

PROSPECTUS 10

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PROSPECTUS is the newsletter of the Fantasy and Science Fiction Society of Columbia University, and is published irregularly. For information about the Society and its activities, contact the officers:

Grand Marshal: Eli Cohen, 601 Furnald, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027
663-4653

Petit Marshal: Ron Bleker, 3554 De Kalb Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10467

Acting Seneschal: April Khilstrom, 479 Reid, Barnard College, New York, N.Y. 10027

Well, I did say this was published irregularly. But perhaps three months is a bit too long to go without a newsletter. To make up for lost time, I'm planning to put out PROSPECTUS every two weeks, in some form or another, until the end of the semester. Volunteers for typing and contributing will be gratefully welcomed. This is the last issue that will go to non-dues paying members (dues are \$1.00, and entitle you to benefits too exalted to blaspheme by an attempt to describe them in a few short words) -- so if you have an X next to your name, you're in trouble.

Before I forget: This weekend (April 10-12) is LUNACON, a science fiction convention in the heart of New York City. The LUNACON has become the largest regional convention on the East Coast, with more than 800 people attending last year. Most of the fans and writers in the East will be there (e.g. Isaac Asimov, Lester del Rey, Robert Silverberg). If you've never been to an SF convention, this is a good chance to try it. At the Hotel McAlpin, Sixth Ave. and 34th St., starting 7 P.M. Friday, April 10th.

I would like opinions about what to do with PSFSCU. (I'd even settle for opinions as to how it should be pronounced!) It's your club, and you can have some effect on its structure. At the moment, we have a magazine and a newsletter for those of you with literary or artistic pretensions (though very few of you have taken advantage of these outlets), and meetings every Thursday night for those who want to rap about SF. The Thursday meetings, in case you didn't know, start at about 8:30 in the Postcrypt (that's in the basement of St. Paul's Chapel); if the Postcrypt is closed, they wind up in 601 Furnald. Attendance has been in the neighborhood of ten people most of the time, in contrast to the half a dozen members who showed up to hear Ted White speak at our last formal meeting. If anybody wants formal meetings with programs, they'll have to ask for them, and help in organizing them. I consider them abolished. It's something of a vicious circle -- you can't invite prominent speakers unless you're sure of a large attendance, but it seems impossible to get a large attendance without a reputation for prominent speakers.

Contrary to popular belief, Varik P. Thrip did not eat 54 avocados in one night. It was really his brother Yngvi. Yngvi is a louse.

PROSPECTUS is another malleable institution that is ostensibly yours; you can affect it by the type of contributions you make. And the more stuff you send in, the less you have to read my various babblings.

Book Review: THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS by Ursula K. Le Guin
Ace, 238 pp., 95¢

This is a weird and beautiful book. If Poul Anderson, Katherine McLean and Gore Vidal ever wrote a round robin, it might come out something like this. The setting could have been lifted straight out of Anderson's post-galactic empire universe, and the sexual life cycle of the people of Winter could have come out of the same mind as "The Sharing of Flesh." But Anderson-- and even Sturgeon -- wouldn't have had the muscle to handle the relationships in this book without getting sentimental. Anderson's version of the countries of Karhide and Orgoreyn would have come out bracing and Nordic; Le Guin makes them come through as stolid Mittel European with touches of everywhere. Someone should check out her passport very carefully.

By now reviews of TLHOD are ankle-deep, so for those of you who still haven't read it, but have heard a lot about it, I just want to mention a few of the many things this book has. It has some political intrigue that puts the overblown Byzantine skulduggery of DUNE back in the Arabian Nights where it belongs. It has a religion that just might shake a few Water Brothers out of their nests. It has a love story of sorts that hurts. It has a death camp. It has an epic 800-mile trek across a glacier continent that reads like it was written by someone who has spent some time in a tent. It has Genly Ai, the passive Ekumen envoy to Winter, who comes prepared to be a martyr if he must -- and almost gets to be one. And it has Therem Hath rem ir Estraven, who has more of what constitutes manhood going for him when he is neuter than Jack Barron has on his most horny Wednesday night. It's one part "A Man for All Seasons," one part "Lawrence of Arabia," and one part "Darkness at Noon," all drenched with snow. Read it and Hugo it.

SanD Meschkow

I refuse to make any predictions about AKOS anymore. Nevertheless, as I write this, we have the cover printed and Janet is in the next room typing up final copy. There is an infinitesimal, but finite, chance that it will be ready by LUNACON. Remember: AKOS is free to dues-paying members.

AKOS is KAOS spelled sideways

THE ADVENTURES OF GRAYSON GREENSWARD

The planet Ch'ana was populated by siamese-twin Buddhist fanatics, and rumors were spreading that its leaders were fomenting violent revolution among its neighbors. This despite the fact that most of the neighboring populations felt sorry for the Ch'anans, who were all afflicted with a pronounced harelip. Grayson Greensward was sent to investigate. He discovered that their problem involved a peculiar neurosis caused by the fact that no marriage lasted longer than two years. They were all constantly frenetic, but Greensward decided that they were harmless. They would never get anywhere. His report when he returned was simply that there was nothing to fear, they were just "cleft-om maniacs."

Yarik P. Thrip
(with thanks to Jon Singer)

Spelling by Elie Coen
Typos b y Yarik T. Phirp