to settle the presidency issue later when we had more people to take on the officer roles.

So I rather arbitrarily assumed the presidency and appointed Goldberg and Williams as vice presidents. It was not in my nature to be so high-handed, but I was determined to keep us moving ahead. The others acquiesced to this arrangement.

The Society Is Born

At last, we were ready to announce the formation of the Society, but we felt we needed to do it in a public manner with an audience. While we were mulling over this issue, my old friend John Dixon called with the exciting news that Robert Jungk, a celebrated German author and futurist, was coming to Washington. We hastily arranged for Jungk to speak at a luncheon in Blackie's House of Beef, a large Washington restaurant, and telephoned invitations to everyone we thought might be interested.

And so on October 28, 1966, about two dozen of us gathered for lunch at the restaurant. I welcomed Jungk when he arrived and, feeling rather nervous, pinned a crude name tag on him. Charles Williams, our vice president, acted as master of ceremonies. Tall and serious in manner and speech, Williams commanded instant respect. Furthermore, he represented the august National Science Foundation. Nobody could doubt that we were serious people—not just science-fiction fans or followers of some mystical cult. I was delighted at the way Williams led the meeting, which went very smoothly.

In his speech, Jungk told us that the world's biggest lack is a lack of foresight. He compared the founding of institutions concerned with future studies to the founding of universities in the fourteenth century.

After Jungk spoke, we announced the formation of the World Future Society and said membership was open to everyone.

And so the Society became a reality. Well, sort of a reality. We were an organization with no members, no employees, no money, and no products or services. Clearly a lot had to be done—and fast—if the Society was not to be anything but a failed dream.

Still, for those of us on the steering committee, the luncheon gave us a wee feeling of triumph. □



About the Author

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Personal Meaning in the World Future Society

By Peter F. Eder

Your challenge to reflect and comment on the World Future Society as it celebrates its fortieth anniversary led me to carefully re-view my stash of saved FUTURIST issues. Over the past 23 years of subscriptions, I have saved 29 issues, but two stand out as special.

The first was the December 1983 issue devoted to Orwell's *1984*. I was a high-school sophomore when I read the book in 1954, and it always intrigued me. I believe it served as a major motivation in my early interest in the study of the future. Thanks to the insightful leadership of Ed Cornish, the magazine revisited Orwell's novel 30 years later and gave it a fresh perspective—and another challenging look forward.

The second was an article that appeared in the March-April 1988 issue. Written by Hank E. Koehn, it was entitled "Living and Dying with AIDS: One Futurist's Struggles." The author, a prominent futurist and banker, reflected on his six-month-long battle with AIDS. It dealt with how the disease changed his view of life and his understanding of himself.

When I first read Koehn's article, I felt moved about the AIDS scourge and this futurist's grasp of its crushing reality. Rereading it almost 20 years later, I still feel moved—and yet thankful for the progress that has been made.

For me, THE FUTURIST and the World Future Society have been a source of ideation, a provider of forecasting facts and suppositions, a cornucopia of ever evolving benchmarks, which I have used to stimulate, clarify, and modify my own thinking and work.

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The Truth and the Future

By Sister Brenda Walsh

I have been a member and avid reader of THE FUTURIST for about 35 years. You have done great forecasting over the years on issues like global warming, the global village and trade, and many other aspects of life that are fast becoming a reality and impacting all of us and all of life.

There are numerous people who have made an impact on our lives, such as Robert Muller, Willis Harman, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Richard Kirby, Ed Cornish, and many, many more, including the current staff.

From WFS I have learned that the future must be based on *truth*. It will release us from the slavery of our poor choices and is powerful enough to transform the destructive patterns in our living. If we could only make truth the power that will become the foundation of our future, we would be in much better shape.

I have also learned that we need a global vision as well as imagination, courage, conviction, and hope. We also need to be aware that when we help to lift up the most alienated in our communities we are contributing to local and global peace.

You have been willing to change lanes in response to readers' comments and to emerging needs along the way. For the future, I would like to see the Society further explore ideas on reclaiming our wealth, our liberty, and our democracy, as has been discussed by political economist Gar Alperovitz in his latest book, *America Beyond Capitalism*.

Brenda Walsh is a Racine Dominican Sister. E-mail bwalsh@racinedominicans.org.

A Beneficial Institution Building a Creative Future

By Charles Trudell

Congratulations on the World Future Society reaching the age of 40.

The World Future Society has done great things in the recognition, promotion, and application of the art and science of futures studies since the 1960s. It has become an institution that benefits planet Earth.

The World Future Society and your magazine, THE FUTURIST, have been beneficial to me in many ways, such as providing me with a foundation of progressive thought through flexible wisdom, intelligent compassion, and futuristic philosophy.

I believe that people can have a creative and purposeful future of challenge, adventure, and opportunity despite any obstacles, roadblocks, or hurdles that may come about. And I believe the future can benefit all of us individually and collectively due to the many possibilities that it can provide in our lives.

While employed with the federal government and military for almost three decades, I had the wonderful opportunity to serve on many staff advisory positions where I learned about futures studies and research. I was then able to use the methods and techniques of this body of knowledge to identify problems and provide solutions, answers, and results.

Keep up the good work. Thank you for your time and consideration. It is appreciated.

Charles Trudell may be reached by e-mail at charlestrudell@sbcglobal.net.

Editor's note: Readers are invited to share their thoughts about the World Future Society and THE FUTURIST, past, present, and future. Please write to Cindy Wagner, managing editor, cwagner@wfs.org.

The Search for Foresight

The World Future Society's Emergence from Dream to Reality

By Edward Cornish

In this second installment of his memoirs, the World Future Society's founding president describes how volunteers sharing "ideas and ideals" were drawn to the new, forward-looking organization.

The World Future Society was still just a dream when we announced its founding on October 28, 1966. The Society had no members, no headquarters, no money, no institutional backing, and no legal recognition. But our tiny organizing committee in Washington, D.C., had succeeded in melding our individual dreams into a

shared dream: We had achieved a fairly clear vision of what we wanted the Society to be.

We also had weathered our first crisis: Just before we announced the Society's founding, David Goldberg, who had been a key member of our organizing committee, abruptly withdrew as a vice president and secretary of the Society without giving a clear explanation. I was surprised and dismayed by his unexpected withdrawal, and, for a long moment, I feared that others might also desert, and the Society would become just another failed dream.

But the two other key members of our organizing committee—Charles W. Williams Jr. and Peter Zuckerman—moved immediately to heal the

breach. Before I even got word of Goldberg's withdrawal, Williams had spoken to Zuckerman, our prospective treasurer, about taking on the additional duty of being the Society's secretary, which was to have been one of Goldberg's duties. Zuckerman proved willing. So we moved right ahead with our announcement of the Society's founding.

The calmness that Williams and Zuckerman exhibited in responding to this early threat to our enterprise heartened me enormously. They showed themselves to be reliable, competent, and trustworthy in a crisis—and they remained steadfast allies during the Society's critical early years.

So the Society began life with a Board consisting of myself as president, Williams as vice president, and Zuckerman as secretary-treasurer. In the years ahead, the three of us worked together harmoniously with the help of numerous others to nurse our shared dream toward a reality. Meanwhile, Goldberg continued to participate in Society activities, but he never again played a key role in the Society's leadership.

After we announced the Society's founding, Williams began drafting the Society's bylaws and preparing an initial development plan. He also became the public face of the Society. His job at the National Science Foundation put him solidly in with Washington's scientific and policy-making establishment, and he welcomed the opportunity to become more visible in that community. Williams proved to be an impressive advocate for the Society as well as an excellent speaker and master of ceremonies at Society functions.

Meanwhile, Zuckerman



Charles W. Williams Jr., a founder and first vice president of the World Future Society, was an effective advocate for the Society in its early days. From 1969 to 1971, he served as staff director of the White House's National Goals Research Staff. The Goals Staff was established at the suggestion of Daniel P. Moynihan, who wanted to make the U.S. government more future-oriented.



Peter Zuckerman, one of the Society's founders, served for years as its secretary-treasurer. A survivor of the Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II, Zuckerman has devoted his life to preventing "the holocausts of the future."



Roy Mason, co-designer of the Society's first logo, is shown here working on the model buildings of the future that were used in a film about the future prepared for a Society conference. A dynamic creator of visions of the future, Mason was prominent in Society activities during the late 1960s and 1970s.

and I focused on practical tasks that needed doing. Zuckerman kept excellent minutes of our meetings—I have relied heavily on his notes in preparing this memoir—and he performed meticulously the duties of treasurer, once he had some money to take charge of! Later on, Zuckerman's intimate knowledge of computers and systems would enable the infant World Future Society to computerize its membership and financial records at a time when few other associations in Washington had made the transition.

As for myself, I concentrated on two urgent tasks: The first was to prepare a brochure describing the Society so we could start recruiting members, and the second was to edit and publish the first issue of *THE FUTURIST*, the newsletter that we were promising our future members. These tasks had to be done immediately, and the Society had no money to pay anybody to do it.

I thought that I could handle the writing and editing of *THE FUTURIST*, but I knew nothing about publishing—typesetting, layout, graphic art, printing, inventory, mailing, etc.—and even less (if that be possible) about being an association leader. In short, I was in trouble. What had I gotten myself into?

Volunteers to the Rescue

Happily, many of the Society's early members came to the rescue. Their enthusiasm was truly inspiring. One newcomer—who appeared on the scene at just the right moment—was William C. Moore, a talkative lawyer with many grand ideas. Moore agreed to be our

legal counsel—a post he was to hold for years—and his guidance proved invaluable. One of his first tips was to incorporate the Society in the District of Columbia because its laws were favorable to nonprofit organizations. Our application did satisfy the District's requirements, and we were duly chartered. Moore's law office in the District of Columbia became the Society's corporate address.

When the U.S. Patent Office refused our application for a trademark for *THE FUTURIST*, Moore told me to “go in and argue with them.” So I did, and we got our trademark. He gave me similar advice when the Internal Revenue Service rejected the Society's initial application for recognition as a nonprofit tax-exempt charitable organization. Again, I defended the Society's case and it worked. As a result, the Society got IRS approval, and we didn't have to pay the thousands of dollars a lawyer would normally charge for the service.

Moore also found a volunteer artist for us—Roy Mason, an extraordinarily creative architect who had been trained at the Yale School of Design. Mason also proved to be a godsend. He had just established a design firm on the ground floor of an apartment building on Massachusetts Avenue just off Dupont Circle, and he had lots of associates whom he could call on as volunteers for Society projects. Mason was so incredibly passionate about his projects that he had no time for levity or laughter, and he had to struggle to express his inner visions in words. One of his charming habits was to confuse the words *idea* and *ideal*, so that he regularly said to me, “Let's get together and share ideals!”

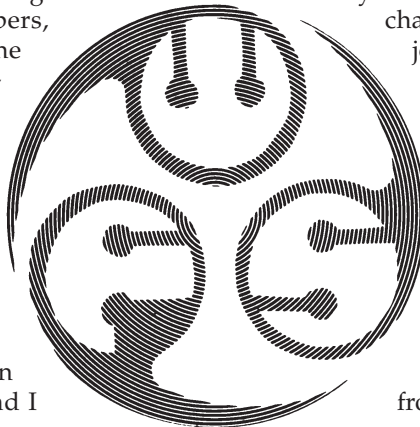
Mason's first project for the Society was designing a logo in collaboration with his associate Kenneth Dresser. The logo incorporated the Society's initials WFS into a

background based on the Japanese *tomoye* symbol, which looks like three comets chasing each other's tails. I was over-

joyed to get the logo, since it made the Society seem like a well-established organization, and it was finished just in time for the first brochures describing the Society and inviting people to participate.

About the same time, I located another volunteer to help publish the brochure and later *THE FUTURIST*—Darold Powers, a tall, thin, rather dreamy writer from Iowa whom I had met while on

a family camping trip. Powers had self-published a children's book he had written, and in the process had learned something about publishing. When I sought his help, he was unemployed and depressed, but he sprang to life as I discussed the Society. Powers agreed to act as a printer's agent, which meant that he would earn a



The Society's logo, designed by Roy Mason and his associate Kenneth Dresser in 1966, was based on the Japanese *tomoye* symbol. The Japanese word means “to bring together as to form a perfect circle.” Mason said, “The three-part *tomoye* brings together in one symbol the basic meaning and motivation of the World Future Society: the dynamic effort to search out, create, and foster a more perfect and lasting future for all mankind.”

commission if he found jobs for a printer or typesetter. The key point for me was that the Society would not be charged for Powers's layout services, though we would have to pay for the typesetting and printing.

The membership brochures, using my text, Mason's logo, and Powers's layout, were printed on single sheets of heavy blue paper, and folded so they could be tucked easily into a coat pocket. Though very simple in design and execution, this brochure proved remarkably effective in recruiting members for the Society.

Powers also arranged to have type set for the first issue of *THE FUTURIST* and laid out the early issues by himself. His first choice of a printer proved unfortunate, however: The copies were so badly smudged that most of them could not be used. But after that near disaster, Powers located a printer who did excellent work for us.

The Birth of *THE FUTURIST*

The first issue of *THE FUTURIST* (dated February 1967) was a crudely printed 16-page newsletter, but it was packed with then-current ideas about the future. I had culled them from news releases, texts of speeches, magazine articles, and whatever other sources I could lay my hands on.

One article carried the byline of Hubert H. Humphrey, then vice president of the United States, and was based on a recent speech in which he foresaw desalinated seawater, a permanent base on the moon, control of weather, elimination of bacterial and viral diseases, the landing of men on Mars, and the creation of primitive forms of life. (I suspect the speech was written for Humphrey by David Williams, a member of his staff who was an early Society member.)

Also in that first issue, oceanographer Athelstan Spilhaus predicted that most ships in the future would be submarines, while Richard Shetler, president of the General Learning Corporation, said we could anticipate a population explosion in non-Western cities, as well as computers that could take dictation. Other forecasts came from science writer Arthur C. Clarke and John Diebold, author of *Automation*, a pioneering best seller on the use of high technology in factories.

This first issue of *THE FUTURIST*—like other issues published during the 1960s—reflected the enormous optimism in the United States at that time. The world economy was booming, and the U.S. government was spending unprecedented amounts of money. Notwithstanding the soaring cost of the Vietnam War and the Apollo program, Lyndon Johnson's administration was pouring money into an ambitious "Great Society" program designed to end poverty in America, boost educational levels, and open new opportunities for blacks and other demographic groups.

The immediate effect of these government programs was to generate an enormous demand for bureaucrats, allowing many people in Washington to move to higher-paying jobs with the government or firms funded by the government. Due to the shortage of educated workers, Washingtonians felt secure in their jobs and often could pursue volunteer projects for the

World Future Society during working hours. They could also take long lunch breaks to attend Society meetings when we began holding them downtown.

The optimistic mood nourished by prosperity and the breathtaking Apollo program also encouraged a widespread interest in the future, which became the subject of many newspaper and magazine articles. Readers enjoyed learning about the wonderful things that they could expect in the future, and editors catered to this interest.

THE FUTURIST was not immune to the mood: Some early issues of *THE FUTURIST* could be described as "future porn"—glowing descriptions of the glamorous world of tomorrow. But I'm proud to say that, in the June 1967 issue, I did warn that writers on the future were focusing on "future solutions to present problems rather than future problems arising from present actions."

The first issue of *THE FUTURIST* contained so many specific predictions that, 30 years later, I decided to see how many proved right and how many were wrong. [See "Futurist Forecasts 30 Years Later," January-February 1997.] I began by identifying 60 statements in our first issue as candidates for evaluation. Then I eliminated 26 forecasts because they could not be judged clearly right or clearly wrong due to vagueness in their wording or the fact that the deadline for their fulfillment had not arrived or simply because I didn't feel able to evaluate their accuracy. That left 34 forecasts whose accuracy I felt I could judge.

Trying as hard as I could to be fair, I scored 23 forecasts as right and 11 as wrong—an accuracy rate of 68%. This finding counters the skeptics who claim that predictions are always wrong, but the fact remains that if you had bet on one of those predictions the chances were one out of three that you would have lost your money.

The 1967 forecasters failed most frequently in predicting future developments in space exploration. Though they forecast correctly that there would be a landing on the moon by 1970, their predictions for landings on other planets by 1980 and a manned lunar base by 1986 proved much too optimistic. (In December 2006, NASA said it anticipated a permanent manned base on the moon by 2024.)

Unquestionably, the forecasters were greatly influenced by the extremely rapid progress in space exploration during the 1960s. They hadn't reckoned with the possibility that the U.S. government would drastically reduce funding for space projects after the successful landing of men on the moon in 1969.

Still, considering the February 1967 issue as a whole, I don't think the forecasters did too badly. They anticipated that humans would make dynamic technological, economic, and medical progress in the years ahead, and so we have. The optimism of the 1960s was not entirely unjustified.

The Society's First Members

Six weeks after we announced the Society's founding, only three people had signed up for membership—hardly a promising start. But after we began dis-

tributing our brochures and the first issue of THE FUTURIST, people began to sign up in more significant numbers. By March 1, 1967, the Society had 340 members (along with a growing stack of unpaid bills), and by the end of our first year we had 1,500 members.

Who were these early members? Clearly, most of them were intelligent, imaginative people, many of whom were quite successful in their careers. And they were certainly well-educated as a group. I often felt like a country bumpkin when I found myself surrounded by people with doctorates. Perhaps a third of our early members were university professors or otherwise engaged in higher education. But there were also many government managers, city planners, engineers, authors, and business people involved in long-range planning, marketing, or product development.

These people were clearly interested in new ideas about technology and society, and they seemed to be highly imaginative and free in their thinking. Altogether, I found them the most fascinating group of people I had ever known, partly because they approached the future in so many different ways.

The very first person to become a Society member was, as I recall, William T. Gay, a retired English professor living in Montgomery, Alabama, who had a passionate interest in utopian literature. Gay gave a gift membership in the Society to Marion Bellamy Earnshaw, daughter of the nineteenth-century journalist Edward Bellamy, who wrote the famous novel *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*. A best seller after it appeared in 1888, *Looking Backward* described the wonders of Boston in the year 2000: airplanes, electric lights, radio, television, and equal rights for women.

I later recruited Gay to be the utopias editor of THE FUTURIST, and he contributed notable articles on Bellamy and Jules Verne, whose book on a flight to the moon inspired rocketry pioneers Robert Goddard and Konstantin Tsiolkovsky.

Other early members included well-known science-fiction writers such as Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov, Frederik Pohl, and Robert Heinlein. Arthur C. Clarke not only joined but sent in a membership for Stanley Kubrick, the producer/director of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Gene Roddenberry, creator of the *Star Trek* series on television, also signed up and gave a gift subscription to actor Leonard Nimoy, who played the character Mr. Spock on *Star Trek*.

My sons were very excited when they saw the *Star Trek* envelope containing Roddenberry's application for membership. I had never watched the show myself and had no idea who Roddenberry was. Years later, however, I did get to know him when he spoke at a Society conference where he explained how he developed memorable characters like Spock by imagining a person with certain characteristics and then questioning him to find out what he thought about specific things.

The early members also included some politicians, such as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman and Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, who later participated in the Society's 1975 conference.

And, of course, there were corporation executives such as William W. Simmons, IBM's director of exploratory planning, and Ian H. Wilson, who was leading a study of changing American values for General Electric.

Why People Joined

People seemed to have many different reasons for joining the Society. Some wanted to know about the future largely as a matter of personal curiosity. Others had a serious interest in learning what was expected in the future so they could be prepared for it. In short, they were not looking for entertainment so much as enlightenment. In fact, most of our early members believed that knowing more about the future might be of some practical importance in their professions and private affairs.

At least a few of the early members had personal experiences that turned them into futurists. For them, the future was part of a life mission.

Peter Zuckerman, the Society's secretary-treasurer, was such a person. Born in Budapest and raised in poverty, Peter experienced extraordinary suffering as a teenager. In 1944, the German army occupied Hungary, rounded up the nation's Jews, and shipped them to concentration camps. Peter was sent to Auschwitz at the age of 15, escaping the gas chambers only because he was deemed fit to work as a slave laborer for the Nazis. Fortunately, he was liberated by Allied troops in 1945 and eventually was able to emigrate to the United States.

Peter never forgot the horrors of his youth, and he has devoted his life to trying to prevent "the Holocausts of the future." His participation in the founding of the World Future Society and his long service to the Society have been part of his personal mission.

Another survivor of the Holocaust who became a futurist was Robert Jungk, the German-born futurist who addressed the meeting at which the founding of the World Future Society was announced. In the early 1930s, Jungk vigorously protested the rise of the Nazis to power, but he eventually had to flee Germany.

After the war, Jungk campaigned vigorously against atomic bombs. On a trip to Hiroshima, he interviewed a man dying from radiation left by the first atomic bomb, but the man had scornful words for him: "Now you protest against the bomb, but it is too late. You always begin too late."

At that moment, Jungk suddenly recognized that it was only too true. He had spent his life protesting things that had already happened, such as the rise of Nazism in Germany and the creation of atomic bombs. So Jungk developed "future workshops" to help people develop their thinking about the future so that horrors could be avoided and humanity could build a better future world. Jungk also became a regular participant in World Future Society meetings.

Key to the thinking of members like Zuckerman and Jungk is their perception that we can do nothing to alter past events—what's done is done—but that we do have great power to shape the future. We can learn to



Glenn T. Seaborg and Barbara Hubbard, both Board members of the Society, share a laugh at an early Society meeting. Seaborg won a Nobel Prize for discovering plutonium and other chemical elements. Hubbard provided vitally needed financial support for the Society, enabling it to increase its membership outside the United States.

avoid repeating past mistakes and we can collaborate globally to create a better future world.

And some futurists envisioned humans evolving into beings approaching the sublimity of the universe in the years ahead. This transcendent perspective was promoted by Barbara Marx Hubbard, another early Society member. Unlike Peter Zuckerman and Bob Jungk, Barbara was a child of privilege. She was the daughter of Louis Marx, America's largest toy manufacturer. Every child in mid-twentieth-century America played with Marx toys, so Barbara grew up in a real-life toyland. But for Barbara it was not enough, so she began what she calls "an evolutionary journey"—a lifelong search for a positive future not just for herself but for all humankind. In Paris, she had met an American artist, Earl Hubbard, and together they developed visions of man's vast future in the universe.

I found Barbara to be utterly dazzling: She was beautiful, brilliant, charming, and energetic. She also seemed to know everyone who had ever done anything interesting, from President Eisenhower to Jonas Salk, the discoverer of the polio vaccine.

When Barbara joined the Society, she also ordered a gift membership for Abraham Maslow, the psychologist who developed a theory of how human values evolve based on people's psychological needs.

Barbara enthusiastically supported the Society and made two handsome donations. One of them was for general support and the other was to make the Society better known abroad. We did this largely by advertising the Society in scientific publications that had large readerships outside the United States, and this led to an immediate upsurge in our members abroad.

Financial support was critical for the Society, because relatively few of our members contributed anything beyond their membership dues, and we had no govern-

ment or corporate support. Without Barbara's help, the Society might never have survived its critical early years.

Early Society Meetings

Aside from my regular job and family duties, most of my time during the Society's first few months went into writing, editing, and publishing *THE FUTURIST*. Quite soon, however, I became involved in arranging luncheon meetings in downtown Washington.

I didn't relish this additional responsibility. I was already swamped with work and I desperately needed to hang on to my paid job at the National Geographic Society. As I saw it, the best way to do that would be to stay out of the limelight so my employer would not realize how much of my time and energy was going into my volunteer activity.

So I was delighted when one of our members, Richard Falknor, was willing to assume responsibility for arranging luncheon meetings for the Society. Falknor was the administrative aide for a new congressman, Thomas Foley of the state of Washington.

When Barbara and Earl Hubbard came to Washington with their children, Falknor arranged a special tour of the U.S. Capitol and lunch in the House dining room. Congressman Foley himself lunched with our party and personally guided us on a tour of what is unquestionably the most fascinating building in the United States. When I complimented Foley on his encyclopedic knowledge of the building's history, he said that he'd been told that if he lost his seat in the House, he might be able to get a job as a guide!

In later years, Foley rose to become Speaker of the House of Representatives, so when Bill Clinton gave his State of the Union addresses, two futurists—Foley and Al Gore Jr., then vice president—sat right behind the president. I was elated at seeing the rise of two committed futurists to positions of power in the U.S. Congress.

How Chapters Got Started

Besides negotiating with restaurants, Falknor's role on Capitol Hill meant that he could recruit outstanding speakers, such as Walter Mondale, a young senator from Minnesota who later became vice president of the United States and the Democratic candidate for the U.S. presidency in 1980. (He lost to Ronald Reagan.)

Downtown Washington proved to be an extraordinarily good place to recruit experts of almost every kind, and most did not require a speaker's fee, which, of course, we were in no position to pay. Besides Mondale, early speakers at our Washington meetings included Harvey Perloff, author of *The Future of the United States Government*; Jessie Bernard, author of *The Future of Marriage*; Mary S. Calderone, America's best-

known sexologist; and Frank Davidson, first president of the newly created Institute for the Future, now located in Menlo Park, California.

Most notable of our early speakers was Glenn T. Seaborg, then chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. I attribute our success in getting Seaborg largely to his speechwriter, Stan Schneider, who was an enthusiastic member of the Society.

Seaborg had won a Nobel Prize for discovering plutonium and other chemical elements, and he would later become the only chemist in history to have an element named for him during his lifetime (seaborgium, element 106). His steadfast support of the World Future Society through the rest of his life was of extraordinary value to us.

The high quality of speakers attracted a growing number of people to the Society's luncheon meetings. Many of them not only joined the Society, but also proved to be enthusiastic volunteers for Society projects. One of the most valuable of these was Frank S. Hopkins, a former diplomat who was then a State Department officer in charge of long-range planning.

Hopkins was willing to take on almost any task for the Society, from the most exalted to the most menial, and this aspect of his character endeared him to me. As a former U.S. diplomat, he had the savoir-faire to deal suavely with top-ranking leaders, as well as the humility and generosity to perform humble but necessary tasks for the Society.

When Falknor could no longer arrange meetings for us, Hopkins took over, so generally all I would have to do was to help recruit speakers. This proved to be remarkably easy, since interesting speakers were generally eager to address Society members.

Still, the luncheon meetings added to my responsibilities as president, and soon there were Society members outside Washington who wanted to establish chapters so they, too, could meet. I was simultaneously delighted and alarmed by this. The members' enthusiasm was exhilarating, but I wondered if we could cope with a network of chapters. My workload as president and



Earl C. Joseph, founder of the Minnesota Futurists, the first of the Society's global network of local chapters and coordinators.



Glenn Seaborg, then chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, chats with Richard Falknor, a congressional aide who arranged Society events in 1967.

editor was mounting higher and higher, and I had been warned by Fred Durant, who had been president of the International Astronautical Federation, not to get involved with chapters due to the many problems they create.

In the end, however, I could not resist the eagerness of our members. Earl Joseph, a computer scientist with the Sperry-Rand Corporation, organized the remarkably successful chapter in Minneapolis–St. Paul and also established an impressive journal, *Futurics*. Almost simultaneously, Robert Prehoda, author of *Designing the Future: The Role of Technological Forecasting*, organized a chapter in Los Angeles. Soon afterwards, other chapters appeared across America.

In 1970, Tibor Hottovy in Stockholm organized the first overseas chapter, and our members in London held their first meeting early in 1971, with physicist Dennis Gabor as their speaker. Gabor, who won a Nobel Prize for his discovery of holography, had recently published a book, *Inventing the Future*, in which he argued that the great human challenge is to create or “invent” a better future rather than to predict it, which is largely impossible.

The London chapter, under the highly competent and dedicated leadership of David Berry, proved remarkably stable over the years. But the Stockholm chapter—despite the dedication of its founder, Tibor Hottovy—ran into difficulties because a number of the early participants in the meetings rebelled against belonging to an organization based in the United States. Despite the Society's neutrality, global perspective, and effort to treat all members alike, our organization was actually held responsible for the Vietnam War.

Yes, Fred Durant was right in warning me about the difficulties that chapters bring. Still, they became—and I hope will remain—a vital part of the Society's life.

The Society Starts a Book Service

During the Society's early years, its mail came to a box at Washington's Twentieth Street Post Office. There I would pick it up on my lunch hour and take it home, where I would open the envelopes and try to supply the sender with whatever was requested. Checks for membership would be delivered to Peter Zuckerman at our next Board of Directors meeting. He would deposit



Arthur C. Clarke (center), the famed science and science-fiction writer, is welcomed at a Society meeting by Society President Edward Cornish (left) and Michael Michaelis, a long-time member of the Society's Board and Council. Clarke, a member of the Society's International Council, is now Sir Arthur Clarke, having been knighted by Queen Elizabeth II.

the checks in the bank and pay our suppliers—when ever there was enough in our account to meet their demands.

Printers' trucks made deliveries of *THE FUTURIST* to the back door of my home, and I would store the copies wherever I could find space. To prepare mailings of *THE FUTURIST* to our members, my wife, Sally, would organize work parties that might consist of neighbors, Society members, and our children. One amusing incident I recall from this period was an envelope-stuffing contest between our four-year-old son, Blake, and Joseph F. Coates, a bearded chemist who was then working for the Defense Intelligence Agency. (I forget who won the contest.)

As membership continued to grow, addressing and mailing copies of *THE FUTURIST* to members became increasingly time-consuming. So I was overjoyed, early in 1967, to get an enthusiastic letter from a woman named Juanita Smith, who worked as a secretary for a psychiatrist only a block or two from my own office in downtown Washington. She asked if she could be of help to us. Could she ever!

I immediately arranged to lunch with her and found her very well organized and public spirited. Her job allowed her considerable free time, and she said she would be happy to help with the Society's paperwork. I eagerly accepted her offer, and she became the Society's first Membership Secretary. Juanita's task was to process membership applications and type mailing labels for *THE FUTURIST*, greatly reducing the bur-



Sally Cornish, the first managing editor of *THE FUTURIST*, supervised the Society's staff of volunteers and part-time workers who worked on the Cornishes' back porch during the Society's early years. Highly sociable, Sally Cornish took a special interest in the Society's chapters and conferences.



Famed European author and futurist Robert Jungk visits the Society's headquarters in 1970 when it was located on the back porch of Edward and Sally Cornish's home in Bethesda, Maryland. The Society's headquarters remained on this back porch until 1972, when operations were relocated to a small business building in Bethesda.

den on Sally and me.

Juanita Smith soon moved to a new job working for the American Freedom from Hunger Foundation in the Matomic Building on H Street, where the Atomic Energy Commission was located. Juanita's boss spent most of his time on the telephone trying to raise money, leaving Juanita largely free to work for the Society.

Meanwhile, I decided to experiment with selling books about the future, such as Arthur C. Clarke's *Profiles of the Future* (1962), one of the best books I had read. So I ordered copies from the publisher and began offering them for sale through *THE FUTURIST*. Soon we were getting so many orders for Arthur's book (as well as others) that book sales became a growing part of the Society's operations. Since volunteers were doing the work, the book sales helped greatly to defray the cost of producing *THE FUTURIST*.

We gradually increased the number of books we offered for sale, and to help handle the orders, Juanita volunteered her husband, Walter Smith, a 77-year-old Englishman with an elegant white beard. The Smiths lived next to the post office, and Walter was retired, so he could provide extraordinarily swift service for Society members ordering books. As soon as an order was received, Walter would select the books, wrap them up, and take them immediately to the post office. As a result, our members got quicker service than any profit-making operation could provide, so more and more members began ordering books from the Society. One of our best customers turned out to be Arthur Clarke himself.

Back-Porch Operations

During 1967 and 1968, the Society operated almost entirely with volunteers, but the increase in membership created more clerical work than even dedicated volunteers like Juanita Smith could manage. To make matters worse, Juanita was moving to a new job that



The World Future Society's Advisory Council meets with Society officers on December 1, 1967, in a private room at the Cosmos Club. Starting at far left are: Arthur Waskow, Institute of Policy Studies; Henry David, National Academy of Sciences–National Research Council; Michael Michaelis, Arthur D. Little Inc.; John Dixon, Xerox Corporation; Harvey Perloff, Resources for the Future; Peter Zuckerman, the Society's treasurer; Edward Cornish, the Society's president; and James Kunen, Eugene and Agnes Meyer Foundation.

would allow her little if any time for volunteer work.

So we faced a new crisis. Peter Zuckerman found a partial solution by locating a reliable computer service bureau that could process the Society's records and print out mailing labels, thus greatly reducing the need for human labor. But computerization alone would not be enough: The Society also needed more volunteers and a place for them to work. The only solution seemed to be to move the operations to the back porch of my home. (Sally and I had been using our back porch as a playroom for our three sons, but they were using it less as they grew older.)

Sally found a few neighbors willing to help occasionally, but accommodating the special needs of the volunteers became an increasing burden, which fell mainly on Sally. The very nice woman who took over the Society's book service was half blind, so Sally had to drive to her home to get her and then drive her back after she finished packing books for shipment to our members. Another problem was that volunteers who were mothers would often bring their children, who tended to wander about our house getting into things. There were even infants who might have to be held while the volunteer was typing labels for us.

We finally decided we simply had to have at least one dependable employee to keep our operations on track, so we hired Ellen Dudley, a banker's wife who lived nearby, to work one day a week at our house. Ellen thus became the Society's first paid employee. As the workload continued to grow, more neighborhood women worked part time on our back porch, such as Lucille Beard, wife of a U.S. Army colonel then fighting in Vietnam, and Joanne Albrecht, whose husband was an electrician. When summer came, the part-timers demanded air conditioning, so Joanne got her husband to install it. (Sally and I had never felt we could afford it.)

As the Society's membership continued to grow, so

did the small staff of part-timers and volunteers on our back porch. In 1969, we hired another neighbor, Joan McAlear, as our first full-time employee. Joan lived just down the street from us and was willing to let us use her garage for storing Society books when we no longer had room for them in our house.

Our back porch remained the Society's headquarters until 1972, six years after the Society was founded. By that time, the situation at our house had become totally intolerable, and my long-suffering wife's patience was completely exhausted. Luckily, Peter Zuckerman located some very low-cost office space over a used-clothing store in a downscale area of Bethesda, Maryland. Our new quarters were hardly pretentious, but they met our basic needs. We remained there until 1992, when we moved into a more modern building a block away.

Recruiting Advisors

The Society's initial Board of Directors consisted simply of Charles Williams, Peter Zuckerman, and myself. We held our first "official" Board meeting on November 2, 1966. I was authorized to open a bank account, and Zuckerman and I were authorized to draw checks on it.

At a later Board meeting, Williams proposed and the Board agreed to hold an Advisory Council meeting early in 1967. Our idea was to reach out to others interested in the future in the hope of getting guidance and also building relationships in the Washington community and elsewhere. Williams would try to recruit his boss, Henry David, to be the Council's chairman.

The Advisory Council held its first meeting on February 2, 1967, in a private room at the Cosmos Club, a Washington institution with many famous members. I was delighted to have the meeting there since I was very anxious for our just-born Society to start earning a good reputation among serious people. At the time, most people couldn't imagine that futurists could be anything other than astrologers or science-fiction fans. (I myself would have had such a view only a few years earlier.)

Henry David, who presided at the Council's first meeting, now held a new post as executive secretary of the National Academy of Sciences–National Research Council's division of behavioral sciences. Others at the meeting included Harvey Perloff, an economist with Resources for the Future; James Kunen, president of the Eugene and Agnes Meyer Foundation; Michael Michaelis, manager of the Washington office of Arthur D. Little Inc., a prominent research firm; Arthur Waskow, a historian at the Institute for Policy Studies; and John Dixon, my oldest friend, who was then working for the Xerox Corporation after a long association with comprehensive designer Buckminster Fuller.

The Council members were very sympathetic to our enterprise and offered many helpful ideas, but one

thing disturbed me: Henry David seemed too authoritarian and argued that the Society should take a positive stance and propose desirable futures. I was convinced that the Society could play a far more constructive role if it were officially neutral on political, social, and ideological issues. Our proper role, as I saw it, was to be a neutral clearinghouse for forecasts and ideas about the future, as well as a nonpartisan forum where people with conflicting perspectives could freely share their views and learn from each other without having to follow a “party line.” There were plenty of partisan groups promoting this or that specific cause; what was needed, in my view, was an organization that would be above the fray.

The Advisory Council held only one more meeting—a supper gathering at an ordinary restaurant. The main topic was how best to handle two different sorts of members—“professional futurists” and “interested others.” In the end the consensus seemed to be that the Society should provide special services for members willing to pay for them but require no special credentials for membership in the Society. This view was in line with the compromise our Organizing Committee had already worked out: There would be a Supplemental Program for people who wanted to receive scholarly or technical papers dealing with the future.

The Supplemental Program later became largely Charles Williams’s responsibility. He invited scholars to submit papers for possible distribution to the Program’s participants. Many of his invitees complied, and the program proved enormously popular with subscribers.

However, duplicating and distributing the papers was enormously time-consuming due to the backward state of the office technology at the time. Most of the papers—as well as the *World Future Society Bulletin*—had to be typed, corrected, mimeographed, collated, and stapled. This task fell largely to Williams’s wife, Yvonne, and their son Wesley. Once a paper had been mimeographed, the stacks of copies of each page were placed on a Ping-Pong table in the Williams’s basement, and neighborhood women would walk around the table, individually assembling each copy of each paper. Back in those days (the late 1960s), computers and photocopying machines were still primitive and far too expensive for ordinary folk, and the Internet had not yet appeared. Only the devotion of the Williams family enabled the Program to succeed.

Recruiting Board Members

Having only three of us on the Society’s Board of Directors did not seem enough, so Williams, Zuckerman, and I agreed that we should expand the Board.

I had gotten to know Rowan Wakefield, who was then head of the State University of New York’s Washington office. Wakefield had had a lot of practical experience with boards, and his office was on the next block

from my own, so he and I could easily meet and discuss the Society’s problems. I thought Wakefield would be a useful Board member and invited him to meet with us. We later elected him as our first non-officer Board member.

The successful recruitment of our second Board member was thanks to Sally’s networking skills—one of my wife’s many contributions to the Society. She had volunteered to run a table for the Society during a meeting of humanistic psychologists at the Mayflower Hotel in downtown Washington. The hotel allowed her to have a table in the main corridor—a prime spot for catching the eye of people passing through the hotel’s lobby between Connecticut Avenue and Seventeenth Street. For instance, one of the passersby who got interested in the Society was Arthur Shostak, a sociology professor at the Drexel Institute of Technology (now Drexel University) in Philadelphia. When I went to the hotel to see how Sally and her exhibit were faring, Art was sitting on a table in the Mayflower lobby reading Society literature, and so began our long association. Art soon became the mainstay of the Society’s Philadelphia chapter.

Another interested passerby happened to be Carl H. Madden, chief economist of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, whose very imposing building was located only a few blocks away. Madden had left the hotel by the time I arrived, but I was very excited that someone prominent in the business community was interested in the Society, and I soon got to know him.

Madden proved to be a tall, heavy-set man with a gentle, good-humored manner. A former dean of business at Lehigh University, he was not only keenly interested in the Society, but also exceptionally thoughtful, well connected, open minded, and judicious—just the sort of person we needed to help us make wise decisions. Rowan Wakefield already knew him, and our new four-member Board quickly approved our recruiting him as a Board member.

We also agreed to invite Michael Michaelis and Barbara Marx Hubbard to be Board members. We had found Mike to be a very helpful member of the Society’s Advisory Council, and he was well connected with people in government, business, and academia. I was naturally enthusiastic about Barbara as a Board member—and so were the other members of the Board who had met her—so she, too, was invited to join.

By this time, I was very pleased at our success in getting Board members. I only recall one turn-down—Harvey Perloff, a member of Daniel Bell’s Commission on the Year 2000, felt he was already overworked—so I raised my sights. It would be wonderful if we could recruit some people who were not merely distinguished, but really prominent in the American or, better, the world community.

My friend Lester R. Brown was a close associate of Orville L. Freeman, a former governor of Minnesota who had become U.S. secretary of agriculture under presidents Kennedy



Orville L. Freeman, U.S. secretary of agriculture under presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, joined the Society’s Board in 1969.



French futurist Bertrand de Jouvenel reads the first issue of *THE FUTURIST* shortly after its publication in 1967. *THE FUTURIST* then was a newsletter.

and Johnson. I also knew that, after the 1968 election, Freeman had become president of EDP Technologies, the firm that Peter Zuckerman worked for. That gave us two connections to Freeman.

Could we—dare we—invite Freeman to be a Board member? We decided it was worth a try. Brown had become a member of the Society, so I could use him as a reference in soliciting a meeting with Freeman.

Freeman received me very kindly, and we discussed the Society. I asked him if he would be willing to serve on our Board of Directors.

“Let me think about it,” Freeman responded.

About two weeks later I got a letter from him saying he was willing to join our Board. I was overjoyed.

This success got me thinking that maybe—just maybe—we could also recruit Glenn Seaborg, the Nobel Prize-winning chemist who was chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. His presence on our Board would clearly establish the Society’s legitimacy in the scientific community.

With the help of Seaborg’s speechwriter, Stanley Schneider, I had gotten Seaborg to address an early meeting of our Society’s Washington members. So I appealed to Schneider for help in getting Seaborg to become a director.

Seaborg agreed to see me, and Schneider led me to his office. Seaborg listened very sympathetically while I discussed what we were doing to build the Society, and he agreed to become a director.

I left his office in a state of great joy and excitement, but I also was pondering two things Seaborg said that surprised me: Near the end of our conversation I asked him if he had any advice for us. Since he was new to the Society, I didn’t expect him to say much in response to my question, but he leaned forward and said, very emphatically, “Keep up the editorial quality in the publication (i.e., *THE FUTURIST*).”

I was surprised at the seriousness with which he offered this advice, but as I thought it over, I decided that

Seaborg was quite right: Editorial quality would be critical to our success, so we had to do all we could to maintain it.

The second comment that surprised me came earlier after I described how we had gone about establishing the Society. He said simply, “That shows real dedication.”

Later I decided that Seaborg was quite right about that, too: Dedication can make up for a lot of deficiencies. Those of us who were trying to build the Society were dedicated to our task, and that might make up for the fact that we had no money, no real office, no official backing, nothing much at all but ourselves and our dedication.

Working for the White House

By 1969, the Society’s revenues had increased to the point where they covered its costs, more or less, so that I no longer had to make up shortfalls out of my own pocket. But my personal life was getting totally out of control due to the ever-growing workload imposed by the Society and *THE FUTURIST*. I was still desperately trying to hang on to my paid job, and I knew that a choice had to be made. Finally, in the spring of 1969, I made it: I quit my paid job and began working full time for the World Future Society, hoping that somehow I could survive financially until the Society could afford to pay me something.

Quitting my paid job immediately relieved the day-to-day stress, but it also meant that I was living on my savings, which were meager indeed. They would soon run out and, with a wife and three children, I would be forced to give up my work for the Society. I did not know of anyone who would be willing and able to take on the work I was doing without compensation. That meant the Society would likely collapse—or, at best, survive only as a shadow of what we had envisioned.

In the months that followed, my savings steadily dwindled. By early 1970, I thought I would have to surrender to economics and get a paying job. Then, to my complete surprise, Charles Williams got me a temporary job at the White House.

Williams had left the National Science Foundation to become staff director of the White House’s new National Goals Research Staff. President Richard Nixon had established the Goals Staff on the recommendation of an advisor, Daniel P. Moynihan, who wanted the United States to become more future-oriented in its public policies. Nixon’s former law partner, Leonard Garment, became the director of the Goals Staff, and Raymond Bauer, a Harvard political scientist, was engaged as a consultant to mastermind the preparation of the group’s initial “report to the Nation.”

I was duly sworn in as a U.S. government employee and given a private office in the Goals Staff’s suite in the New Executive Office Building, located close to the Executive Mansion and connected to it by a tunnel.

I came in late on the project and spent only two

months working for the Goals Staff—mainly writing a section of the report entitled “Basic Natural Science”—but my government salary brought some financial relief during a time when I did not have any other source of income. In addition, I got an ego-boost every time a secretary made a telephone call for me: Instead of being just an unemployed journalist I had suddenly become “Mr. Cornish of the White House.” I could imagine people jumping up and saluting whenever I telephoned!

Yet, oddly, during my two months working for the White House, what impressed me most was the weakness of the institution. Americans really do live in a democracy, which means that the White House functions at the whim of its boss, the American People. If they care little about anything other than their immediate self-interests, it’s almost impossible for the White House to care about the long-term welfare of the nation, let alone the world. So U.S. presidents and their staffs become obsessed with trying to discern what “the people” want between now and the next election rather than what might really be in the people’s long-term interest.

From conversations with my Goals Staff colleagues, I learned that the Goals Staff was generally distrusted by the political leadership at the White House. The scuttlebutt was that Ken Khachigian, a Republican speechwriter, had been sent over to “Republicanize” the report. Khachigian’s office was right next to mine; he seemed like a nice fellow, and I never had any trouble with him. Williams told me, years later, that Khachigian was an exemplary employee and never tried to bias the report for political purposes. Still, the fact was that I had received a warning to watch my step politically.

I mention this because dispassionate thinking about the future is not easy in a highly politicized environment. So ever since then, I have wondered how a nation’s leaders can get the benefit of nonpartisan analyses of world problems and potential solutions—as well as the latest analyses of public opinion—so that presidents can make wise decisions that will lead to peaceful long-term progress and not just provide immediate political benefits.

The Goals Staff report, entitled *Toward Balanced Growth: Quantity with Quality*, was duly published, but it had, at best, lukewarm support from the White House and attracted little attention. After all, 1970 was an election year.

Planning a Conference

By 1969, the Washington, D.C., area members of the Society began discussing the idea of holding a large conference on the future. I had not encouraged them in any way to think about such a conference and worried that it might be premature. I doubted that the Society



Sterling Tucker, head of the Greater Washington Urban League, answers questions after addressing World Future Society members in Washington, D.C., about 1968. Tucker later became the first elected chairman of Washington’s city council. Also shown are Society members Marlene Futterman of the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity and educator Vergil Rogers.

had the financial and institutional strength to take such a risk.

Still, I was impressed by one member of the group, John Gerba, who was willing to chair the conference. Gerba seemed to have the dedication (Seaborg’s word) to make it really happen, and eventually I gave the project my blessing.

Gerba, who was a city planner with the U.S. Department of Commerce and Transportation, became the conference chairman, and Wilson Sayers of the American Forest Institute became its treasurer.

Since I was totally ignorant about arranging conferences and so much would be at stake, I decided we had better get professional help for the project—even if we couldn’t afford it. So I signed a contract with Courtesy Associates, a Washington firm, to help with hotel negotiations, logistics, registrations, and other practical matters. Planning the program and inviting speakers would begin in earnest in 1970, and the conference would be held in 1971. But would anybody come? Once again, I was in a state of great excitement and great apprehension.

Next: The World Future Society’s first major conference, growth as an organization, and reflections on the Society’s potential role in promoting world peace. □



About the Author

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The Search for Foresight

The World Future Society's First Conference

By Edward Cornish

In this third installment of his memoirs, the Society's founding president tells the inside story of its first conference, held in 1971.

On December 1, 1966, the newly founded World Future Society had exactly three members, but by 1970 our membership had grown to 4,000.

During this time, we upgraded *THE FUTURIST* from a newsletter to an illustrated magazine that won acceptance in the offices and libraries of 30 nations. We also recruited a distinguished Board of Directors. We

established a special service to provide futurists with scholarly papers dealing with the future. And we began shipping books about the future to people around the world.

Our new members worked in many fields and an increasing number of different countries. Some of these futurists focused mainly on problems—how to prevent war, adjust to new technology, deal with high population growth, etc.—but others seemed simply captivated by the technological wonders that made the future just plain fun to think about!

The 1960s were, after all, a decade when the world's economies soared, the media announced amazing new technologies every day, and the good life seemed to be everyone's natural right. The sky itself no longer lim-

PHOTOS: WORLD FUTURE SOCIETY ARCHIVE



Socio-economist Robert Theobald addresses one of the 50 or so sessions at the World Future Society's first conference in 1971.



Glenn T. Seaborg (left), the Nobel Prize–winning discoverer of plutonium and other atomic elements, toured the exhibit hall during the 1971 conference with Society President Edward Cornish (center) acting as his guide. The equipment being demonstrated by Wesley Thomas of Grumman Data Systems (right) has just located and printed an article by Seaborg in the December 1970 issue of *THE FUTURIST*.

ited human aspirations, since space travel had opened up the universe. So, for many people, the future became the substance of their hopes—a dreamland of endless wonders.

Television had begun showing the world to itself in living color, stirring up people's demand for a better life, and by the late Sixties, the baby-boom generation was emerging into young adulthood, bursting with energy, impatiently questioning age-old traditions, and demanding immediate reform of every institution. Minority ethnic groups organized demonstrations to obtain freedom from discrimination, students sought freedom from academic constraints, and women demanded liberation from their traditional roles as housewives and mothers and access to jobs dominated by men. Contributing to the unrest was outrage at U.S. government policies and the Vietnam War, which was killing thousands of young American men.

A few people wanted to break free entirely from the culture in which they had been reared and began creating little utopias, or "experimental communities," seeking to validate a popular slogan of the era: "The future is NOW!"

One experimental community, called Twin Oaks, was based on psychologist B.F. Skinner's utopian novel *Walden Two*, which I had read in college and found intriguing. Skinner was one of the first people to join the World Future Society, and Twin Oaks happened to be located near Louisa, Virginia, within driving distance of my home, so I arranged for my wife, three sons, and myself to spend a weekend living at Twin Oaks.

The communitarians made us welcome, and I was fascinated to hear of the residents' experimentation with new ways to deal with interpersonal relationships, such as having one member—known as the "generalized bastard"—assigned to hear all the complaints

members had about one another and then provide feedback to the offenders. So I provided readers of *THE FUTURIST* with sympathetic articles on Twin Oaks and other social experiments going on at the time. I believed then as well as now that humanity needs to do much more experimenting with new social institutions if we are to deal effectively with the challenges of the future.

The Society itself was a social experiment, and we, too, were reinventing our organization to meet the demands of our members and our changing perceptions of what the Society should be and do.

How Volunteers Built the Society

The Society's lack of money meant that it depended almost entirely on volunteer labor. But our volunteers were no longer limited to the three of us who founded the Society and functioned as its initial officers—Charles W. Williams, Peter Zuckerman, and myself. Many of our new members had begun helping with Society tasks. We also pressed our wives, children, neighbors, colleagues, and friends into performing Society chores.

Our new members bubbled with ideas for programs and activities. Futurists, we found, are all idea-people, and some were willing to do the work required to transform an idea into reality.

Joseph F. Coates, for example, volunteered to start a radio program on the future, and he proved to be an excellent interviewer. The program, called "The Future of—," featured lively discussions with experts in many different fields. The program was broadcast initially over WAMU-FM (American University's station) and distributed by National Public Radio to stations across America.

Major Joseph F. Martino, an Air Force operations officer, proposed a column for *THE FUTURIST* on technological forecasting, and he soon began producing a series of brilliant articles based on his intimate knowledge of military forecasting. The U.S. Air Force had pioneered in technological forecasting since the end of World War II, and Martino knew everything there was to know about what was going on. Later, he wrote *Technological Forecasting for Decision Making* (1972), the classic textbook in this field, and we happily included it in our book service for members.

Hollis Vail, a management consultant with the U.S. Department of the Interior, volunteered to make tape recordings of speeches at Society forums. So we began marketing his tapes to members who could not be at our meetings. Hollis also gave us professional management advice, which I badly needed since I had never before managed anything but myself—and had not done such a good job of that!

Volunteers helped enormously to expand the Society's services to members but did little to reduce the workload on those of us who founded the Society. Our growing membership and expanding services meant that we desperately needed staff people to do things for which we had no suitable volunteers.



Social psychologist Donald Michael, author of *The Unprepared Society* and *The Next Generation*, spoke at a session on “Goals and Values for Mankind.” Standing next to Michael is Joseph Coates, who chaired the session. European futurist Robert Jungk (seated near Michael) and Ian H. Wilson of General Electric also spoke at the session.

So I was always behind in my work—both the work I needed to do to keep my paid job and my volunteer work for the Society. One result was that my home office overflowed with unread manuscripts and unanswered letters. I tried to prioritize my tasks by putting incoming materials in boxes labeled CAN WAIT and URGENT. But the letters and manuscripts assigned to CAN WAIT were quickly buried by additional incoming mail while the URGENT boxes became forbidding towers of paper.

In desperation, I set up a special box for items that were more urgent than urgent, and labeled it URGENTISSIMO. But the URGENTISSIMO box also quickly filled up and overflowed, and months might pass before I got around to dealing with a manuscript or letter.

“You’ve caught a tiger by the tail!” one of my friends informed me, and that expressed exactly how I felt. The Society had developed a forward momentum that was both exciting and terrifying. I couldn’t ride the tiger and I couldn’t let go of it. I just hung on to its tail for dear life!

The Society’s First Conference

In February 1969, two of the Society’s Board members, Charles Williams and Rowan Wakefield, sent out a questionnaire asking members’ thoughts on holding an international meeting, to which we could invite all our members.

The members responded enthusiastically to the questionnaire, but I feared undertaking a conference would be beyond the means of our infant organization. I had failed in my efforts to raise much money for the Society, so we still depended heavily on the meager financial support that I myself could provide, and my savings were rapidly draining away. If the conference failed financially, I feared the Society itself would collapse.

Still, I was impressed by some Society members ad-



Dennis Meadows of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology tells a conference session about the Club of Rome’s Project on the Predicament of Mankind. This session brought together scholars trying to find ways to simulate highly complex world conditions, particularly those affecting the quality of human life.

vocating the conference. One was Frank Hopkins, the State Department planning officer who had taken over the arrangements for our luncheon forums in downtown Washington. Hopkins spoke very favorably of John Gerba, a planner for the U.S. Office of Transportation who had volunteered to become general chairman of the conference and lead its organization. I hardly knew Gerba at the time, but I had learned to trust Hopkins’s judgment, and Gerba seemed genuinely dedicated to making the prospective conference really happen. So, despite my fears, I gave the go-ahead for the “First General Assembly of the World Future Society,” to be held in Washington in the spring of 1971.

Gerba went to work with extraordinary energy and enthusiasm. He quickly recruited a planning committee with a wide range of talents, and the committee began laying out an ambitious program that would attract maximum participation by the Society’s members.



Youngsters build an imaginary future city out of Styrofoam during a workshop on urbanization at the Society’s 1971 conference. The children wanted to create a city with open spaces and no pollution, but they discovered to their surprise that they had actually created the urban clutter that city planners have long complained about!



Conference attendees wander through the futuristic village that architect Roy Mason created in the exhibit hall at the Society's first conference.



Blake Cornish, the author's nine-year-old son, tried out an inflatable chair in Roy Mason's futuristic village. Blake spent much of his childhood performing chores for the Society. When he was 19, he helped organize a Society conference and worked as an assistant editor for *THE FUTURIST*. (Today he is a lawyer in Washington, D.C.)

The committee members wanted the conference to reflect their consensus that the future is too important to be left to political leaders. The committee felt, therefore, that the Society needed to pioneer in cross-cultural communications that would enable people in different nations and different walks of life, young and old, male and female, to communicate better with each other and learn to work collegially on world problems.

Striving for maximum inclusiveness, the planning committee arranged 59 formal sessions plus informal sessions that could be set up while the conference was in progress and led by anyone who wanted to discuss a topic. There would also be a "Soap Box" offering open-mike sessions where attendees could take turns addressing the audience on any topic they wanted to discuss.

Due to Gerba and his committee—plus the enthusiasm of our Washington members—an astounding 400 people contributed in various ways to producing our first conference. Some Society members recruited speakers, others distributed conference literature or sought contributions from local Washington businesses. And some members opened their homes to conference attendees who could not afford a hotel room.

Most impressively, Roy Mason, architecture editor of *THE FUTURIST*, rallied his colleagues in the art and architecture worlds to create, in the conference exhibit hall, a unique futuristic village made of inflatable plastic dwellings and furniture.

The planning and preparation for the conference lasted nearly two years, and while it was going on the Society's membership was growing. So the expected attendance at the conference—initially 250—had to be raised to 700. To get additional hotel space, the confer-

ence venue was moved from the Mayflower Hotel to the Washington Hilton, then Washington's largest and most luxurious conference hotel. It was then, as now, much frequented by U.S. presidents, senators, and other top government leaders.

The conference committee contacted almost everybody prominent in the futurist world, and many agreed to come—people like Herman Kahn, co-author of *The Year 2000*; social psychologist Donald Michael; geochemist Harrison Brown of Caltech, who had authored *The Challenge of Man's Future* (1954); IBM's corporate planner William W. Simmons; policy analyst Ian Wilson of General Electric; engineering professor Willis W. Harman of Stanford Research Institute; engineer-author Theodore Gordon; and scores of others.

Science-fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, whose movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* had become a sensation, told me he didn't want to be listed on the conference program due to a provision in his lecture contract, but he came unannounced and participated actively in the conference, as did fellow science-fiction writer Frederik Pohl.

By the time the conference was over, 1,016 people had registered, making it the biggest meeting of futurists ever held up to that time! Most found it a highly rewarding experience, and, to my great relief, there was a modest surplus of revenues over expenditures.

The *Washington Post* featured our meeting on its front page and provided a colorful description of the people who attended:

They came from France where the futurist movement started, from Israel, from Argentina, from Britain and Germany and Canada, from every corner of the United States, and their diversity, even superficially, was staggering.



Herman Kahn, who developed and popularized the use of scenarios in exploring the future, confers with Lee Schoenecker, co-chairman of the 1971 conference. Kahn attended every Society conference held before his death in 1983.

There were beards, hundreds of them. There were gray retired-colonel crew cuts. There were combed, glossy executive haircuts, and extravagantly proliferating bushes, hair that straggled down over collars, hair bound into head bands, hair that languished on shiny furrowed domes. . . . At the Wednesday opener in the Washington Hilton scores of young people with knapsacks and bedrolls stood in the registration lines next to the button-downs and throat scarves. They mingled, too, right away. They didn't wait for the closing.

Though highly successful, our first conference was not without misadventures. The unexpectedly large attendance meant that many conference sessions were jammed, with the worst crowding occurring during the opening reception. This was especially embarrassing for me because I had persuaded our distinguished Board member Glenn Seaborg, chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, to attend this reception, and when he arrived the crowd was so thick that I found it impossible to get any refreshments for him except for one miserable glass of ginger ale. Happily, Glenn was impressed by the crowd and soon found himself surrounded by admirers.

Another problem occurred when psychologist B.F. Skinner arrived to sign copies of his famous book *Walden Two*. His "Meet the Author" session had been scheduled during the supper hour when the exhibit hall where he was to speak was deserted. I had made a point of being there to greet him, but when I did, there was no one for him to talk to but myself. After locating one other listener, I rushed around the hotel like a town crier shouting that the famed psychologist had arrived. To my relief, a crowd quickly gathered, and Skinner delighted his impromptu audience. Later, several of our members led him away to a party they were having.

Before Skinner left, I had a brief moment to report to him on my visit to the Twin Oaks community, which was based on the psychological principles he advocated. It turned out he had never visited Twin Oaks

himself but took a keen interest in it. Unlike most experimental communities established in the 1960s, Twin Oaks survived into the twenty-first century, and at last report was still going strong. Score one for Skinner's psychological theories!

Putting the Future on the Map

When the conference ended, we could take considerable pride in what the Society's members had accomplished. To begin with, our volunteer conference committee had brought together the largest group of futurists ever assembled, and it had stimulated thousands of people to think seriously about the human future, many probably for the first time.

Highly respected government officials and business executives attended, demonstrating that futurists were no longer being viewed as eccentrics. Thanks to the 50 journalists attending our meeting, articles about the conference appeared in newspapers in San Francisco, Paris, New Delhi, and elsewhere—and the articles were quite friendly and respectful.

The scholarly papers presented at the conference along with very thoughtful oral presentations proved to be so numerous that our staff was overwhelmed, and we could not publish a post-conference report on the proceedings as we had planned, though we did use papers and reports from the conference in *THE FUTURIST* or in other ways. This experience led to our current practice of publishing a volume of papers *before* a conference rather than later. This practice means that a conference volume can be distributed to registrants when they arrive, allowing them to have an immediate reference to the thinking of conference speakers.

The 1971 conference provided the world's first "manpower exchange" for futurists seeking jobs or employers wanting to hire a futurist. At least one futurist actually got a job at our meeting: A General Electric executive hired Ralph Hamil for a job at the corporation's New York headquarters. I had been using Hamil as an assistant editor for *THE FUTURIST*, but we could only pay him for one day a week. Despite my loss of



Psychologist B.F. Skinner (left, foreground) discusses his book *Walden Two* at an impromptu session during the 1971 conference. *Walden Two* envisioned a future society organized on the basis of Skinner's psychological principles.



Harold Linstone, university professor at Portland State University and director of its Futures Research Institute, as well as the editor of the journal *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*.



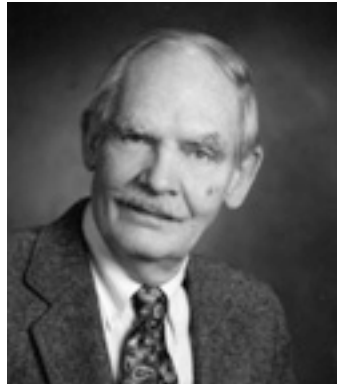
William T. Gay, a retired English professor living in Montgomery, Alabama, organized a session on utopian literature for the 1971 conference. Gay had the distinction of being the first officially enrolled member of the World Future Society.



Psychologist Miriam Kelty, an administrative officer for the National Institute of Mental Health, was an active participant in the Society's Washington chapter as well as the 1971 conference. She specialized in the ethical issues of health research and services.



Gerald Feinberg, a Columbia University physicist, discussed his book *The Prometheus Project: Mankind's Search for Long-Range Goals*. Feinberg was famous for theorizing about *tachyons*, subatomic particles that can travel faster than the speed of light.



Frederik Pohl (shown in a recent photograph) was among the science-fiction writers at the 1971 conference. Another was Arthur C. Clarke, author of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, an avid buyer of books to take back to his home in Sri Lanka.



Arnold Brown, vice-president of the Institute of Life Insurance in New York City, reported to the conference on the Institute's pioneering trend-analysis program. Brown later co-founded the Weiner, Brown, Edrich consulting firm in New York City. Today he is Chairman of the World Future Society's Board of Directors.

his services, I was delighted for him to get a full-time job through the Society.

The conference also was probably the first meeting ever held of future-oriented educators. Professors giving courses in futures studies were able to meet, exchange syllabuses, and compare notes during the conference. In addition, political scientists attending the meeting set up an informal information exchange under the leadership of Kenneth W. Hunter of the U.S. General Accounting Office. (Years later, Hunter became the Society's treasurer.)

A Futures Information Consortium was formed as a way to improve the exchange of information about the future. The Consortium's coordinator was Michael Marien of the Educational Policy Research Center at Syracuse University. (In 1979, the World Future Society began publishing Mike's newsletter *Future Survey*—a unique publication of exceptional quality. The Society has proudly published *Future Survey* ever since.)

The success of the Society's first conference greatly encouraged all of us who participated in its creation. The committee succeeded magnificently in enabling people to communicate across the cultural barriers that

separated them. We also achieved a modest international stature, and the study of the future had taken a major step forward. We felt we had at last put the future on the map!

These achievements strengthened my belief that the Society was on the right path—except that we weren't really on any path at all! The Society was a unique institution, and there was no clear path for us to follow. So instead of being path *finders* we had to be path *makers*, and our precarious financial situation meant that each step we took on that path might be our last.

Next: The World Future Society's first conference leads to a rethinking of the organization's future role in world affairs.



About the Author

Edward Cornish is founder and former president of the World Future Society, editor of THE FUTURIST, and author of *Futuring: The Exploration of the Future*. E-mail ecornish@wfs.org.

The World Future Society at 40: First Impressions

By Lane Jennings

A staff writer and editor recalls the World Future Society's humble atmosphere and grand aspirations.

The World Future Society was born on a back porch in Bethesda, Maryland, just north of Washington, D.C. Its founding staff consisted of journalist Ed Cornish (who had left his full-time job at the National Geographic Society to take this challenge on), his brave wife Sally, their three young sons, and a handful of neighborhood volunteers. By the time I arrived a decade later, the Society had graduated to a "suite" of offices above a beauty parlor several blocks closer to downtown. But the back-porch atmosphere remained. Creative chaos was the norm.

In the 1970s and 1980s, any visitor climbing the drab stairs to the Society's few, dark, unair-conditioned rooms, piled high with boxes, papers, and equipment, saw at once that appearance mattered very little here. WFS devoted every inch of space and every ounce of effort from its staff and volunteers to producing THE FUTURIST magazine, a quarterly series of special-focus newsletters, and a long-term book project to compile a resource directory of individuals, organizations, books, films, and other learning/teaching tools for exploring trends and future social options.

WFS and the Future

The World Future Society might look rough around the edges, I decided, but its heart was in the right place and its priorities were clear—do the work of being a futurist and let others look the part. I began writing book reviews as a volunteer, and, when a paid job opened up, eagerly became a full-time copy editor.

The Society's goal, as we then described it, was to be "an impartial clearinghouse for a variety of different views" on future options. Importantly, the Society declined to ever "take positions on what will or should happen in the future."

I applauded this decision, and still do. It meant that all points of view—reactionary, radical, middle-of-the-road, and just plain wacky—would be welcomed (or at least not turned away without consideration) in WFS publications and meetings. Still I must admit the range of future possibilities being explored seemed far less ominous back then.

Optimists, like F.M. Esfandiari, were confident that worldwide progress in science and technology would quickly produce sweeping social change as material abundance and reasoned dialogue replaced outdated conservative right-wing vs. liberal left-wing worldviews with a unifying "Up-wing" focus on future opportunities for all.

Even pessimists, like Donella Meadows and others who warned of uncontrolled population growth, dwindling stocks of natural resources, and signs of spreading environmental damage, were also proposing policies and actions that might slow or even reverse the alarming trends their statistical models revealed.

Personally, I believed most likely futures fell somewhere between the voices of calm confidence and those of shrill alarm. For example, the Hudson Institute's Herman Kahn seemed right on track. By daring to "think the unthinkable" and seriously explore how a nation might maintain itself even after a massive nuclear attack, he was performing an important futurist task: turning crisis into opportunity, or at least checking even the darkest cloud for its potential silver lining, not just running off to shelter from the storm.

Also, by pointing out the impressive cumulative achievements of humanity over centuries of time (what he called "the long-term multifold trend"), Kahn embodied another important futurist virtue: taking the long view, not demanding, or even promising, quick results.

I remember those early days at the Society as a time of optimism, belief that what futurists were doing mattered, that the world could change itself, and that we could help by stimulating people to begin envisioning their preferred future, then find or invent ways to make that desired future real. Despite minimal conveniences, tight spaces, hectic deadlines, and primitive equipment, somehow the Society kept producing and survived.

The World Future Society now has modern offices and up-to-date equipment. The staff still works long hours in surroundings that are far from elegant, perhaps, but at least professional. Publications and meetings remain at the heart of what we do. In some ways, the organization has not changed all that much in four decades. □

About the Author

Lane Jennings, former editor of the *World Future Society Bulletin*, is the production editor of *Future Survey* and research director of THE FUTURIST. He has also spoken at several Society conferences and contributed essays to its conference volumes. His e-mail address is lanejen@aol.com.



Author Jennings (right) pitches in as a cover model (with wife Margaret) to illustrate an article forecasting global depression. The photograph was taken by another FUTURIST editor, Ellen Dudley.

The Search for Foresight

Futuring and World Peace

In this fourth installment of his memoirs, the founding president of the World Future Society explains how it contributes to world peace.

By Edward Cornish

Call me a dreamer, but since early 1966 when I was developing a plan for what was to become the World Future Society, I have believed that the Society might someday become an effective force for world peace.

This thought occurred to me suddenly and unexpectedly while I was waiting to cross Seventeenth Street in Washington, D.C., on the way back to my office. I remember the location because the idea caught me by surprise when it burst up from my subconscious.

This eureka moment, which I think of as an epiphany, was based on my sudden realization that an organization focused on the future and providing a neutral forum where people from around the world could share their ideas about the future would provide a new basis for international collaboration and the building of a more peaceful and prosperous future world.

So, in my six-page prospectus for a "Society for the Future," I cautiously suggested that "The study of the future might help the cause of world

peace. . . . Perhaps the 'conquest of the future' may provide what William James called 'a moral equivalent for war.'"

I don't believe I ever discussed this thought with my colleagues on the organizing committee because I felt the idea would distract people from the vision of the proposed Society as a scientific and educational association. It was essential, I felt, that our group not be viewed as a club for starry-eyed dreamers or "peace-mongers."

My model for what was to become the World Future Society had been and remained Britain's Royal Society, which was founded in 1660 by a group of men interested in what was then known as "natural philosophy." People laughed at the Royal Society for doing such crazy things as trying to weigh air, but that small group of enthusiasts and amateurs transformed natural philosophy into what we now know as science.

The Royal Society quickly proved its value. Only a few years after its founding, it began receiving letters

from a humble Dutchman named Anton van Leeuwenhoek, who had begun making microscopes. Leeuwenhoek claimed that he had seen "invisible creatures" by means of the glass lenses that he ground. The Royal Society's members were skeptical, but a few decided to have a look for themselves and, to everyone's astonishment, found that Leeuwenhoek was right: The "invisible creatures"—which we now know as microbes or "germs"—really did exist. This discovery proved to be a milestone in the history of medicine.

The Royal Society demonstrated the power of an *organized group* to accomplish something beyond the power of a single individual. Without the Royal Society, Leeuwenhoek would probably have been dismissed as a crank and his momentous discovery gone unrecognized. Furthermore, Leeuwenhoek demonstrated that a person lacking credentials or money or power can make an extraordinary contribution to human progress. For this reason, I argued strongly that the World Future

John Gerba (standing left), who masterminded the Society's first conference, and President **Edward Cornish** (standing) interrupt vice president **Charles W. Williams's** lunch to discuss an urgent problem (one of many during the meeting). As Williams looks up, German author **Robert Jungk** and **Robert Lamson** of the National Science Foundation remain engrossed in conversation.



PHOTOS: WORLD FUTURE SOCIETY ARCHIVE

Society should have no prerequisites for membership, and the majority of my colleagues on the organizing committee eventually agreed. So, from the beginning, the Society has welcomed as members anyone willing to pay our modest dues.

We also have remained true to our vision of a scientific and educational association that would provide a neutral clearinghouse and forum for our members' views of future possibilities, and we have tried to present conflicting views of what the future actually will be like or *should* be like. Neutrality on political and social issues is critically important to our mission—and it is one of the reasons that the Society is a force for peace though peace is not our special purpose.

My Friend "Mikhail"

I have previously discussed many of the wonderful things that happened at the Society's first conference in 1971, but I did not mention what was for me the most wonderful of all because it seemed to validate my epiphany that the World Future Society would be a useful instrument for achieving world peace.

Shortly before our first conference was to open, I was contacted by a Soviet official stationed in Washington. I will call him "Mikhail" because I don't feel comfortable mentioning his real name.

Mikhail wanted to attend our conference, and I assured him he would be most welcome. In fact, I was absolutely delighted that a Soviet dignitary would show an interest in what we were doing. After all, it was my existential dread of thermonuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States that originally set me thinking hard about the future and led eventually to the founding of the World Future Society.

Mikhail introduced himself almost the moment I arrived at the conference, which was being held in the Washington Hilton Hotel. It was then that we had the first of a number of conversations in the hotel's hallways.

As the conference proceeded, I anxiously rushed around, popping briefly into the breakout sessions



Portly **Herman Kahn**, an unmistakable presence at the Society's first conference, was widely vilified for coolly describing the potential horrors of future international conflicts in his book *On Thermonuclear War* (1960), but he was a hero at the Society's first conference thanks to his 1967 book *The Year 2000*, one of the monuments of futurist literature. His moon-faced likeness emerges serenely from a doomsday blast in this painting from the German magazine *Der Spiegel*. Besides *On Thermonuclear War*, Kahn's other books included *Thinking About the Unthinkable* and *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios*. His presence at the 1971 meeting might also explain the interest taken in it by "Mikhail," a Soviet official.

being held simultaneously in different meeting rooms to make sure everything was going smoothly. In doing so, I got the impression that Mikhail had some supernatural power to be everywhere at once, and each time he noticed me, he would come out with me into the hallway, and we would have a chat. By the time the conference closed, I may have spent more time with Mikhail than anyone else.

I now remember little of what Mikhail and I talked about during our hallway conversations, but one thing made a deep impression on me. Near the end of our conference, Mikhail said very emphatically, "I see no sign of war." He seemed to be genuinely surprised at the peaceful nature of our conference, and I was surprised that he was surprised. Just what had he expected? Angry speeches denouncing the Soviet Union? Chants of hatred (as in George Orwell's book *1984*)? Displays of U.S. weaponry? Naturally, there was nothing of the sort.

Following the conference, Mikhail invited me to his office, which was not in the Soviet Embassy but in a nearby office building. I was not clear about what Mikhail wanted, but nothing could keep me from going. When I arrived, Mikhail greeted me in a friendly manner but re-

mained at his desk during our conversation, while I sat wondering when he would get to the point. Our meeting did not seem to be just a social occasion. I don't remember him ever smiling, laughing, or saying anything humorous or personal. And he never offered me a drink, which I thought a little odd for a Russian.

We just sat and talked. He did not ask me probing questions about the Society or anything else. Instead, he meditated aloud about abstract economic and political matters. At one point, he said that he believed that private property was the basic cause of social problems. However, he expressed his view of private property in a way that suggested to me that he was not really sure of his opinion and wanted me to either confirm or challenge it.

I didn't feel like challenging any of Mikhail's views, and he did not push me to reveal my own. Instead, he simply continued to meditate aloud while I sat, mostly silent, waiting to find out what he wanted. I could not invite him to my home because my wife and I were far too busy on our World Future Society work and taking care of our young sons to socialize. In addition, our house was too much of a mess to entertain a Soviet dignitary. What

would he think if he discovered that the great World Future Society's "offices" consisted of nothing more than the back porch and one adjacent room in a shabby house in the suburbs?

After about an hour, Mikhail seemed ready to bring our meeting to an end. We parted company cordially but rather formally, and I went away still wondering what our meeting was all about. Why had Mikhail attended our conference and what did he want with me? Was our conversation being secretly recorded?

I never learned the answer to those questions. But I believe Mikhail's stiffness and caution was due to the fact that he—like other citizens in Communist nations at the time—had to conform rigidly to Communist Party doctrine or suffer dire consequences. At the same time, Mikhail was genuinely concerned to know the *real* truth about what was happening in the United States and world at large and hoped that the Society's conference and his conversation with me would help him to clarify his thoughts.

Mikhail and I never saw each other again. I never had either the time or the money to visit him in Moscow, and if he ever came to Washington, he didn't let me know. But several years after our meetings in 1971, he sent me a copy of a book he had written on the future. Unfortunately, it was written in Russian and my knowledge of that language is so rudimentary that I could not judge its content without spending far more time on it than I could afford.

But after Mikhail returned to Moscow I made a point of inviting him to the Society's conferences in 1975 and 1980. He responded very kindly with letters written in Russian, which I did translate laboriously with the help of a dictionary. Though friendly, the letters were rather formal—just as his manner had been when I met him. In each case, he said he could not attend personally but one or more of his colleagues would attend, and I believe they did though they did not make themselves known to me in the way Mikhail did.

After 1980, I became so busy that I

stopped sending Mikhail special invitations, but whenever I encountered a Soviet representative—at one of our conferences or elsewhere—I would ask if he knew anything about Mikhail. From them I learned that Mikhail had risen high in the Soviet government.

During the 1980s—in the midst of those extraordinary events that brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union—I noticed Mikhail's name in newspaper stories about what was happening, and I was very impressed. My work always kept me too busy to pay close attention to what the press was reporting, but I got the feeling that Mikhail was playing a very difficult but very constructive role in world history. I like to think that the World Future Society helped him to do that.

Reconciling Old Enemies

Mikhail was not the only person at the 1971 conference who offered support for my epiphany. Another noteworthy participant was Yoneji Masuda, a Japanese techno-economist. A native of Tokyo, Masuda had become a prophet of the computer age that lay ahead.

I was old enough to remember when his nation had attacked mine in 1941, killing thousands of Americans, and he was old enough to remember when my nation rained fire



Yoneji Masuda, whose native Tokyo was firebombed by American aircraft during World War II, became one of the World Future Society's most enthusiastic supporters. The Society later became the North American publisher for Masuda's book *The Information Society as Post-Industrial Society* (1981), a "computopia" or utopian vision of a society based on computers.

bombs on his hometown and then obliterated two other Japanese cities with nuclear bombs. But those tragic events were set aside, because we were both focused on the future.

Masuda became a strong supporter of the Society and one of our institutional members. In 1980, when I went to Tokyo to speak at a Johnson Wax conference, I had an opportunity to call on Masuda in his office. There we worked out a deal for the Society to become the U.S. distributor of his book *The Information Society as Post-Industrial Society* (World Future Society, 1980). A few years later, our Board member Kenneth W. Hunter presented to Masuda the Society's Distinguished Service Award at a ceremony in Salzburg, Austria.

Another person attending our first conference was Heinz-Hermann Koelle, who had been a pilot in Nazi Germany's air force during World War II. As a correspondent in London in the 1950s, I had often wandered, during my lunch hour, amid the rubble-strewn lots where buildings had stood before being leveled by German bombs. One bomb had hit a building just across the street from where I worked.

But, as with Masuda, Koelle and I never even mentioned the war because we were busy thinking about the future. He had become chairman of the Berlin Center for Future Research, and he proudly showed me a mockup of the future-oriented journal, *Analysen und Prognosen*, that his group planned to start. Some months later, I began to receive copies of it.

The Power of the Future

The success of our first conference in enabling enemies of both the past and present to discuss the future as friendly colleagues convinced me that my epiphany was valid. Thinking about the future really does have



Heinz-Hermann Koelle, a former pilot in Nazi Germany's air force who had become chairman of the Berlin Center for Future Research, was an active participant in the 1971 conference.

the power to liberate people from the burdens of past and present—the unpleasant memories that make us resentful and suspicious of each other and the never-ending crises that demand everybody's immediate attention and keep us distracted from what we can do to create a better future world.

By setting aside—even if only temporarily—the burdens of the past and present, we can think about the exciting things we can do by working together for a better future world. For that reason, the World Future Society really does have the potential to become a powerful force for world peace.

The future also provides a valuable common ground for people who do not know each other well and have different backgrounds, interests, and attitudes. Finding common ground is critically important in human relations but often hard to achieve—even when everyone concerned belongs to the same organization. A Ford Motor Company executive summed it up when he confessed to me, "We don't talk to each other very well."

To provide common ground for group discussions, major corporations often call in a futurist to meet with their executives. By hearing a general discussion of the major trends shaping the future world that everyone will share, members of a group have a framework for communicating more meaningfully with each other about the important issues that concern their group. Focusing on their common future, they can transcend the petty fears and jealousies that too often obsess their thinking and limit interactions to comments about sports and the weather.

Besides providing common ground for group discussions, thinking seriously about the future enables us to anticipate many opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, so that we can prepare to deal with them effectively. Foresight is, I believe, the gateway to wisdom.

But good foresight for individuals and organizations is not enough. Today we need global foresight if humanity is to survive and prosper in the years ahead. Rapidly advanc-

ing technology is radically reshaping our planet's natural environment and revolutionizing our everyday lives even more than we recognize. Progress makes our lives increasingly comfortable physically, but it is undermining our traditional customs and values, leaving us feeling rootless and uncertain. Today, our human enterprise is like a great ocean liner packed with passengers but with no one steering the ship and no known destination.

Most people believe that politicians are the ones to deal with our perplexing global problems, but my experiences as a young journalist reporting on politicians in four nations convinced me that we cannot expect politicians to solve our great world problems. It's not that politicians are stupid or evil. On the contrary, I found the politicians I dealt with to be mostly intelligent, well-meaning, and very likeable folks trying to do difficult jobs as well as they could.

I vividly remember when Harry S. Truman unexpectedly took a seat next to me in a restaurant while I was with a pack of journalists following him around. As I sat, frozen to my chair with awe at being face-to-face with the man who had ordered atomic bombs dropped on Japan, I was struck by his sheer humanity. He was smart and charming but had no magical powers. He was a fallible human being like myself, yet he had been given the godlike power to consign thousands upon thousands of people to their deaths in Japan and later Korea. The scale of those horrors passes all understanding, yet I could not blame him for his decisions. In his situation, I might have decided history the way he did.

The world's political systems cannot solve the momentous problems we face. These institutions must be revamped and new institutions developed. But it was not until I began developing my proposal for a World

Future Society that I realized that this Society might play a key role in that process.

A World Future Network

After the Society's first conference confirmed my epiphany, I began to envision the Society as the nucleus of a global network of thoughtful people sharing a common interest in exploring the world's future. Our members constituted a stupendous intellectual resource that could light the way for humanity as it moves into a future filled with extraordinary potential, enormous risks, and mysteries beyond our comprehension.

Our members willingly accepted the challenge of thinking about a subject that most people refuse to think much about at all, and they demonstrated the power of the future to enable people to overcome atavistic grudges and misunderstandings.

But for it to become a truly significant force for peace or anything else, I knew that the Society needed to grow much bigger, and that, I knew, would be difficult since we had so little money. Despite the success of our first conference, our financial situation remained precarious, even desperate. We had no money for

development, no money for any emergency that might come up, and no money for the staff needed to coordinate the efforts of our volunteers.

We also could offer nothing but moral support for our chapters, which were now multiplying in number and often had ambitious plans. Talking to chapter leaders, mainly on the telephone, forced me to offer explanations why we could give them no help, and this embarrassing task became something of a strain on me because of the other work I had to do.

On one occasion, Konrad Dannenberg, a member of our Huntsville, Alabama, chapter came to Washington to get support for a conference



Harvard psychiatrist **Chester Pierce**, a specialist in youth problems, told Society members that if children are educated to be planetary citizens "we will have done much to insure civilization on this earth."



Caltech geochemist **Harrison Brown**, author of *The Challenge of Man's Future* and *The Next Hundred Years*, returns to his seat after addressing the Society's 1971 conference. "Forecasting is, I believe, key to our survival," Brown told the audience. Applauding at right is conference chairman **John Gerba**.



Conference chairman **John Gerba** savors the success of the Society's first conference. Back to camera are **Janet Carson** (left), one of the housewives who worked part time at the Society's headquarters on the back porch of the Cornish home, and **Suzanne Pineau**, a professional conference planner who helped plan the Society's first big meeting.



Soviet futurist **Igor V. Bestuzhev-Lada** of Moscow's Institute of the International Labor Movement was an early reader of *THE FUTURIST*, which published his article "Utopias of Bourgeois Futurology" in December 1970 along with a review of his writings on the future. Publication of this article may have led to the mysterious presence of a Soviet representative at the 1971 conference.

the chapter was planning. When I went to meet Konrad at the Old Stein, a German restaurant on Connecticut Avenue, I found him sitting in a booth with five other German rocket scientists. They kept silent while Konrad and I discussed the Huntsville chapter, but suddenly I realized that the man I had forced to move aside so I could squeeze into the booth was the infamous Werner von Braun, whose rockets had terrorized Britain during World War II. This was another validation of my epiphany but also another embarrassment: I could offer the Huntsville chapter nothing at all. I could not even afford to travel to their meeting to lend my support.

After the conference, I continued to search for an answer to our money problem, but could find none. So we were forced, again and again, to raise the dues, and that had the effect of discouraging many people from joining, especially young people and people living in poor nations.

My efforts to get support from foundations and philanthropists proved almost completely unavailing, partly because I am a poor salesman but also because I had little time for soliciting funds. Meanwhile, only a couple of my colleagues seemed willing to try to raise funds and they came back virtually empty-handed.

Obstacles to the Society's Future

There appear to be a number of

serious obstacles to raising funds for futurist activities. One hurdle is that most people have great difficulty understanding that it really is possible to think more realistically about the future. It's certainly true that we can't know much at all about the future—but that little bit we can know is critically important for making wise decisions.

A second obstacle is that the future of humanity is everybody's business, and whatever is everybody's business is treated as somebody else's business, certainly not ours.

A third obstacle is people's feeling that we should solve all immediate problems before trying to deal with any future problems. This fixation on immediate problems, however trivial they may be, leads nations as well as individuals and organizations to lurch from one crisis to another, always too busy with the current "crisis" to forestall the next.

A fourth obstacle is that people like to deal with well-defined problems that can be solved quickly using a direct approach that produces quantifiable and photogenic results. People hate coping with problems that are poorly defined, bafflingly complex, and impossible to solve quickly using a direct, well-approved approach. (In the seventeenth century, an approved approach to illness was to pray to God or a saint or, if that failed, to burn a witch or two.)

A fifth obstacle is that we cannot show on television the victims

of future wars. We now live in a visual culture where TV images have largely displaced the human imagination. So the orphans of future wars have no standing because their faces cannot now be seen on television. Nor can their cries be heard.

A sixth obstacle is that futurist publications are unattractive to advertisers because futurists as a group are not big consumers of any substantial category of goods.

These obstacles continue to keep the World Future Society impoverished, so the Society has never been able to realize its potential.

That's the bad news. The good news is that the Society has survived into the twenty-first century and still lives in hope while the mighty Soviet Union has faded into history. Back in 1971 when Mikhail and I had our chats, I don't think either of us dreamed that things would turn out quite that way.

Next: A groundbreaking conference focusing on energy helps crystalize the challenges ahead for the Society and the world. □



About the Author

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Adventures in Organization Building: Adding Star Power to Futuring

By Edward Cornish

Isaac Asimov, Margaret Mead, and Gerald Ford were among the luminaries recruited for various meetings and programs that were launched to help the struggling young World Future Society meet ever more pressing challenges, recounts the founding president in the fifth installment of his memoirs.

After our first, quite successful conference, in 1971, when the World Future Society was five years old, my wife threw it out of the house. With new projects, new staff, and new visitors crowding our living space, things had gone too far. Finally, in the spring of 1972, Sally gave me an ultimatum. The Society had to go. The last straw came when staff members began using upstairs rooms while she was still in bed, depriving her of what little rest and privacy she still had.

We found some small office space in downtown Bethesda offered at an exceptionally low rent by a distressed landlord. We inspected the premises and immediately signed a lease.

The Society's new premises were in a two-story red brick building, above a beauty parlor and a used-clothing store. To help furnish the offices, the Society's pro bono lawyer, Bill Moore, donated three or four desks that he no longer needed for his law office, and we bought chairs at an auction of used furniture. Staff members contributed rugs and other items. So we soon

PHOTOS: WFS ARCHIVE



Gerald R. Ford, then vice president of the United States, addresses the World Future Society's special forum on "Energy: Today's Choices, Tomorrow's Opportunities" in 1974. The unique two-day Energy Forum brought together 50 experts from industry, government, and academia to present their views on a critical topic.

had all the furniture we needed, and, for the first time, the Society took on the semblance of a serious enterprise.

Charles Williams, the Society's vice president, inspected the premises and was quite impressed. Less impressed were visitors unfamiliar with our previous "headquarters." They always expected something grander. But that didn't bother us. We were proud and delighted with our new headquarters, especially the room we called the Members' Lounge.

The Members' Lounge had a large table plus chairs and bookshelves for displaying books about the future that visitors could buy. So it served as a small bookshop as well as a conference and reception room. To deal with book buyers and other visitors, we hired a recent widow named Julia Larson, who proved highly popular with visitors. When a blind member, Michael Esserman, came by to "see the books," Julia made his visit so pleasant he came again and again. Once he brought his parents along, and we all had a nice chat together.



Sally Woodhull Cornish patiently bore with having the World Future Society use her house as its headquarters during its first six years but was delighted to see it move out in 1972. Here she is in the Society's new headquarters, where she worked first as managing editor of *THE FUTURIST* and then as program coordinator.



Young Colin Kark sucks his pacifier while his mother does volunteer work for the World Future Society on the back porch of the home of Edward and Sally Cornish in Bethesda, Maryland. The Society operated from the Cornish home until 1972 when it moved into an office building in downtown Bethesda. Spring Kark, a native of England, lived across the street from the Cornishes.



Joan McAlear, the Society's first full-time staff member, worked first on the back porch of Edward and Sally Cornish's house. Here she is at her desk in the Society's new headquarters.

Next door to the Society's new offices was a yoga parlor run by a German lady. Through the wall we could hear her disciples humming the Sanskrit holy word "Om" as they contemplated ultimate reality. Meanwhile, I had to contemplate a more urgent reality: How to pay the rent on our new offices.

The rent problem intensified some months later when the yoga lady vacated the space she was using and the landlord offered it to us. We did not need the space immediately, but we probably would within a year or two. Reluctantly, we decided we had to take it and immediately put it to some remunerative use if we could find one.

Planning New Programs

The best idea we could come up with to boost revenues was to use the extra space to give educational courses for which we could charge tuition. So we col-



Joseph F. Coates of the National Science Foundation taught a popular course on the future at the Society's new headquarters in 1973 and 1974. The Society improvised a classroom with folding chairs.

laborated with our emerging Washington chapter in sponsoring an evening course on the future and sharing the proceeds. Joseph F. Coates, who had been the interviewer on the Society's radio program, conducted the course with the help of another chapter member, Gregg Edwards. Both worked for the National Science Foundation (NSF), so they had ready access to the best scientists in America.

One lecturer was the nuclear physicist John H. Gib-



Staff members test a future-oriented game in the Member's Lounge—a special feature of the Society's headquarters after its move from the Cornish home. **Julia Larson** (right, rear) made visiting members feel welcome and sold them books. **Lane Jennings** (wearing glasses) edited the *World Future Society Bulletin*, a predecessor of *Futures Research Quarterly*.

bons, who was so impressed with Joe Coates that, when Joe left NSF a year or so later, Gibbons hired him to work for the new Office of Technology Assessment that the U.S. Congress had created. It was the second time that Joe had gotten a job through the World Future Society: He had secured his National Science Foundation job after interviewing an NSF official, Joel Snow, on the Society's radio program.

The course proved highly popular, but the revenues were meager, so we looked for other ways to improve our financial situation. An obvious way was to seek donations or grants. Though I had failed to raise much money myself, we could try harder to find members willing to take on this difficult task.

One person willing to pick up the challenge was an elderly businessman named Lloyd Luther. He had done fund-raising for a Washington church, and he appreciated our problem. So Peter Zuckerman, the Society's secretary-treasurer, and I gave him our blessings, and Lloyd succeeded in obtaining an appreciable amount of money, but he was in poor health and soon died.

Later, Zuckerman and I met with another Society member, a retired U.S. Army colonel, who was willing to try to raise money for us. In the Army, the colonel said, he had gotten used to receiving challenging assignments and showing he could handle them. Unfortunately, getting people to give money for the future seemed to be harder than storming a nest of machine-gunners. The brave colonel retreated in defeat, leaving Zuckerman and me pretty much where we started.

Meanwhile, I tried hard to improve THE FUTURIST so that we could attract more members and subscribers.

Since members paid dues, we might eventually have enough members to finance our operation properly. Our revenues from member dues and the sale of books were bringing in more money, making it seem possible that we might eventually outgrow our money problems.

On the other hand, the workload on the Society's staff kept increasing. I couldn't seem to work any faster myself, and I was neglecting many highly important tasks. So it was a considerable relief to me when Peter Zuckerman began working full time as the Society's business manager. Peter's job as a systems analyst for the System Development Corporation had ended, and he was willing to work full time for the Society at a much lower salary than he had been receiving.

Zuckerman took over from me the task of dealing with printers, compositors, mailing list bro-

kers, and other business aspects of the Society, allowing me to focus more on THE FUTURIST, the Society's chapters, and other programs. Peter eased my anxiety greatly: Whenever I went to him with a worrisome problem, he always accepted it with complete equanimity. He undertook a number of initiatives to increase the Society's revenues. Since we hadn't had much success getting advertising for THE FUTURIST, he arranged for a Los Angeles firm to solicit advertising for us. He also negotiated a deal with an insurance company so members could get life insurance through the Society. Unfortunately, the insurance company abruptly canceled the program when one of our participants died.

Peter and I also tried to get money from government agencies. We thought we saw an opportunity when the U.S. Congress established the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission to coordinate a celebration of America's 200th birthday on July 4, 1976. Possibly, we surmised, the Commission might support a report on the outlook for America's next 200 years. We did succeed in getting an audience with two different Commission officials, but they seemed to have no interest whatsoever in our idea. One staffer wanted only to support projects for blacks or other minorities. The other official sought only projects involving women. A project designed to benefit everybody, regardless of their race or sex, was of no interest whatsoever.

A year or so later, we lost more time trying to get support from the government. This time the government sought us out, rather than the reverse. An official working for the President's Committee on Mental Retardation who had been impressed with our ability to organize a good meeting wanted us to arrange a con-

ference looking at the future prospects of mentally retarded people. After we spent much time preparing a proposal, the official learned that such a project would have to be subjected to competitive bidding—a complex, time-consuming procedure that we could not afford to undertake. So we bowed out despite the pleas of the official we had been negotiating with.

Discouraged by our efforts to get donations or government money, I fell back on trying to improve THE FUTURIST. I also spent more time trying to support our chapters.

The Growth of Chapters

Society chapters began forming as early as 1967, with the earliest being the chapters in Minneapolis and Los Angeles. In the following years, chapters began appearing in other U.S. cities as well as in Canada and Europe, many of which planned and organized exceptional programs. The vitality of the newly organized Washington, D.C., chapter, for instance, made me more enthusiastic about developing the Society's chapters, and I wished the Society had a chapter in New York City, which dominates America's business, arts, and communications and hosts the United Nations. I needed to go to New York on Society business occasionally, and I also had personal reasons to visit the city since I had grown up in Manhattan and still had many friends there.

But I did nothing about establishing a chapter in New York until I got a call from Joel Brink, a young woman who lived in the Bronx. Joel had attended our 1971 conference, and while there had broken off her engagement to a Unitarian minister. She did not explain how or why her engagement had broken up, but she seemed to feel that if the Society could not supply her with a new fiancé, we might at least establish a New York chapter to provide social activities for the New York members.

I agreed to help, and on my next trip to New York I met with Joel and Brian Quickstad, whom we had been listing as the Society's coordinator in New York City. Quickstad had done little to organize a chapter, and I figured he needed a push. Joel was just the sort of person to do the pushing.

Brian arranged for a meeting of the New York City members at the Mercer Arts Center in lower Manhattan, a part of the city I had not seen since my teenage years when I worked as a trucker's helper delivering bolts of cloth to garment factories in the area. To speak at the meeting, I recruited Julius Stulman, a lumber



Science-fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke (left) meets with Robert Prehoda, founder of the World Future Society's second chapter, in Los Angeles. With them is Prehoda's wife, Claudette.

magnate who had become one of the Society's few financial contributors. I also spoke at the meeting—mainly to make it clear that we at headquarters could not help them. They had to help themselves if their chapter was to succeed. The New York City chapter was duly launched with Quickstad as president and Joel Brink as one of three vice presidents, and the chapter began holding regular meetings with impressive speakers.

Attending these meetings was a lecture agent named Patricia Hederman, one of whose clients was Isaac Asimov, a science and science-fiction writer whom I had long admired. Patricia persuaded Isaac to speak to the New York chapter, so I made a special trip to New York to hear him.

Pat Hederman arranged a private dinner with Asimov before he made his speech to the chapter, and on the evening of the meeting, she and I, plus Joel, taxied over to his apartment building to fetch him. While Pat went upstairs, Joel and I waited in the taxi, and I had a

minute to think about what I would say to the famous writer. I knew that he had written a lot of books but wasn't sure how many, so I put the question to him the moment he got in the cab.

"Two hundred forty-one with eight more in press!" Asimov responded without the slightest hesitation. I was even more impressed than I expected to be, not just with the total, but with his precision in keeping score.

At dinner, Isaac proudly showed the three of us his business card proving that he was a professor of biochemistry at Boston University. He said he kept his academic standing by giving the introductory lecture for the biochemistry students every year. "The kids don't know it," he confided, "but that's the best lecture they're going to get!" (Isaac did not suffer from false modesty.)

He also confided how he was able to write so many books: "Most writers like to get ideas for books and they like to have them published, but they don't like what comes in between. I like what comes in between."



Isaac Asimov, one of the first members of the World Future Society, addressed the New York City chapter shortly after its formation in 1972.



Margaret Mead, the legendary anthropologist, addresses the World Future Society's symposium on the future, held as part of the 1974 convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. At left, **Roy Amara**, president of the Institute for the Future, leans over to whisper a suggestion to **Glenn Seaborg**, discoverer of plutonium and other chemical elements. At far left is biophysicist **John Platt**, a highly creative thinker on the interdisciplinary issues involved in futuring.



Give the Elderly a Child to Think About

I'd like to mention what looks to me like the best way of getting people to take a longer look into the future than they're willing to take at present, and that is for every person to know small children that he or she cares about. The one way you cannot avoid thinking about the future, is if you have a two-year-old child in front of you who is growing. When you think about ten years from now, that child will be twelve; when you think of twenty, that child will be twenty-two, and you begin to wonder: What will that child's children be like? . . . [We need] to get the old people out of the golden ghettos and get them back into the community and give each of them a child to think about.

—Margaret Mead

After dinner, the four of us went to the chapter meeting where Asimov gave a splendid lecture on "How Predictive Is Science Fiction?" His answer: "Not very." In most cases, he told us, science fiction is a humble follower of science fact. Scientists constantly discover things beyond the imagination of the writers, and what the fiction writers do say is mostly wrong.

That was the beginning of my friendship with Asimov. Years later, at the Society's 1986 conference, I had the pleasure of presenting him with the Society's Distinguished Service Award. After his death, his widow, Janet, became a life member of the Society.

Asimov was only one of the distinguished speakers who addressed the New York chapter, but after operating successfully for a number of years, the chapter faltered and collapsed, then revived and collapsed again.

The ups and downs of our chapters frustrated me enormously. Chapters can provide magnificent experiences for our members, but they depend on good leadership at the local level. There must be at least one person who is really dedicated to sustaining a chapter if it is to survive and prosper. Previous experience is unnecessary if a person is dedicated and has reasonably good judgment.

Despite the many problems that chapters often pose,

they can achieve wonders in providing personal experiences with other futurists, including some of the world's most fascinating people.

Lunch with Margaret Mead

In 1973, Glenn Seaborg, our Nobel Prize-winning Board member, called me from Berkeley, California. He had become chairman of the 1974 conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in San Francisco.

"Ed, I've got an idea," Glenn began ominously. I say "ominously" because I had learned to worry when someone came to me with an idea. It generally meant more work for me, and that proved to be true in this case.

Glenn wanted me to organize a session on the future for the AAAS meeting. I didn't like this idea one bit because I knew it would consume considerable time and money that neither I nor the Society could afford to lose. Furthermore, I had never organized a session for a meeting of scientists and doubted my ability to do it.

But I couldn't say no to Glenn, who had done so much for us, so I quickly agreed. Once committed, I had to think how one goes about organizing a session

for the world's most prominent scientific society. Since I lived in the Washington area, I went to the headquarters of the AAAS to ask for guidance, but I couldn't seem to get much practical help. So I plunged ahead on my own by making up a list of noted futurists and just calling them up to ask if they would be willing to participate in a session at the AAAS conference.

I first invited Roy Amara, president of the Institute for the Future in Menlo Park, California, to chair the futurist session, since it would be easy for Roy to come to a meeting in San Francisco. I did not want to preside myself, because I wanted to tape-record and photograph the event in order to report on it for *THE FUTURIST*.

Happily, Roy Amara was willing, and I was also able to recruit Theodore Gordon, president of the Futures Group; Willis W. Harman of Stanford Research Institute; biophysicist John Platt; and Glenn Seaborg himself to speak at the session. Inviting Glenn was a kind of payback for making me do so much extra work!

I also sent an invitation to the legendary anthropologist Margaret Mead, because I knew she was president of the AAAS that year and might be at the San Francisco meeting. She was not a member of the World Future Society, but judging from her writings and speeches, I believed she was very interested in the future and always seemed to have interesting things to say. But she did not respond to my invitation.

The new San Francisco chapter of the World Future Society arranged an elegant reception and luncheon to be held just before the symposium. I was amazed by the initiative of the San Francisco chapter and found the event most enjoyable.

While I was talking to people at the reception, someone came up and told me that Margaret Mead was looking for me. Though quite startled, I quickly located her in the crowd, and we were soon chatting like old friends. Mead was a small woman, though plump, so I was quite amazed when she downed two sizeable highballs while we talked. Then we went together to what proved to be a very pleasant lunch; John Platt sat across the table from us but entered into our conversation occasionally. At the end of the meal, I expected to conduct Mead to the hall where our session was to be held, but Glenn Seaborg came over and started asking me questions about his presentation. While my attention was diverted, Mead disappeared without saying a word, and I had no idea where she had gone. I had miffed her—a blunder that I still regret.

When I arrived at the meeting hall, Mead was nowhere in sight. The other speakers milled around the speakers' table as the crowd assembled, and it really

was a crowd. Some 500 people packed into the room, making it one of the biggest sessions at the conference.

Amara started the program on schedule, and the presentations proceeded smoothly and uneventfully until he began bringing the session to a close, noting that Margaret Mead had been expected but had not arrived.

Suddenly, a murmur arose from the crowd!

"Oh, is she here?" exclaimed Amara.

Mead had been sitting unnoticed in the midst of the hundreds in the audience. At last she came forward and placed herself at the microphone. She then proceeded to give a forceful talk, despite—or perhaps because of—the two highballs, and quickly disappeared again into the crowd. I never saw her again, but I had successfully recorded her talk on tape, and we published it (with her corrections) along with the other presentations in *THE FUTURIST* (June 1974).

The Society Responds to a Crisis

In 1973, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced an embargo on shipments of petroleum to nations that supported Israel, which had been attacked by Egypt and Syria. The result was a worldwide crisis in the United States and other nations dependent on OPEC petroleum. Overnight, frustrated motorists were forced to spend hours waiting at filling stations to get some of the limited amount of gasoline available. Fistfights broke out among impatient motorists.

Zuckerman and I decided that the Society could make a useful contribution to public understanding of energy issues by holding a public forum that would bring together knowledgeable people from industry, government, and academia to discuss the complexities of the energy situation. We believed that such a timely meeting might also produce some badly needed revenue. The Society's first conference had been financially successful and our membership had grown considerably since then.

To chair the forum, I recruited Anton Schmalz, a management consultant who had served on the committee that planned our 1971 conference. To assist Schmalz, we hired Nancy McLane, a former employee of the Sierra Club in California. She and her husband were deeply committed to protecting the natural environment, an issue closely linked to the world's soaring consumption of petroleum and other natural resources.

By early 1974, Anton and Nancy were hard at work preparing for what we billed as a Special Forum on "Energy: Today's Choices, Tomorrow's Opportunities." Anton enlisted an impressive group of speakers, in-



Vice President **Gerald R. Ford** is welcomed to the Society's 1974 Energy Forum by Board member **Glenn T. Seaborg**, a Nobel Prize-winning atomic scientist. At right is **Murray Bowen**, director of Georgetown University's Center for the Transdisciplinary Study of Human Adaptation and Evolution.



Washington Hilton Hotel, then the newest of Washington's big hotels, was the site of the Society's first conferences.

cluding James Lee, president of the Gulf Oil Corporation; Congressman Mike McCormack, the only scientist in the U.S. House of Representatives; representatives of the energy producing companies; and a variety of people outside the energy industry, such as psychologists, who might provide unique perspectives on energy issues.

Schmalz's biggest triumph was recruiting Gerald Ford to speak at the luncheon on the first day of the Forum. President Richard Nixon had just appointed Ford vice president of the United States, replacing Spiro Agnew. Furthermore, Nixon was expected to resign soon due to the Watergate scandal, so Ford would automatically become the next U.S. president!

But despite our extraordinary program, registrations fell far below expectations, and Zuckerman and I soon realized that the Society was headed for a serious financial loss. To make matters worse, the printers had failed to deliver on schedule the copies of the book on energy issues that we had promised the attendees.

I became sick with worry that we were headed for a complete disaster and began screaming at Schmalz to pressure the printers to finish the job. He finally bribed them with triple their normal wages to work at night. Still, the books did not arrive until half an hour before the conference opened. But at least we had succeeded in delivering on our promise to the attendees.

Energy: Today's Choices, Tomorrow's Opportunities was the first book that the Society had published, and it was an impressive production with statements from 48 experts and opinion leaders, including four U.S. senators and two future U.S. presidents (Ford and Jimmy Carter, who was then governor of Georgia).

The Forum opened as scheduled on the morning of April 24, 1974, and everything went smoothly until lunchtime when Ford—our star speaker—failed to appear. Since we had anticipated that possibility, we had a backup speaker, environmentalist Lester Brown, so Les began making his presentation.

While Les Brown was talking, Ford finally arrived and rushed to the platform, but his assistant, who was carrying the Great Seal of the Vice President of the United States, was stopped at the door to the hall by a zealous guard. The Great Seal is placed on the lectern

whenever a U.S. vice president speaks, but due to the mischance Ford was forced to speak over the "Great Seal" of the World Future Society.

Ford gave a friendly but brief talk without saying anything memorable and then rushed away to his next appointment, but I was elated: Only seven years after the Society's founding, a soon-to-be president of the United States had favored the World Future Society with a speech—and we didn't have to pay him a dime.

Planning Beyond Our Means?

Zuckerman and I had hoped that the Society would benefit financially from the Energy Forum. Instead, we had dug ourselves into a deeper financial hole. When the bill arrived from the Washington Hilton Hotel, where we had held the Forum, we simply couldn't pay it.

To make matters more terrifying, we planned to hold our general conference in the same hotel the following year, 1975. If we failed to pay the bill for the Energy Forum, the hotel would certainly not allow us to hold another conference, and no other hotel would touch us.

Zuckerman and I put off paying other bills until we had settled with the Hilton. Even so, we were shamefully slow in settling our hotel account, so the hotel would likely refuse to host our 1975 conference. Desperate, I appealed for help to Sheila Stampfli, a professional conference planner who had helped with our earlier meetings at the hotel. The Society's credit was now worthless, but the hotel might trust Sheila.

Sheila and I went down to the Hilton and pleaded with the hotel's sales manager. We argued that the Energy Forum was merely a one-of-a-kind experiment that hadn't worked out, and we had made good in the end. We weren't deadbeats. Our next meeting, we assured the sales manager, was a regular conference that could be expected to provide plenty of revenue. The manager, Gino Rosante, scolded me for half an hour, but, underneath, he seemed sympathetic. He finally yielded. He could trust in Sheila and her organization, but he clearly remained quite skeptical about me and the World Future Society.

I was a little skeptical myself, but I had little time to worry because we were already busy planning the program for the 1975 conference. Maybe that would be our salvation.

Next: Futurists gain influence in the U.S. Congress. □



About the Author

Edward Cornish is founding president of the World Future Society, editor of THE FUTURIST magazine, and author of *Futuring: The Exploration of the Future*. This series of memoirs may be downloaded free from www.wfs.org.

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The Search for Foresight

Future Shock and the Magic of the Future

By Edward Cornish

The founding president recounts the World Future Society's experiments in new programs, such as a forum on energy, a workshop for teachers, and a tour of Scandinavia. Voluntary services by members enable the Society to survive despite its financial woes.

There is something magic about the future that I can't fully explain, but I felt it strongly at the World Future Society's early conferences.

Our very first conference, in 1971, showed that a focus on the future had the power to turn people who had been enemies into friendly collaborators. Then, in 1974, the Society's special forum on energy demonstrated that a future focus also facilitates close collaboration among people with very different backgrounds and concerns. I was especially impressed by the fact that our energy forum succeeded in bringing together "doers" and "thinkers."

Our principal speaker at the Energy Forum, Gerald Ford, would soon become President of the United States, hence America's chief doer. He would have overall responsibility for setting the U.S. government's energy policies. We also had on our program the Nobel Prize-winning scientist Glenn T. Seaborg, who had discovered plutonium and served as chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. Seaborg was perhaps the world's most profound thinker on the subject of energy.

At our Forum, Ford and Seaborg came literally face to face and shared their views with 550 other thinkers and doers who were also concerned with the complex problems of using energy wisely. So I felt the meeting was an extraordinary success, even though it had left us financially on the edge of bankruptcy.



PHOTOS: WFS ARCHIVES EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

Above: Senator Edward M. Kennedy (right) lunched with Graham T.T. Molitor, general chairman of the World Future Society's 1975 conference.



Vice President Gerald Ford (left) takes time while chatting with Nobel laureate scientist Glenn T. Seaborg to shake hands with Georgetown professor Murray Bowen.

Clearly we had come a long way in the seven years since the Society's founding in 1966. Back then, futurists were viewed as oddities, freaks, crystal-ball gazers, tea-leaf readers, science-fiction nuts, weirdoes, or worse. Now, in the company of people like Gerald Ford and Glenn Seaborg, futurists were getting some respect.

Our improved status was due primarily to the extraordinary help we got from our members and friends. Though very few donated money, there must have

been a thousand or more by 1974 who had helped by providing voluntary services of one kind or another. They contributed articles to *THE FUTURIST*, spoke at Society meetings without requiring payment, or helped organize Society chapters and events. This voluntary support was tremendously heart-warming and helped me keep optimistic despite our financial perils.

It is impossible to acknowledge all the people who helped the Society in one way or another during its early years, but I must mention the unique role played by Alvin and Heidi Toffler.

Future Shock

I first met Al and Heidi Toffler in 1966 when they came to Washington to do research at the Library of Congress. They were working on a book about “future shock”—the disorientation that rapid technological and social change was having on people in modern society—and they sought me out because they had seen my prototype issue of *THE FUTURIST*.

The three of us had supper at the Hay-Adams Hotel on Lafayette Square across from the White House. We discussed our future-oriented projects and parted company as new friends and allies. I looked forward to reading their book.

When the book, *Future Shock*, finally appeared in 1970, I found it even better than I anticipated, but I still was astounded at its phenomenal success. Overnight, everybody seemed to be reading it—even people caught up in the hurly-burly of the White House where I was working as a consultant. One reader was the head of our section, Leonard Garment, who later was suspected (erroneously) of being the “Deep Throat” who exposed the Watergate scandal.

Future Shock’s extraordinary success recalled Rachel Carson’s 1962 best-seller, *Silent Spring*, which triggered the environmental movement of the 1960s. *Silent Spring* vividly described how pesticides were poisoning the songbirds and toxic wastes were killing fish in rivers and streams. Activists all over America quickly rushed to Mother Nature’s defense, and politicians responded with new laws to protect the environment. In 1970, President Richard Nixon established the Environmental Protection Agency.

Future Shock sold millions of copies, but it failed to stir up a similar mass movement because it did not provide a suitable target for social activists. The “enemy” in *Future Shock* was simply rapid technological and social change, but most people want change in the form of more comfortable homes, higher quality food, better health care, etc. So nobody picketed the White House with signs saying, “STOP PROGRESS!” and the U.S. government never established a “Future Protection Agency.”



Alvin Toffler, author of the 1970 best seller *Future Shock*, chats informally with Society members at the 1975 conference. Sitting next to him is Barbara Hubbard, a member of the Society’s Board.

On the other hand, *Future Shock* did a lot to develop future consciousness among thoughtful people, and so proved an extraordinary boon to the young World Future Society. In 1966, when my colleagues and I organized the Society, we felt we had to constantly stress the scientific legitimacy of our enterprise. But after the appearance of *Future Shock* in 1970, many people began to view futurists as cutting-edge thinkers who should be listened to with respect.

This improvement in the image of futurists helped the Society to grow rapidly during the 1970s, but for me personally, it was a bit unsettling. I regarded myself simply as a journalist reporting on what scientists and scholars were saying about the future. I did not think of myself as an “expert” on the future. Yet, suddenly, I found people viewing me as someone who could tell them all about what was going to happen in the future, as if I were some kind of wizard!

I began receiving invitations to give speeches about the future, and it was often hard to beg off. One of the first invitations was more of a command from my wife to speak to her mothers’ group at the local Unitarian church. I solved that problem by simply telling the ladies some of the things Al Toffler said in *Future Shock*.

A more difficult problem came when I got an invitation to lecture at Columbia University. The professor apologized for the small size of the honorarium—\$50—but, at the time, it seemed like big money to me, so I accepted his invitation. I went to Columbia, despite my

discomfort with my new position as an “expert” on the future.

Once in the lecture hall, I became further unnerved when I found the famous architect and city planner Percival Goodman sitting in the front row. (I thought I would only be speaking to students.) Goodman interrogated me sharply during my talk, making me feel even more foolish.

I managed to survive that occasion and continued to give speeches, but I never came to think of myself as a “real” expert on the future—not even now, after having written or edited about a dozen books on the subject. The future is just too vast and mysterious to permit the exactitude and certainty expected of an honest-to-God expert.

On the other hand, good foresight—the goal of futurism—is so critically important for people’s chances of success in work and life that what futurists have to say is, I believe, still worth listening to.

Educators and the Future

Besides raising future consciousness among the reading public, *Future Shock* encouraged many professors and teachers to think about futurizing their courses so that young people would be better prepared to live and work in the world of the future.

Educators made up about a third of the attendance at the Society’s first conference in 1971. Our meeting gave them an opportunity to get to know each other, share their frustration with backward-looking institutions, and collaborate on future-oriented projects.

My wife, Sally, took a special interest in these forward-thinking teachers, so after the conference, she teamed up with a young educator named James Stirewalt who was collecting information about future-oriented courses being given in high schools in the United States and elsewhere.

In 1974, Sally and Jim Stirewalt organized a workshop for teachers interested in giving future-oriented courses for their students. I helped them arrange for meeting space at a hotel in Bethesda, Maryland, close to the Society’s headquarters, but other than that they did almost everything by themselves.

Some 200 teachers attended the workshop and heard talks by experienced futurists as well as other educators who were involved in futuring. Each teacher got a copy of *Teaching Futures*, a 150-page collection of articles and syllabuses that could be used in informing students about the world of tomorrow.

As a further service for educators, we published the Society’s first catalog of books, audiotapes, and other materials that might help teachers to equip students for the future. All told, the workshop was, I believe, of great practical benefit to the teachers, and it also stimulated a lot of new interest among educators in teaching their students

about likely developments in the world they would be living in.

A Scandinavian Adventure

One reason I did little to help with the 1974 Teachers Workshop was that I had become involved in a more adventurous activity.

Here’s how it happened:

We had polled Society members early on to find out what programs they wanted us to provide. Polling revealed considerable interest in study tours that would allow futurists to visit future-relevant institutions in other nations. The top choice as a destination was Scandinavia due to its forward-looking social policies.

So as early as 1970 I had discussed tours with professionals in the tour industry. But I took no action until late 1973 when I noticed that the Society’s coordinator in Vancouver, Canada, was a Norwegian named Anders Skoe. I telephoned Anders and asked if he would be willing to conduct a study tour of his native Norway and its neighbors, Sweden and Denmark. Anders readily agreed, so we set about arranging a 15-day tour with a special focus on things of interest to futurists.

We developed an impressive program featuring innovative projects in Oslo, Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Copenhagen, with a side trip to the College of the Future on Denmark’s Jutland peninsula. To add a touch of glamour, we tried to arrange meetings with Scandinavian royalty and actually succeeded in lining up an audience with Norway’s Crown Prince, an enthusiastic environmentalist who later became King Olaf V.

I discussed the tour at a Board meeting and, to my astonishment, learned that one Board member, Glenn Seaborg, planned to be in Stockholm at precisely the time our tour group would be there. (Sweden was the



Architect Tibor Hottovy (right), the Society’s coordinator in Stockholm, entertained members participating in the 1974 tour of Scandinavia. With Hottovy is a tour member, the Rt. Rev. Frederick W. Putnam, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma.



Space artist Robert McCall, shown while painting a multistory mural for the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, gave *THE FUTURIST* permission to reproduce some of his inspiring paintings.

land of his ancestors, and Glenn still spoke Swedish.) He said he would be happy to meet our tour group.

Everything seemed to be falling into place—except for the fact that very few of our members registered for the tour, mainly, I think, because we failed to promote it early enough for members to make plans. In any event, the small number of sign-ups meant that I could not accompany the tour since I could not afford to pay my own way, and, since I would not be going, the Crown Prince could not take time to receive our group.

Despite these disappointments, the tour actually got under way in June 1974. In Oslo, the group met with Norwegian futurists as well as scholars at the Peace Research Institute, which chooses the winners of the Nobel Peace Prize. In Stockholm, the Society's Swedish members provided the tour group with a warm welcome and dinner in the home of Tibor Hottovy, the Society's local coordinator. Seaborg, as promised, really did meet the group at a reception held in the Swedish Engineering Academy.

One member of the tour group, Phyllis Huggins, wrote a lively account of the tour, which we published in *THE FUTURIST* (October 1974). Phyllis had been so



The Society's London coordinator, David Berry (left), and his wife, Paula, welcome Soviet futurist Igor Bestuzhev-Lada. The Society's network of chapters and representatives facilitates contacts among members around the world.

thrilled with the Peace Research Institute in Oslo that she told me she was planning to give up her job in California and go to work for the Institute. (Circumstances later prevented her from actually doing so.)

Other members on the tour also found it highly enjoyable and educational, but, as with the Energy Forum, also held in 1974, the Society lost money. Clearly I had a lot to learn about business management.

Growth in the Society's Membership

Despite my management blunders, the Society survived and grew rapidly during the early 1970s. In 1973, for example, we added 3,000 more members, giving us a total of 15,000 by the beginning of 1974.

Due to membership growth, our revenues kept increasing, and we always managed to pay our bills, though we were often dangerously late. What kept us going—and growing—were largely the improvements we made in *THE FUTURIST*. As our Board member Glenn Seaborg had advised, we tried hard to keep up its quality and to improve it as much as we could.

THE FUTURIST had begun regular publication in 1967 as a 16-page newsletter, but by the end of 1968 it had grown to 14 pages plus a glossy cover. At that point, we began calling it a magazine. By December 1970, *THE FUTURIST* had reached 40 pages plus a cover with a blue border. Until then, it had nothing but black-and-white covers.

In the years that followed, we added more pages, but it was not until October 1975 that *THE FUTURIST* had a full-color cover—a painting by the eminent artist Robert McCall of a city suspended in outer space. Our volunteer art director, Roy Mason, had persuaded McCall to let us reproduce his stunning painting without charge.

To close the deal I went down to the National Air and Space Museum (which had not yet officially opened) to see McCall. I found him standing on scaffolding while completing the magnificent multistory painting that



Frank Hopkins, the Society's coordinator of chapter services, took a special interest in overseas chapters.

now greets visitors when they enter the museum. This vision of McCall on the scaffolding reminded me of Michelangelo painting the ceiling of the Vatican's Sistine Chapel, so when we later did an article about McCall as an excuse for reproducing more of his inspiring work in *THE FUTURIST I* described him as "the Michelangelo of the Space Age."

The Growth of Chapters

The Society's chapters grew in number along with the increase in our membership. By 1974, we had 20 chapters plus 36 local committees and coordinators. All told, we had representatives in 56 cities around the world.

Frank S. Hopkins, a U.S. diplomat and State Department planner who had arranged luncheons for our members in the Washington, D.C., area, took a special interest in our growing network of chapters and volunteered to become the Society's Coordinator of Chapter Services.

I gave Hopkins that responsibility with enormous gratitude and relief. The chapters had proved quite troublesome for me, mainly because they always needed far more help than I could possibly provide.

Hopkins's wife was slowly dying of a crippling disease, and he had to carry her in his arms to meetings of our Washington chapter. As her condition worsened, he retired early from his State Department post so that he could be constantly at hand to care for her. Being at home so much gave him time to write long letters to our chapter leaders, advising them on how to organize a chapter, get speakers, etc. Though his method was primitive, it proved extraordinarily effective in helping our chapters.



Planning the Society's 1975 conference. From left, Society President Edward Cornish, program chairman Victor R. Ferkiss, general chairman Graham T.T. Molitor, and staff associate Suzanne Seitz.

Aside from my wife, Sally, Frank proved the Society's most dedicated, reliable, and productive volunteer during the early 1970s, and when Charles Williams could no longer serve as the Society's vice president, Hopkins assumed those duties as well.

After Hopkins's wife died, he had even more time to advise our chapter leaders, and when they came to Washington, he would take them to the Cosmos Club for lunch and answer all their questions about the Society and Washington. As a former diplomat, he took a special interest in the Society's overseas members and even lodged some of them in his home.

The coordinator of the Society's London chapter, David Berry, became like a son to Frank, and he remembered David in his will. When Frank died, David flew across the Atlantic, and he and I went together to Frank's funeral.

By this time, David Berry and I had also become good friends. I had long been impressed with his dedicated support of the London chapter and delighted with its success. One triumph was having as its first speaker Dennis Gabor, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist who developed holography. I had taken a special interest in Gabor since his 1964 book *Inventing the Future* and had sent him copies of the prototype issue of *THE FUTURIST* in 1966 to distribute. (He wrote back that he distributed three copies to friends he thought might be interested.) Thanks to Berry and the London chapter, we had established personal contact with Gabor.

Another accomplishment of David Berry and the

London chapter was entertaining Soviet futurist Igor Bestuzhev-Lada when he came to England. We had published Bestuzhev-Lada's writings in *THE FUTURIST*, but we had never had face-to-face contact with him. I was delighted that our London chapter could do this for us.

I might add that, years later, when circumstances allowed me to make a stopover visit to London, Berry arranged for me to give a talk for our British members at the Polytechnic of Central London. While in London, Berry and I looked into the possibility of holding a conference at the University of London. I decided the Society wasn't quite ready for such an undertaking, but I hope that someday it will be.

Planning the 1975 Conference

While Hopkins handled most chapter matters, I continued to be involved in the New York City chapter. So when the new president of the New York chapter, Brian Quickstad, was visiting Washington in 1972, he invited me to lunch at the University Club. Quickstad said there was someone he thought I should meet. The "someone" turned out to be Graham T.T. Molitor, a lawyer who acted as the Washington representative of the General Mills Corporation.

Molitor later became research director of the 1973 White House Conference on the Industrial World Ahead, and he persuaded me to join the committee he assembled to help plan the conference. Participating in the preparation of the White House conference proved interesting in terms of the people I met and gave me my first opportunity to see President Richard Nixon. (I never got to see him during the two months that I worked on the White House staff!) I also got to see Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans, who introduced Nixon at the concluding session of the conference, as well as Attorney General John Mitchell, both of whom were later indicted in the Watergate scandal.

But the most valuable part of working on the White House Conference was getting to know Graham Molitor.

Molitor had attended the Society's first conference in 1971 and had a vast knowledge of the Washington policy-making community. So in 1974, when I was looking for leadership for the Society's 1975 conference, I persuaded him to become chairman.

Soon afterwards, I enlisted Victor R. Ferkiss, a Georgetown University professor of government, to be the program chairman for the conference. I had gotten to know Ferkiss when he gave a talk to our Washington chapter on his book, *The Future of Technological Civilization*.



Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, former vice president of the United States, addresses a conference session on the world food situation. Sitting beside Humphrey is Jean Mayer, a Tufts University professor of nutrition with a worldwide reputation.

To support Molitor and Ferkiss, I reassigned Nancy McLane, who had been working on the Energy Forum, to become staff coordinator for the 1975 conference. To help her, I hired Suzanne Seitz, wife of a State Department official, Raymond Seitz, who later became the U.S. ambassador to Great Britain.

The conference committee's first task was to choose a theme for the meeting. That seemed to me like a simple enough task, but it took us four long meetings to come up with seven words: "The Next 25 Years: Crisis and Opportunity."

But the speed of planning soon picked up, thanks in large measure to Nancy McLane, who turned out to be a tireless worker and unbelievably efficient at administrative tasks. She was, however, temperamental and ruthless in pushing her co-workers to greater efforts.

At one point, Nancy became so exasperated with Peter Zuckerman and me for not doing what she thought we ought to do that she angrily resigned. To make matters worse, Suzanne decided to join Nancy's "strike," and then the third member of the conference staff, Jan Carson, felt she had to quit out of solidarity with the others.

So, suddenly, I faced a full-blown strike!

I was furious, but I couldn't decide who I was angriest at: Was it Nancy for quitting in a fit of pique and starting the to-do? Or was it Suzanne for frivolously deciding to turn Nancy's resignation into an employee walkout? Or was it Jan, who was betraying our years of friendship by siding with the other women?

But circumstances dictated that I had better settle the strike quickly if our conference planning was to remain on track. So I swallowed my anger and pacified the



Roy Mason, architecture editor of *THE FUTURIST*, works on a film about the future, which had its premiere during the Society's 1975 conference. With Mason is his partner, Marc Chinoy.



Senator Edward M. Kennedy (left) spoke at a 1975 conference luncheon. Sitting with him is Michael Michaelis, one of the World Future Society's first Board members.

strikers. Within a few days, all three women were back working as hard as ever.

As speakers for the conference, the planning committee recruited almost every well-known personage in futuring as well as seven members of the United States Congress, including senators Edward M. Kennedy, Hubert H. Humphrey, and John C. Culver.

I was a long-time admirer of Senator Humphrey, who had served as vice president under Lyndon Johnson and later became one of the first people to join the World Future Society. Senator Culver was also a member of the Society and was actively pushing a futurist agenda in Congress. But "Teddy" Kennedy was the biggest star in terms of popular interest. The martyrdom of his brothers, John and Robert, had made Teddy a living legend. The mantle of the legendary Kennedy clan rested on his shoulders, and there was talk of him becoming the next Kennedy to run for president.

Molitor, who was used to dealing with prominent politicians, was not so impressed by Kennedy or the other politicians we recruited. Instead, he gloried in his success at recruiting distinguished futurists, and I must say that I rejoiced that we had secured Al Toffler and Harvard sociologist Daniel Bell, both of whom had missed our first conference.

Bell had chaired the Commission on the Year 2000, which helped inspire the creation of the World Future Society, and had written impressive books, like *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1967). He had served on Bertrand de Jouvenel's pioneering *Futuribles* project in the early 1960s and ranked as one of America's most prominent intellectuals.

A World's Fair of Ideas

About 2,000 people attended our 1975 conference—far more than we had at either of our previous conferences. The extraordinary turnout could be attributed

partly to the rise in our membership, our more effective promotion of the meeting, and the richness of the conference program. We had so much going on that I began thinking of a Society conference as a "world's fair of ideas." The biggest problem for attendees was that many people, including myself, felt frustrated that we could not be in a dozen places at once.

Among the special features at the 1975 conference was an innovative film presentation on the future that Roy Mason, the architecture editor of *THE FUTURIST*, had developed with Marc Chinoy. There was also a "conference within a conference"—a "Syncon" run by our Board member Barbara Hubbard and her colleagues John Whiteside and Jerry Glenn. A Syncon was a unique method of conferencing that was designed for participants to gradually work toward a "synergistic convergence" of their thinking.

We also had another teacher's workshop, as well as a variety of training courses for futurists. These events offered more opportunities for our members to interact and also provided some additional revenue for the Society—not to mention some impecunious educators who needed a way to pay their travel expenses to the conference.

The conference was a considerable success, and not just in member satisfaction, I'm happy to say. This time we were able to pay our bills in a timely fashion.

Note: This concludes the first portion of Edward Cornish's memoirs; he will continue the series in 2008. □



About the Author

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