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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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Bet You Missed It

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

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I SEE MY LIVER, THEREFORE I AM by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

Our belief in ourselves as anatomical entities is part of a centuries-long collaboration between pioneering anatomists, missionary school-teachers, educational reformers, and present-day anatomical entrepreneurs. Consider that prior to the 1834 publication of **William A. Alcott's** *The House I Live In*, most American had never seen an anatomical illustration. And that in the 1830's, a dedicated band of Baptists taught basic anatomy to the Karen hill people of Burma in an effort to combat their belief in animism. And still further, that modern shock and reality media programming, with unveiled scenes of gutted bodies and body parts, and anatomical art such as staged by German anatomist **Gunther von Hagens**, seeks to reconnect us yet again as anatomical beings.

See — "The Anatomical Mission to Burma" by **Michael Sappol**, *Science*, October 10, 2003, pp.232-33.

LITTLE LOST URL by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

"Honest, Professor, the Web link was just there last week!" While Internet references are proliferating in medical and scientific periodicals, the URLs for those references are also disappearing at an alarming rate. In a study that examined frequency, format and activity of Internet references in three high-circulation US journals, researchers found that inactive links increased from 3.8% at three months after publication to 13% at 27 months post-publication. Inactive references were most commonly .com addresses, followed by .edu. There are strategies for recovering the information, including contacting the author and taking advantage of search engines that cache information.

See — "Going, Going, Gone: Lost Internet References" by **Robert P., Dellavalle et al.**, *Science*, October 31, 2003, pp.787-88.

UH-HUM ... RIGHT ... by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

"Surfer's Voice" is the new term for someone inattentively talking to another on the phone while surfing the Web, instant messaging and downloading music. Mindless information saturation is swamping us. Cell phones have created "absent presence."

After 20 years of the PC revolution, we need an information diet, but the solutions are elusive. Companies are creating email-free days.

See — **Dennis K. Berman**, "Technology Has Us So Plugged Into Data, We Have Turned Off," in *The Wall Street Journal*, p. B1, Nov. 10, 2003.

SCIENCE PHOBIA by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

Part of kids aversion to science may stem from a deep dislike for the subject by authors of popular children's books. Of seven writers interviewed, four named math and two named chemistry as their worst subjects. Their overwhelmingly favorite subject? English.

See — "Analyze This" in Random Samples section edited by **Constance Holden**, *Science*, October 10, 2003, p.225.

EXTREME PAIRS KISS (KEEP IT SIMPLE...) by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)

The article discusses the pros and cons of the new approach to developing software called "extreme programming" (XP). **Kent Beck**, who wrote the first book on XP, extols it as an alternative to the current wasteful programming process, rife with cost overruns, late releases and flawed programs. At the heart of XP are 12 simple rules, which include an emphasis on simple program design, continuous testing, and pair programming—two programmers work together at the same machine, one typing code, the other casting a critical eye on it. Adherents say they prefer working in pairs and have more confidence in their results. Critics dismiss XP as a fad that only recycles old ideas.

See — "The New X-Men" by **Martha Baer**, *Wired* 11.09 (Sept. 2003), p. 124-129.

OPEN COURSE OPPORTUNITIES by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)

In April 2001, the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** announced a project called **OpenCourseWare** that would post content of MIT classes on the Web, with hopes of inspiring other educators to share knowledge worldwide. The idea quickly gained financial support from the **Mellon** and **Hewlett** foundations and as many as 2,000 courses will be offered by 2006. Though the project has been enthusiastically received worldwide, there have been a few problems. Entrepreneurs quickly came up with ways to try to profit from the free information—one proposed to offer a Bachelor's Degree in MIT Studies—and a **UNESCO** study concluded that many developing countries simply do not have the means to access the MIT site. Success in the long run will depend on the emergence of learning communities based on the **OpenCourseWare** content, with third parties developing tools to organize discussion groups and other support mechanisms typically available for courses in a university setting.

See — "MIT Everywhere" by **David Diamond**, *Wired* 11.09 (Sept. 2003), p. 132-137.

WHERE DO COFFEE TABLE BOOKS GO TO DIE? by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Coffee table books are tricky things for publishers and many of them flop. **Rick Smolan** and **David Elliot Cohen's** 1986 *A Day in the Life of America* was a big success that they sold to **HarperCollins** along with a five-year non-compete agreement. **HarperCollins** saw it as a series and did *A Day in the Life of the United States Armed Forces* which was a dud selling only 14,000 books so far.

Now **Smolan** and **Cohen** are back with *America 24/7* with **Pearson PLC's DK Publishing** unit. Of course they had a costly legal squabble with **HarperCollins** which figured it had bought the *Day in the Life* franchise. Hence the 24/7 title change.

Digital cameras have been a big help for them. 25,000 photographers took 250,000 digital pictures during a week in May. These have, of course, been greatly distilled to fit into a book. But you can go to the Website and pull up an image and get a personalized dust jacket made for your copy of the book.

And **DK** is going to do 50 state-by-state 24/7 titles.

That sounds like a lot of ponderous donations to county libraries one day.

See — **Jeffrey Trachtenberg**, "U.S. Through Digital Lens," *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 29, 2003, p.B1.

NO POETRY IN MONEY

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Launched in 1912, the fabled *Poetry* magazine limped along in genteel poverty while introducing **Wallace Stevens**, **William Carlos Williams**, **Sylvia Plath** and **T.S. Eliot** to the world. Editors worked two jobs and the phone bill often went unpaid.

Then **Ruth Lilly** gifted them \$100 million and the trouble began. Realtors and investment outfits pushing their schemes. Starving poets begging for grants. Rival poetry groups screaming about the unfairness of it all. A lawsuit with a bank over mismanagement of money. And the firing of the long-time editor who had successfully solicited the gift from heiress **Lilly**.

See — **Robert Frank**, "Poetry Commotion: Big Donation Roils A Literary Bastion" in *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A1, Dec. 8, 2003.

LIFE AFTER PERKS

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Newspaper Baron **Conrad Black** (*Chicago Sun-Times*, *The Telegraph*, the *Jerusalem Post*) was ousted by his board amidst a flurry of fiduciary questions. One of the more curious footnotes is that along with the jets, butlers and lavish apartments paid for by the company **Hollinger International** is an \$8 million **Franklin D. Roosevelt** papers collection. Dealers are quoted as being baffled by the enormous price. **Roosevelt** was a prolific letter writer and there are reams of the stuff around. **Hollinger** paid **Washington** and **Lincoln** prices.

Asked by the *London Times* about the company purchase, **Black** replied: "8 million was not something I was prepared to spend (personally)."

See — **Elena Cherney and Robert Frank**, "Le Cirque Is Out: Getting Lord Black Off Hollinger's Tab" in *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A1, Nov. 28, 2003.

UNTERNEHMERISCHE BETEILIGUNG OR WHAT?

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Bertelsmann says the term means "entrepreneurial participation" or profit sharing. Two former execs say it means "equity." And they helped set up a **Bertelsmann** venture that became **AOL Europe**.

And now they're suing for \$3 billion.

See — **Matthew Karnitschnig**, "Suit Has Big Stakes for Bertelsmann" in *The Wall Street Journal*, p. B4, Oct. 27, 2003

DARK TOWER HAS PUBLISHERS GROVELING

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Before *Carrie* came the "Dark Tower" series, an amalgam of wizardry and the Wild West. But no one paid a lick of attention to it. Now **Stephen King** is a 29 year brand name, and although he's slowed a bit, he still has clout. Normally rivals, **Viking**, **Donald M. Grant**, and **Scribners** will collaborate on selling the seven book series.

Reading them is heavy going — 7 volumes, 3,600 pages and 550 characters — which makes this a risky publishing venture. There's a Concordance to guide you through the first four books.

The fiction buyer for **Barnes & Noble** says she's hoping for a Christmas feeding frenzy.

See — **Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg**, "The Bookslinger" in *The Wall Street Journal*, p. B1, Nov. 3, 2003.

NONSENSICAL SERVICE

by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

A trade embargo against Iran, in place since 1997, has reached out to affect Iranian authors. The **US Dept. of Treasury** has ruled that US based scientific journals cannot edit papers from Iranian authors without government permission (although they can review submissions and publish them without changes). The **Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)**, who will apply for a special license, pursued and clarified the issue on behalf of all publishers. Some societies are less than happy, though, noting that the central value of a technical paper is in its content, not its grammar. **IEEE's** some 1,700 Iranian members declined to under 400 after they were stripped of several benefits in January 2002.

See — "U.S. License Needed to edit Iranian Papers" by **Yudhijit Bhattacharjee**, *Science*, October 10, 2003, p.210.

LEWIS & CLARK BIBLIOMANIA

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Portland, Oregon, construction worker **Roger Wendlick** is obsessed with **Lewis and Clark** and set out to collect everything ever written about them. Journals and diaries. All foreign language books. Maps. Botany and zoology books. Everything. Including a bodice-ripper novel about **Sacagawea**.

A true bibliomaniac, he went heavily into debt, sold his house and car, and worked multiple jobs. Now **Lewis and Clark College** has paid him \$375,000 up front and \$30,000 a year for the collection. And he gets a desk in the rare books room where he sits reading and playing host to visiting researchers. He wears a badger hat and a long ermine vest.

See — **June Kronholz**, "Journey of Discovery: A Man's Pursuit Of Lewis and Clark" in *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A1, Dec. 5, 2003.

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