

The second novel in Charles Ingrid's *The Marked Man Omnibus* is entitled *The Last Recall*. In one scene a young woman, who is a member of the technologically advanced portion of the remnant of civilization that survived the global catastrophe caused by a comet colliding with the earth, is sitting in her chair reading a report. She can't understand why she feels so tired. Then she recalls that she had left her chair on relax mode. She switches the chair into work mode and at once she begins to feel invigorated.

Chairs seem to reflect the nature of a civilization in the way other objects cannot. They have been with us since the beginnings of our civilization and there is no reason to think they will disappear in any future society.

Our society seems to put a premium on using technology to produce comfortable chairs. Therefore, it seems odd that the Willowbrook Mall should have, perhaps, the most uncomfortable benches ever made. They are made of a solid sheet of metal about 1 inch thick and curved into the shape of a bench. Not only do they provide far less cushioning than the hardest wooden bench, the metal conducts heat away from your

body much more efficiently than if you were sitting on a stone.

It has often been noted that church pews are very austere and uncomfortable. The explanation for this was that churches were focused on the spiritual side of man. Christianity didn't have a high regard for the material or sensual side of human nature. It is odd that the Willowbrook Mall, which is devoted to satisfying the materialistic and sensual side of human nature, would have benches that are far more uncomfortable than the pews of a church. The design of the Mall benches seems to say, you are welcomed to sit down, but for only a very short period of time.

The design of office chairs on the other hand seems to say, the wheels make these chairs efficient and the adjustability demonstrates a respect for individual differences. Unfortunately, the adjustability comes at a price. Most office chairs develop squeaks as a result of the adjustability of the back cushion. I recently bolted the back of my office chair to its seat with two large bolts. This stopped it from squeaking, but the back cushion is no longer adjustable.