

On arriving at one of the Hilton Hotels in New York on the evening of Christmas Day 1967, a large queue at the check-in counter greeted me, all scientists coming to the AAAS Meeting. Only one of the largest hotels in New York could provide not only the many lecture rooms and halls for the meetings, but also the huge demand for hotel rooms for the visitors from all over America. It is a brilliant, and the only convenient, solution by the AAAS organisers, to combine bed-rooming, restaurants and lecture-facilities in a single building. A simple ride, in the always overcrowded elevator, allows a rapid change from listening-work in one place to refreshment or writing-work in another.

After a brief unpacking in my room, first priority always is the Press Badge. This one receives, after due accreditation, in the suite reserved for the Press where all possible additional facilities, like typewriters, telephones, fax machines and photocopyers are available. Laptop PCs are standard equipment now, but were not in 1967. Many lecturers, having no doubt learnt from experience, now provide either abstracts or full texts of their presentations in the Press Room for the benefit of the many hundred representatives of the various media. Piles of luscious publications from industrial companies are also available there from those who are in one way or another concerned with the Meeting, or in the case of a the lecturer representing a commercial firm.

Innumerable voluntary organisations, scientific and otherwise, prepare colourful sheets of paper with advertisements and with them and liberally decorate walls, columns and tables with these, until they eventually land on the floor. This gives many rooms a very pleasant and bright, though rather untidy, aspect. Every night the hotel staff clean up, so each morning presents a different, but ever new work of art to the beholder—if he has the time to look!

Quite separately, mostly deep down in the sub-basement, is the Exhibition Hall where about half the space is devoted to wall charts, explaining single pieces of research by junior scientists for comment or criticism from those inclined to show-off their own knowledge. The rest of the basement is devoted to the advertisement stands of publishers, anxious to sell and also to buy the works of authors. Laboratory equipment finds room on other stands.

I have even seen works of art in these Halls, showing for example science fiction paintings of spacecraft on new planets or sculptures inspired by mathematics. One set of sculpture I liked so much that I invited the sculptor to write a brief article about his work and published it, with photographs, in *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, when I was editing the Journal. There can be no doubt that a AAAS Meeting is inspiring for scientists of all disciplines, if they are willing to open their minds. [See also Titles 202-204]