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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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Books Are Us from page 85

her sorority sisters comments, "You don't look like a librarian," and she replies in a joyful tone, "Oh, I don't feel like one!"

There is a fairly traditional looking library and librarian in George Lucas' *Star Wars II, Attack of the Clones* (LucasFilm, LTD production, 20th Century Fox, 2002). The library itself, housing the Jedi Archives, is grand, reminiscent of the Great Hall (Prunksaal) of Austria's National Library in Vienna — marble busts (of famous Jedi Knights) lining two levels of stacks with a high arched central hall. There the similarity ends. The "books" on the shelves are eerily glowing phosphorescent blue, and in the hall itself are long tables with elaborate computer monitors, where Obi-Wan Kenobi sits looking for a planetary system he cannot find. The stereotypical librarian/archivist arrives, white hair in a bun pierced with two apparent knitting needles, formal long brocaded

gown (well, that's not so stereotypical!) asking Master Obi-Wan if he had called for assistance. A conversation ensues but the planet isn't found on the system. Obi-Wan suggests the archives aren't complete, whereupon the librarian replies in haughty tones: "If an item doesn't appear in our records, it doesn't exist!" She turns on her heels and leaves the Jedi Knight to go help a child standing near by. Such authority! Such audacity! But I take comfort in knowing that at least George Lucas believes that libraries and librarians exist in a galaxy far, far away!

Both movies reminded me that a few weeks ago I was alerted to a Web site devoted to the depiction of librarians in film (thanks to **Teri Lynn Herbert**, MUSC, and **Ramune Kubilius**, Northwestern, via CHAT on the MEDLIB-L Listserv).

LIBRARIANS IN THE MOVIES: An Annotated Filmography, is maintained by **Martin Raish**, David O. McKay Library, **Brigham Young University-Idaho** (<http://www.byui.edu/Ricks/>)

[employee/raishm/films/introduction.html](http://www.byui.edu/raishm/films/introduction.html)). The site acknowledges that "The librarian stereotype has long been the focus of articles, letters, workshops, conversations, and possibly even dreams and nightmares. But analyses have usually been based on limited personal experience with a small number of examples, whether books, television programs, or in this case, commercial motion pictures....This filmography is an ongoing attempt to expand our collective memory, to find a more comprehensive and defensible basis for our acceptance or rejection of the typical movie librarian." The site lists over 400 productions, sorted into four groups: films with persons clearly identified as librarians; films that feature a library; films that mention librarians or libraries, but don't show them; and a miscellaneous group. There is a title index, a list of actors who have portrayed librarians, and a bibliography of articles about librarians in the movies. Mr. Raish (raishm@byui.edu) invites feedback and contributions to the site. His work is indeed an impressive effort, and both of the films mentioned in this column are also included in his lengthy filmography. 🌱

Bet You Missed It

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

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GIVE US YOUR DNA, YOUR DATA by **Pamela M. Rose** (University at Buffalo)

Scientists extoll population databases as sure-fire ways to better health care, while critics charge that they are "still mostly hype" and ethicists worry about confidentiality and profit. Since Iceland's controversial decision to entrust the nation's health records to one biotech company, **deCODE Genetics**, a half-dozen other countries and some U.S. health care providers are beginning to collect DNA and compile databases using the Iceland experience to inform their designs. While federal U.S. projects are still in the early planning stages, other U.S. health care providers such as the **Marshfield, Wisconsin Personalized Medicine Research Project** and the **Major Clinic**, are moving ahead on their own.

See — "Population Databases Boom, From Iceland to the U.S.," by **Jocelyn Kaiser** in *Science*, Nov. 8, 2002, p. 1158-1161.

END OF THE DAY CENSORSHIP? by **Pamela M. Rose** (University at Buffalo)

More than a dozen social scientists have written to Education Secretary **Rod Paige** because of a leaked internal memo directing over 13,000 pages not "consistent with the Administration's philosophy," unless needed for legal, historical, or non-political reasons, to be deleted from the Website (www.ed.gov/index.jsp) as part of an overhaul. **Patrice McDermott** of the **American Library Association** says this is "public information" that should not be removed at the whim of political appointees. Education spokesperson **Dan Langan** says "...at the end of the day the information will still be available in a Web-based format."

See — "Educational Overhaul?," in ScienceScope section in *Science*, Nov. 29, 2002, p. 1697.

MARTHA HITS THE SKIDS by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

It's well known that **Martha "Domestic Diva" Stewart** dumped Imclone shares and got the SEC sniffing around for insider trading. But did she publicly lie afterwards because her personal fortune in **Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia** was tanking? And, yes, if true, she can be sued by purchasers of the stock. Her reputation is the company, and to tell lies about it is fraudulent.

And by the way, the stock has slid 70%.

See — "Now, Stewart's Public Statements Are Probed," by **Jerry Markon** and **Charles Gasparino**, *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 10, 2002, p.C1.

BLOOMSBURY WIZARDRY by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Financial analysts wonder if **Bloomsbury Publishing** is a one-trick pony. **Harry Potter** is quite a trick, but the two year interval between Nos. 4 and 5 in the series has investors — dare we say — spooked.

Once an obscure literary publisher founded in 1986, only known for "The English Patient," it started to reap **J.K. Rowling** riches in 1994. **Bloomsbury** has been using its **Potter** bucks to buy up quiet-but-steady publishers of **Brit** reference works such as their "Who's Who" and **Bradford's** crossword dictionaries.

But is there a best-seller life after Hogwarts? **Bloomsbury** lost the **Potter** sales in the U.S. to **Scholastic Corp.**, but it has hooked up with **St. Martin's Press** for distribution, set up shop in the Flatiron Building, and intends to bid aggressively for U.S. authors, and turn fiction into films via **Creative Artists Agency**.

See — "U.K. Publisher Plans for Wane of Harry Potter," by **Charles Goldsmith**, *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 12, 2002, p.B1.

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WHERE GRAHAM GREENE, SIR HAROLD ACTON & JACKIE-O BROWSED by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

During WW II, Nancy Mitford worked in the **G. Heywood Hill** book shop — 10 Curzon St., London W1J — while writing *The Pursuit of Love*. Evelyn Waugh and other literary chums would drop in, along with her brother-in-law, the Duke of Devonshire. The Duke spent so much money there that he bought the shop and launched the **Heywood Hill** literary prize.

This is THE carriage trade book shop for Britain, regularly mailing customized book selections to society/lit celebs like **Brooke Astor**, **Gore Vidal** and **David Tang**.

Film producer **Sam Goldwyn, Jr.** recently dropped in and announced he had bought the rights to **Patrick O'Brian's** historical naval novels. When asked how he was going to film sea battles, he replied that in 1958 a clerk in **Heywood Hill** had advised him to buy rights to **Ian Fleming**, and he had neglected to do so.

Email them at www.heywoodhill.com.

See — **Victoria Mather**, "A Booklover's Paradise - G. Heywood Hill," *Town & Country*, Jan. 2003, p. 155.

EVERYONE HATES CUBICLES by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Everyone who actually works for a living knows open-office plans foster nosiness, eavesdropping, and non-stop interruptions. But bosses adore them. So the free-market has come up with a variety of devices to ward off the pests such as color-coded blocks, cube-a-door, and even a rear-view mirror to warn you of approaching nuisances.

But of course none of them are the least bit effective.

See — "Employees Try Out Inventive Weapons Against the Office Pest," by **Suein Hwang**, *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 9, 2002, p.B1.

CHUCK H. MAKES THE WASHINGTON POST by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

The **Energy Dept.** shut down **PubScience** — a free-of-charge cross-indexer of 2 million government reports and articles — because two equivalent services exist in the private sector. **DOE** admits that **Scirus** and **Infotrieve** lobbied for this.

Chuck Hamaker (UNC-Charlotte) notes that the "Scirus search engine pushes users toward content owned by its corporate parent **Elsevier Science**." And while the search is free, the **Elsevier** content comes with a charge.

See — "Agency Closes Free Research Site - Pay sites put pressure on Energy Dept.," *Post & Courier*, Nov. 22, 2002, p.4A (Washington Post wire).

QUEEN OF NICE DISPLAYS HER "EXORCIST QUALITIES" by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Vanity Fair really dishes the dirt on the **Rosie O'Donnell v. Gruner + Jahr** \$100 million legal brawl. Behind the Queen of Nice facade, **Rosie** was well known to be "morose and given to volcanic rages." She had segued from caustic stand-up comic to the **Snickers** eating, **Tom Cruise** worshipping afternoon TV hostess.

Dan Brewster came to *Gruner + Jahr* from being CEO of **American Express Publishing**. Known to be impulsive, he promptly showed it by using **Bertelsmann's** checkbook to overpay for *Inc.* (\$200 mil) and *Fast Company* (\$360 mil) both of which turned out to be turkeys. Meanwhile, celebrity-as-brand was all the rage, and he figured **Rosie** could duplicate **Martha Stewart** and **Oprah**.

So he tried to transfer the dying *McCall's* middle American readership over to the mish-mash that is anti-gun lesbian **Rosie's** shtik which came off okay on TV due to her charisma but fell flat in print. **Rosie's** thing was everyone is fighting breast cancer and being so brave. She wanted paraplegic **Christopher Reeves** on the cover when management figured **Rosie** had to be a "happy home for beauty advertisers."

See — **Judith Newman**, "Cracklin' Rosie," *Vanity Fair*, Dec. 2002, p. 332.

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International Dateline — Quiet and Fairly Confident

A Report From the 53rd Frankfurt Book Fair

by **Anthony Watkinson** (Consultant, 14, Park Street, Bladon, Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England OX20 1RW; Phone: +44 1993 811561; Fax: +44 1993 810067) <anthony.watkinson@btopenworld.com>

This is my third report on the **Book Fair** for *ATG* and I realise that there is less big news, thrills or spills, than before. Admittedly my own knowledge is in scholarly publishing, but careful reading of the special issues of the trade rags given away at the venue do not suggest that there was anything very exciting going on among fiction publishers or vendors of exotica. What has happened to the disruptive impact of the Internet? When will the Big Deal fall over? The **Elsevier Science** people on the old Harcourt booth were coming out of the convenient little offices hiding away behind the books and the people. They were whey-faced to a man (yes, they were all men), but it was not because they realised what **SPARC** had done for them. They were just reworking the budget.

Presumably for librarians, the big question is about the progress of the digital revolution. The answer is that it is going slow. The big thrill for the book sector was said to be **Print on Demand (POD)**. It is difficult to argue that **POD** is really cutting edge. Indeed, there are those who see it as a way of hanging on to print rather than as part of a digital repertoire. It certainly does not overturn existing relationships in the information chain. Other big dot.com ideas from the past (last year) seemed to have lost body. There was no booth for either **NetLibrary** or **Ebrary**, though personnel were spotted in the aisles. Everyone was waiting for a new model to emerge for the former (from the strategists of **OCLC**) and for a model to emerge for the latter. As for the journal hosts, **Ingenta** had the best stand party I went to (real wine), but their business model was not visible either to other than the eye of faith. **Extenza** (the publishing solutions business owned by **Swets**) had a mediocre lunch, which conflicted with a divine lunch next door, but they gave the best present in a Fair almost devoid of freebies. Both promised a lot in their different styles. The heavy tread of **MetaPress** (the **EBSCO** presence) could be heard — they are said to have a lot of money to spend. They were not noisy. As for the technology, after a lot of action a few years ago, the software people have folded up their large exhibits and crept away. Companies like

MicroSoft are present, but the literature is mostly in German. The action is now located at **International Online** early in December in London.

The main talking point over the snatched cups of coffee at breaks in the schedule (one euro deposit) and in the bars of the evening, was not about e-matters. The conversational starter was produced the first day of the **Fair**, which saw a substantial item in the *Financial Times*. “Books for boffins beat publishing blues” read the headline. Actually it was about journals: these money men do not know the difference. It correctly predicted the sale price of **Kluwer Academic**. In following day’s issue of *The Bookseller* (the UK equivalent of *Publishers Weekly*) the British valuation expert **Christopher Gasson** wrote in purple prose about publishing mergers in general. He did not pull his punches and some long quotations for purposes of comment and criticism seem in order.

“To an outsider, acquisitions in the publishing industry look like a stupendous Daliesque banquet in which the big groups are continuously consuming each other, as well as any independent publishers who happen to pass their way... Every year we expect to arrive to discover that the familiar aisles of publishers’ booths have been replaced by a single stand occupying an entire hall. Instead we discover it is much the same as last year, with even the grandest corporate stands — those with multi-story office complexes, coffee bars, mini-gyms and lidos — dwarfed by the sheer scale of the Buchmesse.”

This is a slight exaggeration, but **McGraw Hill** did have two floors. **Gasson** however is hopeful about the future. The smaller company, the niche player, is not dead. He continues:

“It is the stupidity and brutality of the big publishing groups that are the best guarantees of diversity in publishing... There may be some short-term accountancy benefits, but after that, most acquirers seem to find it very difficult to harness and drive the vitality of the businesses they have bought. Somehow it slips away and appears again next year at the booth next door.”

Frankfurt does indeed illustrate the diversity of the business. In hall 8 there was a man with a rabbit. He was advertising a book about the rabbit. Some animal lovers did not like this, but the rabbit looked in peak form. A newspaper item mentioned that a German firm is printing novels on toilet paper. There is one chapter per roll. I did not see this new venture but the owner claimed to be inundated with orders. The British distributor **Turnaround**, which specialises in erotica, gay and lesbian literature and the black experience has an unusual design on the inside cover of its catalogue. This image came from the much talked about *A New Kind of Science* by **Stephen Wolfram**, the very independent owner and developer of **Mathematica**. I went to see the booth. The **Wolfram** book, which is big, made a formidable presence on the shelves, just above a different style of book, shrink-wrapped to avoid browsers, entitled *Huge 2*. Religious publishing was noticeably represented. Within a stone’s throw of the **Taylor & Francis** booth was the presence of a company new to me. This is **Summit University Press** — not an **AAUP** member. Their lead title for 2003 reveals the lives of the ascended masters and their cities of light in the spirit world. There is indeed something for everyone.

Readers of *ATG* may like to know that the Americans are back in **Frankfurt**. Many US publishers have always grumbled about **Frankfurt**, its cost and the problems of getting a cab or anywhere reasonable to eat in the evenings. The aftermath of 9/11 in 2001 left many empty sites where booths had been due to go up. This year everyone came back. A leading New York publisher wrote in one preview that “there is nothing like pressing the flesh.” There is a lot of that going on.

What has the **Fair** got for librarians? The short answer is that there is little laid on for them. I did not meet a single librarian throughout the **Fair**, although a reliable informant tells me that there were about twenty over from North America. There is a revamped **International Centre for Information and Content Management**. **ICOCOM** (not an easy acronym to get the tongue round) ran a scientific programme, but I spotted on the list of speakers only two from English speaking countries — **Abby Smith** from **CLIR** and **Michael Olson** from **Harvard**. There was also a centre with some booths. Some **Casalinis** were there and a few others known to the library world across the Atlantic, but business seemed far from brisk when I visited. This is a great pity. Publishing is laid open to the view in all its rawness. Publishers are talking to each other and selling to each other and cheating each other. It is all very entrepreneurial and librarians would be advised to find out what sort of content is heading their way. Someone should set up a package tour.

ELDRED v. AOL GOLIATH by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

In the tiny town of Derry, NH, retired computer administrator **Eric Eldred** runs a tiny press devoted to great works of literature. Wanting to republish **Sherwood Anderson’s** *Horses and Men*, he found himself thwarted by the 1998 copyright extension, which inspired him to file *Eldred v. Ashcroft* along with **Jonathan Zittrain**, **Lawrence Lessig** and **Charles Nesson**.

And soon the Supremes will pronounce.

See — **Andrea Foster**, “A Bookworm’s Battle,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 25, 2002, p. A35.