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Interview with leading futurist Andy Hines

Interview conducted by Art Shostak

1) As there is only one graduate program in the USA in futuristics (Peter Bishop's), how can you be optimistic about the near-future of the study of the future in the USA?

Hines: What's that saying, "don't quite before the miracle happens"? Regent U has a foresight masters. And Notre Dame has a mandatory futures class for all undergrads, I believe. Hawaii program is still going. Our Houston week-long certificate program is doing very well. Singularity U, while note futures, shows that futures topics can draw popular interest. Individual futures courses continue to spring up here and there. But all that is not exactly grounds for optimism.

2) How might the Academy be drawn to take the study of future(s) more seriously?

Hines: I guess maybe a "celebrity" business person or large organization gave a support, i.e., money to start a program. I read somewhere, for example, that the founder of E-Bay was interested in foresight.

3) How can minorities, now grievously under-represented in the Futures field (as among attendees at WFS Annual meetings, authors of futures articles or books, etc.) be encouraged to participate and contribute their distinctive ideas?

Hines: I'm not sure anyone can be encouraged to participate and contribute. There are some small-scale efforts to try and reach K-12. We run a summer camp for kids, we have a teacher training for how to futurize the curriculum. But these are not enough to move the needle.

4) Where around the globe do you see Futures well-developed, and/or rapidly coming of age? Why there, and, what can futurists in the USA "import" in the way of transferable ideas to help the field here?

Hines: Ah, hmmm, not aware of any area that is well-developed.

5) What do you MOST wish futurists understood about the subject that they may not grasp?

Hines: How great it would be to have an academic research base to help build the field.

6) *What are the major mistakes far too many futurists make – and how might this situation be set right?*

Hines: I'm not sure why we want to pick on futurists. I guess you could say we could do a better job of promoting ourselves as a field.

7) *What about the planet's next 25 years gives you most hope? Most anxiety?*

Hines: Values shifts are moving in a direction that suggests we'll be more capable of handling the major "sustainability-related" issues ahead.