Future Conference Dates
FOR PROFITS IN THE CROSSHAIRS
by Bruce Strauch  (The Citadel)

The Department of Ed is not pleased with the low rate of loan repayment by college students and has focused in particular on for-profit colleges of Strayer, U of Phoenix and that ilk. A proposed rule would strip the schools of federal funding if the debt repayment rate does not exceed 45%.

The money-losing Washington Post owns the money-making Kaplan, which is not just the familiar test prep courses but an online university like Phoenix. Its repayment rate is 28%. The Post’s stock has dropped 31% over the past year, and this will not be helpful for them.

And what will DC bureaucrats read if the Post goes?


SCORN NOT THE TV WRITER
by Bruce Strauch  (The Citadel)

TV writers are churning out 52-page scripts every eight days and are ravenous for material. With that kind of workflow, writers rule on TV shows, and meddling producers and directors can’t interfere.

Writers not only get even with childhood bullies and other people who have ticked them off, but can kill off an actor’s part seemingly with impunity. Ed O’Neill (Al Bundy) of “Married with Children” avows crossing a TV writer is suicide. This was spoofed on “Friends” with Joey getting a soap opera gig, irritating the writer, and suddenly his character falls down an elevator shaft and is eliminated.

Even big time actors are not bullet-proof. Nicollette Sheridan died a gruesome death on “Desperate Housewives.” “Fantasy Island’s” Hervé Villechaize character falls down an elevator shaft and is eliminated. Joey getting a soap opera gig, irritating the writer, and suddenly his character falls down an elevator shaft and is eliminated. This was spoofed on “Friends” with Joey getting a soap opera gig, irritating the writer, and suddenly his character falls down an elevator shaft and is eliminated.

And even big time actors are not bullet-proof. Nicollette Sheridan died a gruesome death on “Desperate Housewives.” “Fantasy Island’s” Hervé Villechaize was called into Aaron Spelling’s office and found the waiting room was filled with other little folk who could shout “The plane! The plane!” Aaron was tired of his raise demands.


WHAT? THE LIBRARY DOESN’T WANT THOSE OLD BOOKS IN YOUR OFFICE
by Bruce Strauch  (The Citadel)

To discard books or not? Sir John Squire’s 1919 essay “On Destroying Books” notes that “books may not have as many lives as a cat, but they certainly die hard, and it is sometimes difficult to find a scaffold for them.” The author threw a sack of inferior poetry books off Chelsea Bridge into the Thames.

Others think no book should be destroyed. Future scholars may wish to study the inferior works of the past.

When the library turns down your gift, there’s always Books for Africa and Books for Soldiers.


WHEN EVEN THE FRENCH SPEAK ENGLISH
by Bruce Strauch  (The Citadel)

Americans have always been lambasted for not knowing other languages than English. And the failing is getting worse, mainly because beginning the study of a language in the 9th or 10th grade pretty much guarantees you will never master it.

On the other hand, English has won. Ben Wildavsky’s The Great Brain Race describes English as the language of international exchange in commerce and intellectual and scientific matters. The Chinese and the Indians are obsessed with learning English.

And there’s the prediction that adequate machine translations “will almost certainly be available as phone apps within a decade.” You’ll walk down a street in Cairo talking English into the phone and have it come out Egyptian.


Rumors
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(p.20), Paul Needham and Peter Shepherd (p.26), and Henk Moed (p.34), contribute papers on the issue of statistics.

Future Dates for Charleston Conferences

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Speaking of the Glasgow Fiesole Retreat, the tartan-wearing Derek Law (I still remember his Dickensian “best of times, worst of times” keynote back in November of 2008) was our gracious host and a good time was had by all. In fact I just got an email from Derek who was at home watching the diamond Jubilee of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo ceremony complete with the Pipes and Drums of the Citadel! Shucks! Wish I could have been there. http://www.edintattoo.co.uk/

There are two op eds in this issue of ATG. Why don’t you send yours in for the Charleston Conference issue or any other issue for that matter? (Steve (see above) sent his from the ATG Website!) The lovely Elaine Robbins (coincidentally of the Citadel Library) has written the second op ed about Trend Overload (p.40). This is a very real problem continued on page 32