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Bet You Missed It

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Against the Grain

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Bet You Missed It

Compiled by **Katina Strauch** with a LOT of help from her friends
— Hey, does anybody out there want to help with this on a regular basis???

Maxwell — Mighty Maxwell //
"Media Mogul Maxwell Reveled in Growth, Now Must Scale Back," in *The Wall Street Journal* for September 13, 1991, p. 1.

Hmmm... In his *Playboy* interview reported in September's *Against the Grain*, Robert Maxwell was asked what he was like to work for. In this article, there seem to be descriptions of a man who is "mercurial", "unpredictable", and, for many, hard to get along with. Anyway, come October 1992 Maxwell Communications "has to come up with a \$750 million payment of principal." And those financial gurus out there are speculating. They thought something was wrong when Maxwell sold off "his publishing gem" Pergamon Press PLC which "deprived Maxwell Communications of the 20% of its profit that Pergamon had always provided . . . and a crucial contributor to cash flow [and] . . . more than 200 million pounds in annual sales [that] came up front, in the form of subscriptions." Talk is that Maxwell may sell *Collier's Encyclopedia* and the Marquis Who's Who Reference books, among other things, or spin off his U.S. businesses into a separate public company. As always, time will tell.

Lyman Newlin
(Book Trade Counsellor)

****Editor's note:** See Rumors, this issue (p.36). In a press release dated October 7, 1991, Reed Publishing announced the acquisition of the Macmillan directories business. **

More on Maxwell/ "Mr. Maxwell's Nightmare," by Roger Cowe, in *The Manchester Guardian Weekly*, October 6, 1991, page 6.

This article reports on the fact that the "[i]ndependent directors of Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) have turned down an offer from Robert Maxwell to buy the *European*, his privately-owned weekly newspaper which is believed to be losing more than 500,000 pounds on each issue." Debt is clearly a problem, that and the fact that the recession has hit, among other things. This spring apparently Maxwell "floated" half of MGN on the Stock Exchange, leaving himself with 51% of the shares, but there is speculation that selling more may be necessary. In the United States, Maxwell apparently has "abandoned" floating "a separate U.S. company . . . in favour of piecemeal asset sales." Mr. Maxwell, however, remains optimistic.

Lyman Newlin
(Book Trade Counsellor)

****The President of the College of Charleston recently sent our Collection Development Department a copy of the *European* which had been sent to him as a sample issue. Very interesting.****

Fraud's the Word //
"Confronting Scientific Fraud," by Eugene Dong, in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, for October 9, 1991, p. A52.

This article, by a physician/lawyer states: "The universities and institutes that make up the scientific community have an obvious conflict of interest in investigating allegations concerning their own faculty members. Their record indicates no zeal for the task." Dong goes on to suggest that a better mechanism for investigating research fraud might be the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services "or some new corps of professional scientific investigators" instead of universities themselves or the NIH. Dong goes on to propose that "the most important step a university can take is to implement the basic principles of open research, putting policies in place assuring that any interested person may have access to the data underlying published research."

Rick Heldrich
(College of Charleston)

A Computer is not a Commuter
— "Senate Approves Big Computer Link for Colleges, Labs," by Scott Jaschik in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for September 18, 1991, pages 1 and A 32.

About a month ago, the Senate voted "to create a new national computer network that would link hundreds of universities, laboratories, and libraries and transmit more information at much faster speeds than is possible in current networks." You've heard of this before — the

new network is called the NREN, the National Research and Education Network. The principal sponsor was Senator Albert Gore (D-Tennessee). The legislation did not pass last year because of a fight over who would control the network (the House wanted NSF and the Senate wanted to leave control to the President). That's the good news. The bad news is that the NREN can be created and all that, but no money was voted to operate it. It's the states and universities that have to pay most of the money for NREN, though the bill apparently could send more than \$1 billion NREN's way over the next five years, while the House could authorize \$2.9 billion.

Rick Heldrich
(College of Charleston)

**** We note that the September, 1991 issue of *Information Technology and Libraries* has a good overview article on "The Development of the National Research and Education Network" by Roberta A. Corbin. ****

Time(s) Are Bad All Over?// "Time Warner Said to Set Staff Cuts at its Magazines," by Patrick M. Reilly in *The Wall Street Journal* for August 29, 1991, page B3.

They have to pay back debt everywhere, even the rich guys. It's sort of comforting to know. Anyway, according to this article, ad sales are down for "six of Time Warner's seven major magazines," which include *Fortune*, *Life*, and *Time*. Speculation is that there may be cuts and/or closing of small news bureaus.

Rick Heldrich
(College of Charleston)

****And *Advertising Age* has released a Special Issue, dated October 6, 1991, on "Magazines in America: A Troubled Industry Looks Ahead." ****

"The Utility of a Recommended Core List: An Examination of *Books for College Libraries*, 3rd ed. by John M. Budd in the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* for July 1991, pages 140-144.

The subject of this article — the usefulness of BCL in collection development — allows your editor to get up on one of her favorite hobby horses. In noting out that this study showed "the relative unavailability of 42.8% of the sample titles", this article points out that "perhaps future versions of BCL could be created with greater cooperation from the publishing industry, so that the potential for reprinting included but out-of-print titles can be addressed in advance of the appearance of BCL." I say, amen.

Katina Strauch
(College of Charleston)

3001//"Toward the Electronic Book by Nathaniel Lande in *Publishers Weekly* for September 20, 1991, pages 28-30.

Long time ago (I mean in another life), I read a science fiction story in which all of the world's information was in a computer and society suddenly lost the way in. Well, the proposal in this article on the electronic book reminds me of that story (I wish I remembered the author and the title). This article is by a publishing consultant who is currently dividing his time between Trinity College Dublin and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It describes Bookbank and Bookmark, "'an entirely' workable project that would be a 'landmark in publishing.'" It goes something like this. You insert a Smartcard (like a bankcard) into a vending machine and gain access to any number of books, bestsellers, reference works, etc., etc. (nothing quite goes out of print). At which point you can play (read?) the book of your choice on a "portable electronic book" which is the right size, has a perfect screen and point style, etc., etc. And report-

edly the leading American publishers like Time Warner, Simon & Schuster, Bantam Doubleday Dell, Harry Abrams, etc., have all looked at this and "show some degree of interest and are currently pondering the feasibility of the system." I figure this will really be a boon to the antiquarian book market. Any real old book (you know those traditional things that you have lying around your house or even in libraries) will become really valuable. This whole thing makes me feel old. Maybe I don't want to be alive in 3001, after all.

Katina Strauch
(College of Charleston)

Pearls Before Computers//"Plugging Along//Once Far-Fetched, Computer is Carving Out a Publishing Niche." by Adrienne Ward in *Advertising Age* for October 6, 1991 (special issue), page 28.

This piece acknowledges the impact that computers are making on magazine publishing even as we speak. Magazines like *National Geographic*, and *Time* have already done CDs — *Time* when it released its "Desert Storm: First Draft of History," and *National Geographic* which "offers CD-ROM media to complement *National Geographic*." Time Warner is also currently "working on a disc for *Sports Illustrated* on the history of the Olympics, to be released next summer." Still, the mood is mixed. Craig Cugel of Backer Spielvogel Bates, New York says "I'm not saying we're about to see the end of the paper magazine, but we will begin to see major inroads [in publishing via] the computer." Some big problems continue to be the availability price-wise of necessary equipment to the average run-of-the-mill consumer. Advertising is also a problem as it seems to take "fancy equipment" to put ads on CD.

Katina Strauch
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