

# How does the world work, scientifically speaking that is

*How the World Works* is an appropriate theme for this week's selection of science books, all of which you'll find at the Milton Public Library.

It also happens to be the title of Boyce Rensberger's guide to science's greatest discoveries.

Mr. Rensberger lists 24 major theories he believes the average person should know about. I can see my homework is cut out for me.

Fortunately, Mr. Rensberger keeps his explanations brief and simple. The larger second part of his book is devoted to defining scientific terms and mentioning scientists in terms of their important findings.

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Nathan Spielberg and Bryon D. Anderson shorten that list of must-knows into their *Seven Ideas That Shook the Universe*. Copernican astronomy and quantum theory are among the seven physics themes that form the foundation of our understanding of the physical world.

While we are on the subject of

shaking the universe, David Ritchie presents a scary scenario of the Big One that will hit Los Angeles within the next 50 years.

He calls it *Superquake* and this earthquake will be much more devastating than the 1906 San Francisco earthquake because of our greater dependency on technology. Forget about toppled buildings and broken roads.

We'll be looking at the disruption of transportation and communication, the breakdown of medical services, the destruction of water resources, the spilling of toxic chemicals and volatile fuels and the leakage of radioactive materials.

*The Ring of Truth* by Phillip and Phylis Morrison is a companion to the PBS television series.

The Morrises are less interested in what we have learned about the universe than in how we go in search of answers. How did we first learn to chart the world? How did we find out that the Mediterranean was once a desert?

Paul Brodeur wants to reveal truths too, but of a more specific nature. Mr. Brodeur was one of the first to alert us to the dangers of asbestos and microwave radiation. In *Currents of Death* he is warning us against the tragic effects of our continuous exposure to low-level, alternating-cur-

rent, electromagnetic fields. Anyone who regularly sits in front of a word processor, lives near a power line works as an electrician or telephone lineman, or even sleeps under an electric blanket should read this book.

Fortunately, there are others who choose to look at the positive aspects of our world.

In *The Unfinished Universe*, Louise B. Young puts forth the argument that order is actually increasing in our universe, or as the Beatles would have sung it, "It's getting better all the time". Ms Young bases her optimistic philosophy on scientific evidence.

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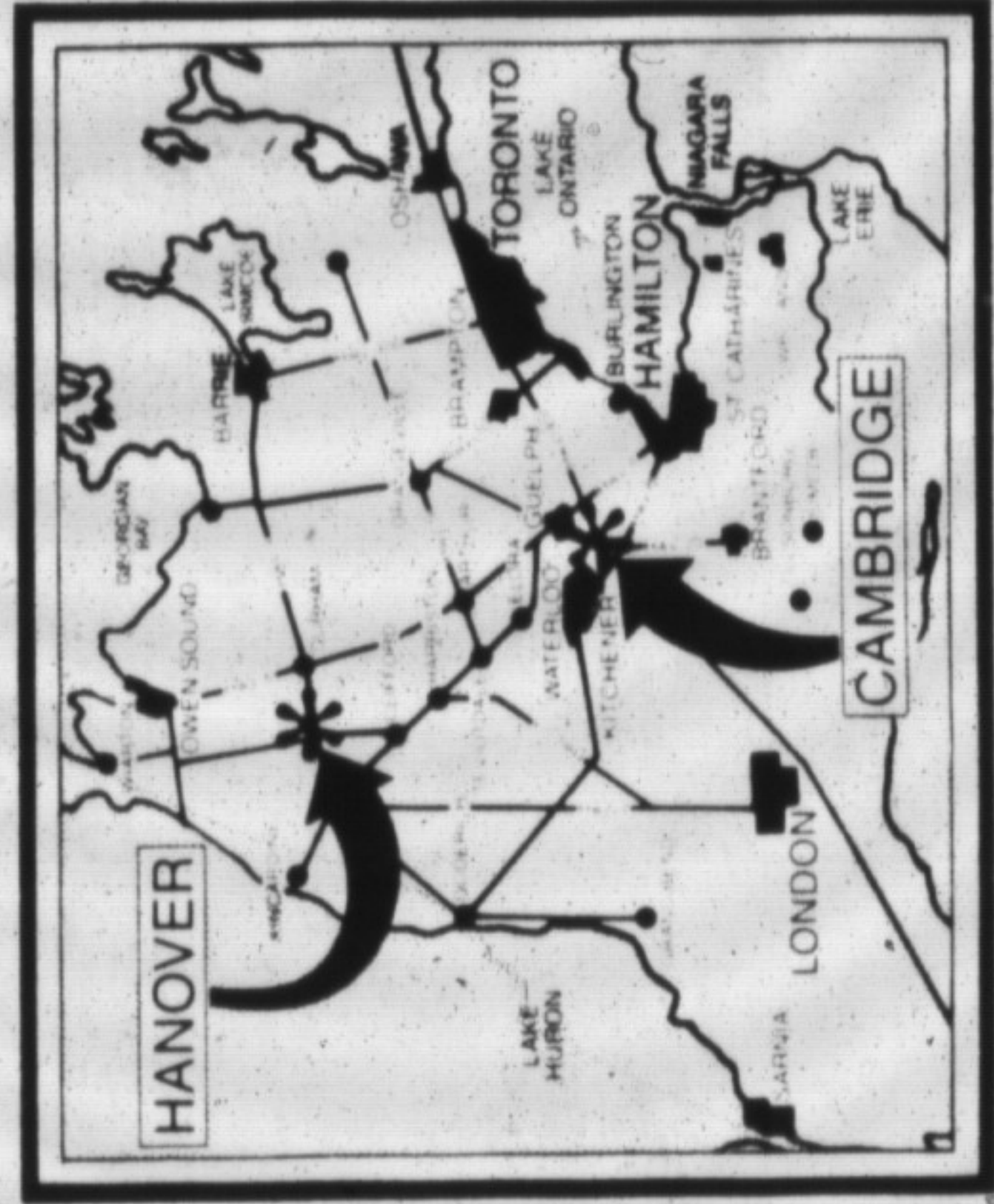
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