Bet You Missed It-Rolling Stone and Peter Drucker

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How Many Yo-Yo Tricks Can You Do In a Minute? by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)

The Guinness Book of World Records only dates to 1955. Does that surprise you? Probably because it had such an antique format it seemed much older. Or are we confusing it with Ripley's Believe It or Not? The Guinness frothy stout family started its famous book after an argument over whether the grouse or the golden plover was the fastest bird. Now in an attempt to reconnect with the core youth readership it will be full of color photos and take a checkier tone with such entries as “biggest divorce settlement.” And it's on the Fox Network as “Guinness World Records: Primetime” where it shows such important teenage accomplishments as a man who crammed 151 plastic straws in his mouth. 30,000 world records are on file and 1,800 wannabes propose per month. See — Charles Goldsmith, “World’s Most Radical Face Lift?,” The Wall Street Journal, p.B1, July 30, 1999.

Big Brother à la Mode by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)

Hyper-liberal Bill Greider, editor of Rolling Stone, suddenly finds a reason to dislike Clinton/Gore. They’re putting an initial $1.5 billion behind controlling the Internet in the name of national defense — even though there’s yet to be an information system attack by a terrorist group. And in fact there’s no danger. Computer interfaces are totally chaotic. Incompatible software programs abound, and there’s no big interconnected grid to destroy. The banking industry has dealt with hackers for decades. Bankers are so good at defense, only an insid is has a chance, and he’s usually nabbed before he exits the building. No, this is really about underemployed and a big need by authority for control. “The emerging digital world confuses people in authority because it madly disassembles their centralized systems and their confidence that they’re on top of things.” See — William Greider, “The Cyberscare of ‘99,” Rolling Stone, p.51, Aug. 19, 1999.

Flexible Feudalism by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)

The ever-stimulating Peter Drucker speculates that feudalism wasn’t rigidly organized from top to bottom, but actually was a competing pluralistic hive of independent units. It took the rise of the nation state from the 1600s to 1800s to jam everyone into a top-down state-managed structure. Even the church got broken in Europe through state support and just became a branch of the civil service. Carried to a moribund extreme under communism, the individual parts of society ceased to function — not just effectively but at all. Now we enter a new age of pluralism with autonomous institutions — not just traditional ones like universities and labor unions — but particularly transnational businesses — each with its own interests all out there stirring around. See — Peter Drucker, “The Rise, Fall and Return of Pluralism,” The Wall Street Journal, p.A22, June 1, 1999.

Mass Seduction by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)

Before Tina Brown came to the New Yorker, it was a “literary culture” that didn’t use its weekly frequency. It performed as a monthly or even a quarterly and thus stacked up unread beside the bed. She made certain there were two hot-topic articles per issue — things that everyone was talking about. She says any magazine should be so distinctive you could throw it on the floor at any page and instantly recognize the identity. The riskiest thing she did was put Demi Moore on the cover of Vanity Fair pregnant. See — Wendy Bounds and Carolynn Nymowitz, “Finding the ‘Seduction Point’,” The Wall Street Journal, p.B1, July 26, 1999.

Yellow Journalism Redux by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)

In 1830s New York, six-cent partisan newspapers owned by political parties were upstaged by poopy papers that relied on sales and advertising. By the 1890s they had become the stodgy and complacent New York Times, Herald Tribune and Sun. Along came Pulitzer and Hearst with their “Yellow Journalism.” Now we have the often inaccurate alternative news sources on the Internet which spawned Matt Drudge on ABC who admits to only 30% accuracy. See — David T.Z. Mindich, “The New New Journalism,” The Wall Street Journal, p.A18, July 15, 1999.

Book Shop Gutenbergs by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)

Lagging badly in Web bookelling, Borders has signed on with Sprout, Inc. to digitally produce out-of-print books right there in the store (with the color cover no less!) at a normal book price. It’s hoped this will cut down on the massive “forecasting inefficiency” in the book business and reduce those mammoth returns. Sprout was a b-school competition business plan that leased the already existing technology from On Demand Machine Corp. Naturally Sprout wanted to line up big chain buyers, but the small independent bookstore is expected to be the biggest benefactor. See — Rodney Ho, “Borders to Try A New Weapon: Printing Books Inside Its Stores,” The Wall Street Journal, p.B1, June 1, 1999.

Undercover at the Nudist B-and-B by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)

Those aggressively downmarket British tabloids have been roundly criticized for invasion of privacy, rumor-mongering, checkbook journalism and abusing the royal family. Now they are pushing the envelope by manufacturing news in the form of undercover sting operations. They have “entrapped” celebrities and a cabinet minister’s son in drug deals, a rugby hero in sex hijinks and confessions and owners of a nudist bed-and-breakfast in group sex for hire. And of course they use that legal defense of “acting in the public interest.” See — Matthew Rose, “No Citizen Is Safe From Crime-Busters At British Tabloids,” The Wall Street Journal, p.A1, Aug. 2, 1999.
Rumors
from page 14

which continues to fascinate readers of all
ages. So we were excited to learn about the
new book by Lynne Rienner Publishers (will
we ever see you in Charleston again, Lynne?)
called the Siege at Hue by former U.S. Army
Captain George W. Smith, who was there.

Speaking of the College of Charleston,
we have been trying to get access over the
Web to the Philosopher's Index so I was
gratified to learn that PI will soon be available
in electronic format exclusively from
SilverPlatter Information. A bibliogra-
phic database with author abstracts, The
Philosopher's Index covers scholarly re-
search in the fifteen fields of philosophy
published in journals and books since 1940
and will be offered via the Internet, Hard
Disk, and CD-ROM. Philosopher's Index
is published by the Philosopher's Informa-
tion Center of Bowling Green, Ohio,
whose director is Richard H. Lineback.
www.silverplatter.com

Heard from Clara-Mae Chittum
the other day. She is still one of my very favorite
people. Here is her new address and email:
C.M. Chittum/van der Velden, (Unilever)
Colworth House, Dept. ICTU, Sharnbrook,
Bedfordshire MK44 2LQ, United Kingdom
<ruudil@flashmail.com>.

Can't Hide on the Net
by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)

As anyone ought to know by
now, your trail on the Web can be
traced. Those who thought the
laws of libel didn't apply are
learning the hard way. HealthSouth CEO Richard
Scrushy launched cyberstealths
on a particularly scurrilous anony-
mous critic and sued him for defama-
tion. Providers of message-
boards are liable only if they at-
tempt to control what is posted
under the theory that a distribu-
tor is not the same thing as a pub-
lisher. The anonymous critic is the
publisher. Needless to say, these
cybercritics of corporate America
see this as intimidation and a First
Amendment issue. Another sued
critic is demanding company data
that will prove she spoke the truth.
And some argue the stock chaff
takes stock opinions out of the
cozy control of Wall Street.
Some prudent stock analysts on
the Street themselves monitor the
bulletin boards for data that
might not appear in company
reports. See — Michael Moss,
CEO Exposes, Sues Anon-
mous Online Critics."The Wall
Street Journal," p.B1, July 7,
1999.

Archival Death
by Bruce Strauch (the Citadel)

The popular press has sud-
denly discovered what the library
industry has long been talking
about. Electronic media is fragile
and much of it won't last longer
than a decade. Hardware and soft-
ware needed to read it go rapidly
off the market. No one has an
answer for it except that impossible
first step — separate the inconse-
quential from the important. See —
Arlyn Tobias Gajahan, "His-
tory: We're Losing It," Newsweek,

NISO Standards
The Serials Toolkit

- Z39.71 Holdings Statements
  for Bibliographic Items
- Z39.9 International Standard
  Serial Numbering (ISSN)
- Z39.56 Serial Item and
  Contribution Identifier (SICI)
- Z39.14 Guidelines for
  Abstracts
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The Next Step?
by Rick Heldrich (College of Charleston)

While not a done deed, the
idea in this report should catch
your attention. The director of the
National Institutes of Health
(NIH), Dr. Harold Varmus, sup-
ports the concept of establishing a
Web-based site for biomedical
papers. NIH has the resources and
prestige to make the Web the pre-
mier choice for dissemination.
But potential antagonists to this
project, including societal and
commercial publishers, have sub-
stantial investments in traditional
printed dissemination of scientific
data which would be at risk if the
NIH dream materializes. The
NIH initiative, in its early plan-
ning stage, is modeled after the
successful efforts of physicists
and astronomers who make use of
a Los Alamos e-print Web-based
structure. Of course, NIH, is not
alone. Discussion by the Euro-
pean Molecular Biology Labora-
tory about possible Web
dissemination is also taking place.
For greater detail and commen-
tary on pros and cons of the ideas,
check out this news item in Sci-
ence. See — Eliot Marshall,
"NIH Weighs Bold Plan for
Online PrePrint Publishing," Sci-
ence, vol. 283, March 12, 1999,
p. 1610.

Editor's note: In case this
looks familiar, another intrepid
Bet You Missed It sleuth, Pam
Rose, covered this same article
in ATG, June, 1999, p. 70. I fig-
ure when an end user and a li-
brarian BOTH feature the same
article, we should really pay atten-
tion!—Yr. Ed.

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<http://www.against-the-grain.com> 71