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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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Bet You Missed It

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

Column Editor: **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Editor's Note: Hey, are y'all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to *Against the Grain's* attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We're listening! — **KS**

REVISIONIST SAMUELSON by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Household-name economist **Paul Samuelson** died at 94.

His famed economics text was first published in 1946. Now that's a professorial racket. Updating it annually, pausing for a Nobel in 1970, raking in the royalties of one of the few texts to make any money for the author.

Now two **Middlebury College** economists are convinced his legacy "has paralyzed the best brains in the Anglo-Saxon branch of the profession for the last three decades."

At heart a believer in Classical Economics, **Samuelson** thought models were only useful as aids, certainly not as any guide to policy. It was his followers who were convinced everything could be reduced to math and failed to see the current debacle.

See — **Ideas**, "Did Samuelson's Followers Go Astray?" *Business Week*, Dec./Jan, 2009-10, p.10; reviewing **David Colander** and **Casey Rothschild**, *Sins of the Sons of Samuelson*.

YARDLEY ENGLISH LAVENDER by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Fatigued with searching for her favorite authors in secondhand-book shops, **Nicola Beauman** launched **Persephone Books** in a former grocery store in London's Lamb's Conduit Street. Her 86 titles are by neglected British women authors from the inter-war years and evoke memories of when England was England. Covers are all dove gray with colorful floral endpapers.

See — **Christa D'Souza**, "A Woman of Substance," *Vanity Fair*, Feb. 2010, p.54.

TESLA ROCKS by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

The nearly forgotten **Nikola Tesla** got alternating current to work on a grand scale, created the Niagara Falls hydroelectric dam, and beat **Thomas Edison** in developing the preferred electric chair.

Now he is sexy among the techno-cognoscenti. The \$100,000 electric sports car is named for him. **Capcom Entertainment** uses his name in their Dark Void saga. **David Bowie** played him in "The Prestige." **Google** co-founder **Larry Page** cites him as early inspiration.

And his rival **Thomas Edison**? Much less *au courant*. Indeed, the EU is banning the incandescent light bulb.

See — **Daniel Michaels**, "Long-Dead Inventor Nikola Tesla Is Electrifying Hip Techies," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 14, 2010, p.A1.

DIALECTICAL QUICKIE by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Actors are terrible at affecting foreign accents. **Angelina Jolie's** Greek in "Alexander?" Ick. **Brad Pitt's** Austrian in "Seven Years in Tibet?" Puh-leeze.

To the rescue comes **Odile Rault** with **UseMyAccent.com** where for a fee of \$10 — avoiding expensive dialect coaches — you can get ordinary folk from foreign climes to read your script to you in the proper voice. And that includes a New York accent which is certainly foreign enough.

See — **Joanne Kaufman**, "Talk Like an Egyptian," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 13, 2010, p.D7.

BRAVE NEW DATA WORLD by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Now here's a thought. Could an internet giant — a **Yahoo** or **Google** or **Amazon** or **Facebook** — be annihilated because the public suddenly lost trust in the safety of its consumer data? Hence **Google's** need to respond forcefully to Chinese (government?) hackers trying to ransack its servers.

But of course pulling down its China server won't make **Google** any more safe from hackers. And anxiety lurks. What does **Google** do with all that information? What will become of it tomorrow? What if it leaks to outsiders?

You make a minor query about hemorrhoids, and suddenly as your car passes an electronic billboard an ad flashes for hemorrhoid creams?

See — **Holman Jenkins**, "China, Google and the Cloud Wars," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 22, 2010, p.A19.

THE NOISY DEATH OF QUIET by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

"Anonymous librarian" wrote our columnist **Florence King** despairing that the people she used to feel safe from in the library's quiet atmosphere are now there: "foul-mouthed teenagers, loud adults, musical concerts, screaming children, and a thousand-and-one cell phones a-ringing."

"What little intellectualism America ever had is extinct, and I fear that the library as I remember it is soon to follow." Silence is now elitist and authoritarian. The library is both a homeless shelter and a free day-care center as parents just dump kids there and pick them up at the end of the day.

And her local government is musing turning the library into a community center called "Realia" where the library can lend out anything from books to lawnmowers and barbecue grills.

See — **Florence King**, "Silence is Olden," *The National Review*, Dec. 21, 2009, p.46.

Florence is of course the famous wit and author of Southern Ladies & Gentlemen.

ONLINE INDISCRETIONS LIVE FOREVER by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Facebook founder **Mark Zuckerberg** has decided that privacy is "no longer a social norm." And in keeping with that **Facebook** has made "public" the default setting for text, photo and video updates.

Marshall Kirkpatrick in his blog **ReadWriteWeb** replies that although we are a growing nation of exhibitionists, we still expect our communications to be in an appropriate context.

Is that why beauty queens never imagine their nude photos will come to light? Or our drunken carousing to become a photo fest at work?

At any rate, France is debating a bill to give Internet users the right to have old online data on themselves deleted. But the technology to do this is not yet available.

See — **Ideas**, "All Worked Up Over Privacy On the Web," *Business Week*, Jan. 25, 2010.

