

MY TERM

Winfred P. Lehmann  
Department of Linguistics  
The University of Texas  
Austin, Texas 78712

My term came at the time of the New York World Fair. The Association, still of MT as well as CL, was trying to crash the club that shared profits from the annual meetings of AFIPS. These were producing something over \$20,000, a sum which in those days would do more than pay a fraction of one's annual overhead on an NSF grant. ACM of course was grabbing the bulk of this, but IEEE wasn't doing badly, to judge by the magnificence of its journal. I attended the pow-wows of the powers national and international. In spite of our run-down heels, they treated me courteously. Among other activities we journeyed out for a preview of the World Fair exhibits.

IBM's massive show, with a question-answer demonstration as its highlight, didn't absorb all that much attention from a group, all of whom may have shaken the hand of Seymour Cray and pondered at his hilltop. Convention memories fade after so long a time. I remember best a conversation from a representative from Japan. He expressed great wonder at all things and beings American. The head of our computation center was a tall tennis-buff. When I gave my new friend the name his response was: "Oh the great ...?" I still haven't reconciled the possible interpretations on his use of the adjective.

A couple of the more prominent members of the hardware crowd offered me a ride back to town after our group had paid its respects to a few more pavilions of the Fair. When we located their car it turned out to be an old four-door Buick, barely hanging together. The back seat was clogged with computer parts, an overflow from the trunk; I made a bit of room for myself among the pirated splendors and listened to the hopeful chatter on the wonders of the new world, hoping both the Buick and the absorbed driver would preserve me for it.

Thanks to a successful outcome of the ride no doubt, I received issues of the elegant IEEE journal for a few years. The Association did get a cut out of the AFIPS pot, as I recall, but since it was distributed in accordance with membership, our 600 didn't stack up too well against the 20,000 of ACM.

The rest of my year was more routine.