Future Dates for Charleston Conferences
Reading While Wall Street Burns
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

The now Bloomberg-owned Business Week gives us a list of five top novels about “banking culture” as appropriate reading for the financial meltdown: (1) F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby; (2) Tom Wolfe, Bonfire of the Vanities; (3) Bret Easton Ellis, American Psycho; (4) Kate Jennings, Moral Hazard; (5) Adam Haslett, Union Atlantic.


DYing Like Blockbuster
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Estimates have eBooks rising to 20-25% of the market by 2010, and Barnes & Noble is taking the threat seriously. Already hammered by online booksellers’ price-cutting, the famous bricks-and-mortar bookstore then got a one-two punch from Amazon’s Kindle and Apple’s iPad.

Publishers are suddenly convinced eBooks are for real, and have established an agency model with them getting 70% and the eBook sellers as their agent 30%. Barnes & Noble’s revenue dropped 45% in 2009, and its stock value is half of what it was in 2004. eBooks are selling for less than half the price of a hardcover.

For those of us who still love to hold books, brother of B & N founder Steve Riggio promises they aren’t going away. But the superstores are now selling baby blankets, Art Deco flight clocks, stationery, and adult games like Risk and Stratego. And they’re going to experiment with consumer electronics.


Steve Jobs’ Marketing Coup
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Apple’s iPads and iPhones will not carry pornography apps in the App Store. This has outraged at least one blogger who engaged in a testy exchange about his notions of freedom. Jobs replied he was doing it for parents of children. Not to mention all the corporatons that will see this as a solution to a major problem. And perhaps even our dear federal government, where the employees seem to log so much time with Internet smut.


TO FORGE OR NOT TO FORGE
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

In 1795, the 19-year-old Henry Ireland worked as a drudge in a lawyer’s office in London. Longing for respect from his pompous, antiquity-obsessed father, he used old paper and seals from legal documents to forge first letters from Shakespeare, then fragments of plays, and finally an entire play Vortigern. James Boswell and other worthies were completely fooled.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan scented a forgery and thought the play pretty lousy. But he had big debts from expanding the Drury Lane Theater and knew a discovered Shakespeare would fill the house nightly. The play bombed, and Henry ‘fessed up. But his father refused to believe his dunce of a son could have pulled such a hoax and went to his grave insisting it was all genuine.