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Talk of the Trade

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Talk of the Trade

by **Barry Fast** (Deltabooks, 186 Crooss Street, City Island, NY 10464;
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IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL THE HOMELESS DISCOVER THE POWER OF ONLINE BEGGING

When **Karyn Bosnak** moved from the Midwest to New York, she soon found out that this city is a shopping mall, just like home, only bigger and better. It took her just a few months to run her credit card up to \$20,000, an amount she had no hope of ever paying off. But **Karyn** is nothing if not resourceful, so she set up a Website, *www.SaveKaryn.com*, and posted a message explaining her plight: "I need \$20,000 to pay off my credit card...I'm really nice and asking for your help...if you have an extra buck or two, please send it my way." **Karyn** not only got twenty thousand of those extra bucks, but she was also sent many gifts, such as **Yankee** tickets (she auctioned them on **eBay**), garden vegetables from Ohio (she froze them) and coupons for dates with a guy named **Dave** (poor **Dave**). Now **HarperCollins** has rewarded her ingenuity with a book deal, including an advance of about \$30,000. **Karyn** describes her forthcoming tome as a "madcap memoir of living in Manhattan, running up crazy debt, and ending up in the poorhouse. Like *Bridget Jones meets Confessions of a Shopaholic*." She will include valuable advice, such as keeping a credit card for emergencies only, and "a pair of boots on sale is not an emergency." I have some advice for a certain acquisitions editor at **HarperCollins**: Lay off those Grey Goose martinis when an agent is pitching a book over lunch.

BUT AT LEAST SHE ZIPPED UP THE FLY

Former **Paramount Studios** honcho **Robert Evans'** memoir, *The Kid Stays in the Picture*, recounts an embarrassing moment for him and his wife, **Ali McGraw**. The fashionista **Halston** designed a spectacular dress for their audience with the **Queen**, but when **Ali** put it on just before the event, **Evans** complained that it was much too revealing. Hurriedly **Ali** changed into a demur pantsuit, resulting in loud outcries from the British tabloids criticizing **Ali's** bad taste and lack of respect for **Her Majesty**. The next morning **Halston** called **Evans**, asking him why his wife had not worn the dress he'd designed for this occasion. **Evans** explained "the plunging neckline completely showed my wife's breasts." **Halston** was understandably miffed because **Ali** had put the dress on backward.

IMHBCO from page 84

Radiophony." *Sexuation*, a collection of essays edited by **Renata Salec**, is also ambiguously encouraging on its face. Then you hit the essays: "Freud's Moses and the Ethics of Nomotropic Desire," "On Semblances in the Relationship Between the Sexes," etc. Grateful as I am to be offered a resolution to my ongoing ethical struggle with nomotropic desire, I'm not at all sure there's much fun reading to be had here. And don't forget **Carl Eby's** book *Hemingway's Fetishism: Psychoanalysis and the Mirror of Manhood*. According to the jacket copy, "Critics have long acknowledged **Hemingway's** lifelong erotic obsession with hair, but this book is the first to explain in a theoretically coherent manner why **Hemingway** was a fetishist and why we should care." (They have? It does? We should?) To be fair, this one really does seem to be about sex, so the title isn't really that misleading. But it's hard to imagine that anyone titillated by the title *Hemingway's Fetishism* will likely find much gratification in the pages of this book.

With the advent of a new millennium, the Cultural Studies movement seems to be on the downhill side of its natural arc, and the practice of artificially sexing-up scholarly monograph titles is now, sadly, on the decline. But these things do have a natural tendency to come around again; the practice seems to be on about a 60-year cycle. It was only 70 years ago that **Charles Shelby Gibbs** authored the pioneering classic of the genre: *A Guide to Sexing Chicks*. His book was about determining the gender of baby chickens, of course. There's probably a plaque in his honor on the wall of an English department somewhere.

Artaud's Drawings" and
"Broken Voices, Lost
Bodies: Experimental

COMB-OVER IS IN, AND SO ARE BODY-PIERCING AND BOTOX

If a word is used five times in five different places over five years, the editors of the *Shorter Edition* of the *Oxford English Dictionary* will consider it for inclusion. The newest edition, just published, includes 3500 new words that made the cut. Joining the Taliban are Prozac and Viagra. Chat rooms, snailmail and sticker shock combine with spinmeister, airport novels and arm candy (a good looking young woman with an older but wealthy guy). The *Shorter* is an historical dictionary, intent on recording every word in common usage since 1700. Priced at \$150, it seems to me a priceless record of how our language evolves and prospers. In a *New York Times* piece on the new edition, the co-editor **Angus Stevenson** was asked for his personal favorite new word. "Go com-mando," said **Mr. Stevenson**, which means to go out on a date wearing no underwear.

THE NIGHTMARE AT HOGWARTS SCHOOL: HARRY POTTER EXPELLED?

When **JK Rowling** told the press that she is taking a little more time to complete the next *Harry Potter* blockbuster, share prices of **Bloomsbury Press PLC** declined 26% from its 52 week high. This happened despite the \$40 million cash reserve that *Harry* has produced for **Bloomsbury**. Suddenly the market recognized that **Bloomsbury** without *Potter* was a fine literary press, profitable and respected, but a bit worrisome. And according to the *Wall Street Journal*, **Bloomsbury's** CEO **Nigel Newton**, agreed. He began using the *Potter* cash pot to buy some British reference publishers like *Who's Who*. He launched a children's book line in America where, unfortunately, he'd sold the *Potter* rights to **Scholastic** before anyone knew how big the series would become. **Bloomsbury** is also changing its publishing philosophy, moving away from the literary to the more popular, such as last year's successful *Kitchen Confidential*. Coming soon, an illustrated book entitled *All My Life for Sale*, wherein the author describes how he sold everything he owns over the Internet, including his sideburns packed in a plastic bag. Soon to be a major motion picture?

BIN LADEN'S MYSTERIOUS GIRLFRIEND CON- DEMNS RELIGION AND HARVARD

Who is **Kola Boof**, and why is she posing topless on the cover of her book, *Long Train to the Redeeming Sin*? Don't try to find out by calling her publisher, **North African Book Exchange** in Fullerton, CA. No one answers the phone there. You might want to ask famed **New York University** law professor, **Derrick Bell**, who read *Long Train*, admired it and began an email conversation with **Ms. Boof**. **Bell** defends her against critics who think her life story just doesn't add up. **Ms. Boof**, from southern Sudan, was raised in the Muslim faith and witnessed the murder of her parents by Sudanese rebels when she was 8, or 10, or 12, depending on which version of her life you hear. She somehow fled to America and was adopted by an African-American family whose name she won't reveal. For a time in the 1990s she says she was **Osama bin Laden's** mistress. She eventually left Islam behind her, condemning its treatment of women. When she attacked all organized religion, saying "For just as **Harvard University** is an institution created by men, so is every religion" a fatwa was issued against her by Sudanese clerics. However, the government of Sudan knows of no fatwa against her. She claims she was shot at in Oakland, California, and shot back, and as a result is under FBI protection. But the FBI knows of no protection they are giving her. "That's their way of protecting me," she says.

Her book was selling very slowly over an Internet site called *AALBC.com*, a bookselling site specializing in African-American titles. But **Ms. Boof** joined with some political activists who are working against slavery in Sudan, and launched an intense Internet campaign to promote herself and her book. She appeared on radio talk shows, and her book, languishing near number 190,000 on **Amazon's** bestseller list, jumped to number 951. "I can't deny I'm a conniving person," **Ms. Boof** admitted.

continued on page 86

Talk of the Trade from page 85

being used to help promote *Long Train*. Others feel that **Ms. Boof** is a fraud, since her life story is so inconsistent. But **Professor Bell** remains a supporter, saying "...I do recognize jive and I got no sense of that" with **Kola Boof**. By all accounts, however, her book seems to be a compelling read.

THE THRILL IS GONE

Clive Cussler has told **Reuters** that after 35 years and 19 novels, his next book will be his last. His finely crafted thrillers were often made into movies after topping the bestseller lists. "I'm just tired of it all" he said.

KNOPF PUBLISHES "UNPROFESSIONAL AND MISLEADING WORK" AS COLUMBIA WITHDRAWS BANCROFT PRIZE

In an earlier column I reported on the controversy surrounding *Arm-ing America* by **Emory** history professor **Michael Bellesiles**. When other

scholars checked his research supporting his assertion that early Americans owned much fewer guns than generally thought, they found that many cited sources either didn't exist or had been distorted. An **Emory** faculty review found **Bellesiles'** work so shoddy he was forced to resign from the university. **Columbia University**, which had awarded him the prestigious **Bancroft Prize** for important historical writing, has rescinded the award and asked that the \$40,000 prize money be returned. Nevertheless, **Knopf** has published the paperback version with a prominent cover display of the **Prize**. And, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, a California court decision on gun control recently cited the book in its ruling.

One of the most interesting debates in the library world centers on how to treat books or journals already in the collection that have since proven to be false or misleading. Should such books be removed, or stickered in some way to explain they convey inaccuracies or outright falsehoods? What if they contain dangerous information, such as the wrong formula for creating a drug compound that could result in sickness or death? What, if any, responsibilities do librarians have to correct mistakes if the publishers fail to do so? 🍷

Group Therapy

Column Editor: **Rosann Bazirjian** (Assistant Dean for Technical & Access Services, University Libraries, The Pennsylvania State University, 507 Paterno Library, University Park, PA 16802-1812; Phone: 814-865-0404; Fax: 814-865-3665) <rvb9@psulias.psu.edu>

GRIPE: (Submitted by **Barbara Porrett**, Electronic Services Librarian, International Development Research Centre)

I am writing to enquire about how libraries communicate with their users about use terms in licenses. Although this query was presented on **liblicense** back in July 1999, I would be very interested in an update.

RESPONSE: (Submitted by **Jill Emery**, Director, Electronic Resources, University of Houston Libraries)

My knee-jerk response is that you can lead the student to water but drinking tends to happen more in bars. So what is a library to do? Invest in your own best practice model. At the **University of Houston Libraries**, we do not require click-through license statements unless mandated by the information provider. There are a few out there and we have complied with their wishes when necessary to make important resources available to our community. However, we tend not to like this practice. It is annoying at best and highly unlikely that the student bothers to actually read the half-page to full page before clicking "I agree" and going on their merry way. Faculty and grad students on campus (and more than likely, students at home) skirt this issue completely by book-marking the Website directly and thus not having to bother with this additional nuisance.

Our best practice has been to write a Terms of Use statement, about a page in length, spelling out what is considered acceptable behavior. We've linked to our campus-wide Appropriate Use of Computing Resources statement and we also state that these resources are provided on an "as is" basis. This notice has been put at the top of all of our electronic resources pages to say, hey, there are these terms that you should be aware of but we're not going to force them down your throat.

There are those who would argue that this type of statement never gets a precursory glance, but our statistics say otherwise. Looking at our Web statistics from January through August 2002 showed the terms had an average monthly hit rate of 200 hits per month. Not a shabby hit rate in my book, considering the terms were viewed more than our Interlibrary Loan FAQ for seven months out of the same eight-month period.

At the **University of Houston Libraries**, this is our best practice and it works for us. We have a referral page when someone requests a use that is unauthorized and when users from other universities or the community at large attempt to say they are entitled to this access. In the end, though, each university or business has to determine what works at their institution/place of business and how such a statement fits into their campus-wide/business-wide computing policy as a whole.

RESPONSE: (Submitted by **Becky Albitz**, Electronic Resources and Copyright Librarian, The Pennsylvania State University Libraries)

Notifying patrons of use restrictions and copyright became a real issue after the passage of the 1976 Copyright Act. In Section 108, paragraph f, subsection 1, libraries are protected from liability if their users abuse copying facilities in their buildings as long as they display a notice informing users of the applicable copyright law. Libraries still post standard language on each photocopier, warning users that their activities might violate copyright law, and now we are being asked to inform our users of the provisions and restrictions outlined in electronic resource licenses. Unlike photocopiers, however, these electronic resources are not confined to the physical library building. How do we inform all our users of these restrictions, even those who might be accessing a title at 2 a.m.

from 20 miles away? This is the question asked three years ago on **Liblicense** and is still of great interest today.

In fact, it appears that little has changed. Some smaller institutions still post notices on their computers, much as we do on photocopiers. Others add a note to their **OPAC** record, stating that access is restricted to members of that institution's authorized user community. Others still provide links to licensing terms on publisher's Websites from a master list of licensed e-resources. Some institutions choose to link to a home grown e-resource management database which contains the terms of use for each product. A popular solution is the use of a splash screen that appears before the user can access any licensed resource, displaying, in general terms, licensing restrictions. Finally, one would hope that all libraries are integrating these issues into their library instruction programs

At **Penn State** we have implemented one of these solutions, and are developing another. Before any user can access a licensed database, they are faced with a splash screen that reads:

These databases have been licensed for the non-profit educational use of the **Penn State** community. The use of these e-resources is governed by copyright law and individual license agreements. Systematic copying or the use of an external search engine or robot to gather information from these databases is prohibited. Please contact the Electronic Resources and Copyright Librarian (rsa4@psu.edu) for specific licensing terms related to an individual product.

Penn State is also in the process of creating a database called **ERLIC2 (Electronic Resources Licensing and Information Center)**,

continued on page 87