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Bet You Missed It -- Press Clippings -- In the News -- Carefully Selected by Your Crack Team of News Sleuths

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Talk of the Trade from page 83

ing to market, many publishers think that publishing suffers from too little, not too much, marketing research. "I think this is pretty snooty" says **Peter Osnos**, a publisher at **Perseus Book Group**. "We need to sell more books and this may help."

World's Fastest Writer Scores Big At St Martin's

"I think people have been waiting a long time for a book like this," gushes her agent. *Describing Dirty Girls Social Club* as both "mainstream" and "speaking to this Hispanic population", the literary agent goes on to say the book "toys with the stereotype of what it means to be Latin." The author, **Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez**, wrote the book in just six (that's 6) days. Yet "the characters dance off the page" according to the editor at **St Martin's Press**. "I can see women all over the country adoring this book." Reporting on this accomplishment, the *Washington Post* seemed underwhelmed that this future blockbuster was completed in less than a week. Do the math: If **Valdes-Rodriguez** continues to write a book a week, rests on Sundays, and takes two weeks vacation a year, in just a decade or so she alone will exceed the total publishing output of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

World's Fastest Reviewer Scores Big At Amazon

Librarians quite rightly value book reviews as reliable, if not timely, resources for book selection. With over three thousand (that's 3000) reviews posted on **Amazon**, **Harriet Klausner** has to be the most prolific reader and reviewer the world has ever known. According to **Wired.com**, **Harriet** pumps out an average of two reviews a day, many of which she also posts on **AllReaders.com**. She does have a day job, as a columnist for a couple of online magazines. Imagine her life, furiously reading and writing from the minute she awakes until the darkest hours before dawn. Then, in her moment of triumph, the earth's fastest reviewer sends her literary criticism to the earth's biggest bookstore. It's possible that **Harriet** has influenced more book buying decisions than *Choice* and **Oprah** combined.

It's a Good Thing

Busy **Martha Stewart** has no time to write her autobiography, as she bakes, decorates, gardens, sews, knits, paints, collects, gathers her blue eggs and battles insider trading suspicions. Scheduled to be published in 2003, *The New York Post* reports that the "publishing date has now been put off indefinitely."


But Will They Start Paying Full Retail and Avoid Retirement in Miami Beach?

The Remnant: On the Brink of Armageddon, the latest in the blockbuster "Left Be-

hind" series, predicts that many Jews will become Christians as the Apocalypse arrives. The evangelical authors, **Timothy LeHaye** and **Jerry Jenkins**, penned *Desecration*, the first volume in the series, and topped the best-seller lists last year. In their latest work, the authors say the People of Israel will at first welcome the Antichrist, but 144,000 Jews will see the light and convert.

Even Dead Parrots Are Grateful to Celebrity Photographers

An arresting jacket photo of an author can boost a book's sales, according to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article. The Creative Director of **Little Brown** warns, "If you leave an author alone, they'll go to **Sears** and pop into a booth" to have their dust jacket picture taken. These "deer in the headlights photos"

are as passé as TV anchormen without blow dried hair. Publishers pay as much as \$3,000 to professional photographers who specialize in creating haunting pictures of deep-thinking writers. **Marion Ettlinger** is one of the most successful photographers, and her work is even sold in art galleries. The right kind of photo prompts newspapers and magazines to feature the author, and the resulting publicity can impact sales significantly. Writer **Susan Issacs** disdains this trend, complaining she has become an "ambulatory ad" for her own work. But the late **Ken Kesey** was so pleased with his jacket photo, showing him with his pet parrot on his shoulder, that when the bird died he sent a feather to the photographer. 

Bet You Missed It

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

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EL SEVERE DRIVES A HARD BARGAIN by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

Despite the 24/7 access and a break on costs over print or individually subscribed journal titles, universities such as **Cornell** and the **College of Charleston** [our very own **Katina** is quoted in this article!] and consortia in Virginia and Ohio are thinking twice about renewing contracts with **ScienceDirect**, the electronic database owned by **Elsevier Science**. Increasing costs, reduced budgets, and restrictive contractual requirements are pushing institutions to consider canceling their contracts and return to print or purchase cheaper non-**Elsevier** online titles. The collective action of libraries will be a definite factor for the publishing giant, who hopes to have 75% market penetration by the end of 2002. Still, new customers who include small colleges continue to sign on.

See — "Second Thoughts on 'Bundled' E-Journals," by **Andrea L. Foster**, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Sep. 20, 2002, p. A31 (<http://chronicle.com> Section: **Information Technology** Volume 49, Issue 4, Page A31.)

NATURE'S CHECK DIGIT

by **Pamela M. Rose** (University at Buffalo)

Nature made use of error coding systems long before your credit card company. **Donall Mac Donnell** of **Trinity College Dublin** suspected the four nucleotide bases A, T, G and C chosen out of 16 possible base combinations incorporated a tactic for minimizing the occurrence of errors in the pairing of bases. Using binary representation for each bonding site and a "check digit" for the type of nucleotide (single-ringed pyrimidine or double-ringed purine), he shows that nature banished any odd-parity nucleotides from the DNA alphabet. Essentially the A-T and G-C choices form the best pairs that are the most different from each other, thus minimizing errors.

See — "The Genome Chose Its Alphabet With Care" by **David Bradley**, in *Science*, Sep. 13, 2002, p.1791.

HAVE PH.D., WILL A-B-C

by **Pamela M. Rose** (University at Buffalo)

Just got your Ph.D. and want to work with kids? The **National Research Council** has proposed two-year \$35K per year fellowships to train scientists to use their skills in classrooms, offering a tremendous specialist resource for elementary schools as well as alternate career paths for budding researchers.

See — "New Path for Ph.D.s" in ScienceScope section, in *Science*, Aug. 16, 2002, p.1107.

SHARE OR SUPPRESS?

by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

Should unclassified research that might conceivably help bioterrorists be openly published? Some members of Congress are calling on journals, scientists and funding agencies to rethink open publication of potentially sensitive microbial work, an issue biologists have been discussing for months. Although scientists agree with the premise, they are understandably wary of suppressing data.

See — “A Call for Restraint on Biological Data” by Jennifer Couzin, in *Science*, Aug. 2, 2002, pp.749-51.

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

Although new radiocarbon dating suggests the parchment on which the Vinland Map is drawn was made between 1423 and 1445, chemists argue that the ink is modern, thus making it hard to explain how the map might have been faked. Found in a private library in 1957, it is purported to be the first chart of the New World.

See — “Old Map, New Ink?” in Random Samples section edited by Erica Goldman, in *Science*, Aug. 9, 2002, p.931.

PATIENT PRIVACY

by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

In response to growing concerns about access to medical records, the Bush Administration announced the “privacy rule” giving patients more control over how their records are used by health care providers. The rule, scheduled to go into effect April 2003, was modified to appease researchers concerned that data would be stripped of so many pieces of information that it would be unusable.

See — “Researchers Welcome Revised Privacy Rules” by Jocelyn Kaiser, in *Science*, Aug. 16, 2002, p.1109.

EVERYTHING INTO THE E-POOL

by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

A bold come-from-behind strategy intended to make the American Geophysical Union (AGU) the next wave in science publishing has backfired in crippling access to articles in their print journals. As AGU went all out to make their online papers publications of record, they abandoned sequential page numbers in the paper version, making their articles impossible to locate from a citation. They have since adopted a four-digit article number. However time will tell if they survive their full-body-immersion into e-publishing.

See — “Online Pioneer Winds Up Lost in Cyberspace” by Rebecca Renner, in *Science*, Aug. 30, 2002, p.1469.



YOUNG RESEARCH

by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

If you're still an undergraduate and frustrated by too many hours in class on not enough practical experience, NASA and the National Science Foundation may have just the ticket: adventurous undergraduate research opportunities designed to encourage students to choose careers in science and engineering. Experience a trip on NASA's “vomit comet,” or pursue galactic questions at the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory in La Serena, Chile. It's hard to know if such programs really work, however most feel they do reinforce career decisions to go into science.

See — “New Lure for Young Talent: Extreme Research” by Robert F. Service, in *Science*, Sep. 6, 2002, p.1633.

INTELL PROP FLEES THE TAXMAN FOR SUNNY BERMUDA

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Multinationals are parking trademarks and patents in Bermuda subsidiaries so royalties earned outside the U.S. can be parked there tax-free. The lure sits until it's “tax efficient” to move it to the U.S.

The hitch is the price you charge the subsidiary to buy a big share in the intell property. You want it low to reduce capital gains taxes. You're buying an intangible and the price is subjective — but the purchaser is a subsidiary. It's not an arms-length transaction.

And the IRS is all over this with billions in tax claims.

See — Glenn Simpson, “A New Twist in Tax Avoidance: Firms Send Best Ideas Abroad,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 24, 2002, p. A1.

BRAVE NEW WORLD REDUX

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

MIT is building an ambitious superarchive called DSpace where research material from every prof will be collected and tagged with metadata codes. Profs keep copyright and select access levels for contributed items.

This is yet another university effort to break out of the cycle of paying for research and then paying journal publishers for access to it. Proponents claim it will “unbundle” publishing leaving peer review to the publishers and distribution to the universities.

The scientist boycott of publishers who refused free online access six months after pub date flopped. The pre-print archive effort got nowhere. And Elsevier predicts superarchives won't work either. It is confident of the need for publishers to efficiently organize the “bundle.”

Besides, some professors fear universities won't be able to resist charging faculty for access. And there's the curious quote from Caltech's provost that in the superarchive future, journal publishers would charge authors rather than subscribers for their services. Hmmm.

See — Jeffrey Young, “Superarchives' Could Hold All Scholarly Output,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 5, 2002, p.A29-30.

Devil's Advocate — Variations on a Theme: NISO Z39.7, Library Statistics Standard

by Bob Molyneux (University of South Carolina, School of Library & Information Science)
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1. NISO

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) is in the process of developing the new version of the “standard” for library statistics (Z39.7). Katina asked me to attend the session at the American Library Association convention in Atlanta on June 14, 2002, where the NISO committee

gave a status report on the standard, and to report on the session for *Against the Grain*. This article reports on that meeting and discusses an idea that resulted both from the meeting and several conversations I have had with Katina and others about measuring the use of electronic resources.

NISO was founded in 1939 and is “...a

non-profit association accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) [that] identifies, develops, maintains, and publishes technical standards to manage information in our changing and ever-more digital environment.”¹ The first NISO library statistics standard was issued in 1968 as

continued on page 86