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Bet You Missed It-Rolling Stone and Peter Drucker

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

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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

cheekier 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 b. 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 insider 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 **Carol 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 penny 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 80% 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 bookselling, **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 down-market British tabloids have been roundly criticized for invasion of privacy, rumor-mongering, check-book 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 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.A.1, Aug. 2, 1999.

Rumors

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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 form exclusively from **SilverPlatter Information**. A bibliographic database with author abstracts, **The Philosopher's Index** covers scholarly research 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 Information 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 <ruudf@flashmail.com>.

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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 tracked. Those who thought the laws of libel didn't apply are learning the hard way. **HealthSouth CEO Richard Scrushy** launched cybersleuths on a particularly scurrilous anonymous critic and sued him for defamation. Providers of messageboards are liable only if they attempt to control what is posted under the theory that a distributor is not the same thing as a publisher. 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 chatter 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 Anonymous Online Critics," *The Wall Street Journal*, p.B1, July 7, 1999.

Archival Death

by **Bruce Strauch** (the Citadel)

The popular press has suddenly 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 software needed to read it go rapidly

off the market. No one has an answer for it except that impossible first step — separate the inconsequential from the important. See — **Arlyn Tobias Gajilan**, "History: We're Losing It," *Newsweek*, p.47, July 12, 1999.

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**, supports the concept of establishing a Web-based site for biomedical papers. NIH has the resources and prestige to make the Web the premiere choice for dissemination. But potential antagonists to this project, including societal and commercial publishers, have substantial 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 **European Molecular Biology Laboratory** about possible Web dissemination is also taking place. For greater detail and commentary on pros and cons of the ideas, check out this news item in *Science*. See — **Eliot Marshall**, "NIH Weighs Bold Plan for Online PrePrint Publishing," *Science*, 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 figure when an end user and a librarian BOTH feature the same article, we should really pay attention!—Yr. Ed.*