

September 2011

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

Bruce Strauch

*The Citadel*, [strauchb@citadel.edu](mailto:strauchb@citadel.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

 Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Strauch, Bruce (2011) "Bet You Missed It: Press Clippings -- In the News -- Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 23: Iss. 4, Article 36.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5961>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

# 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**

### HOUSE OF SLEUTH

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

**Agatha Christie's** country house Greenway is just down the Devon coast from Torquay. It's been restored and filled with personal furniture and objects like she has just walked out the door. Although the estate provides scenes for several novels, **Agatha** never wrote there. It was a place of complete repose.

Her father was a rich American who settled in Torquay, lost all his money and then died when she was 11. She grew up quite independent and published her first detective story in 1920, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. It introduced the Belgian Hercule Poirot.

The **Bodley Head** locked her into a six-book contract that paid poorly. *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* was her seventh, and she moved to **William Collins** and found herself famous.

See — **Joshua Hammer**, "A Setting for Murder," *Smithsonian*, June, 2011, p. 68.

### STAY IN THAT LITERARY RUT

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

If you're a successful author and want to write a novel radically different from what you've done before, you will enrage your editor and critics. Tell your editor you'll use a pseudonym, and you'll encounter panic about brand recognition.

**Gore Vidal** pressed on and was published as **Cameron Kay**, **Katherine Everard** and **Edgar Box**. **Julian Barnes** wrote *Metroland* (1980), *Before She Met Me* (1982), and *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) as himself. Then he did detective novels as **Dan Kavanagh**.

Keep your project secret and submit the manuscript under a pen name as did **Doris Lessing** and **Joyce Carol Oates**, and you'll be accused of unfair practices or even fraud.

See — **Joanna Kavenna**, "Pseudonymously Yours," *The New Yorker*, July 11 & 18, 2011, p. 88.

### PAGED PAPER BOOK R.I.P.

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

**John Derbyshire** muses over the irony of the frantic pace of digitization of the printed word and the two tons of books filling his house. The death of used bookstores means he can no longer cull the collection which keeps growing geometrically as publishers send him review copies.

He questions the wisdom of putting all knowledge on servers when a solar storm or cyberwar could zap the lot. And finally, he wryly poses the question: "[W]hat will happen to book-burning as an expression of disapproval or of absolute power?"

See — **John Derbyshire**, "Ex Libris," *National Review*, July 18, 2011, p. 47.



### THOREAU ENCOUNTERS THE SUBLIME

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

In July, 1844, **Henry David Thoreau** climbed Mt. Greylock, highest peak in Massachusetts and spent a frigid night in a box having a transcendental experience. Life was not going well for him. He couldn't break into NY publishing. *The Dial*, to which he contributed, folded. He'd proposed to a young woman from Scituate and been spurned. And he'd set fire to several hundred acres of wood near Concord trying to cook fish chowder.

He described his mountain trek in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* even though Mt. Greylock is nowhere near those rivers.

**Thoreau** buffs annually reproduce the eleven-mile climb, many dressed in period costume.

See — **Elizabeth Kolbert**, "Life in the Woods," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 8, 2011, p.21.

### FROM PARTY NIBBLES TO HEARTY AND WORLDLY

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Vintage cookbook collector **Sara Dickerman** grew up with a mother who cut sandwiches in the shape of spades, hearts, clubs, and diamonds for her bridge club. Poring over two centuries of cookbooks, **Sara** finds the zeitgeist of each American epoch.

*Beverages and Sandwiches for Your Husband's Friends*, by **One Who Knows** (**G.L. Horton**, 1893) sets forth the sandwich as manly fare in a direct line with the early 20th century's hamburger and hotdog. Meanwhile, **Sara Tyson Rorer** and **Fannie Farmer** were pushing back in a culinary temperance movement arguing for thrift and nutrition. In her 1894 *Sandwiches*, **Rorer** urged a workingman lunch of wheat bread spread with cottage cheese.

**James Beard** in essays and books in the 1960s and '70s championed the sandwich as the great American art form. And he liked manly. Po' boys. Hot pastrami on rye. And he began looking abroad, bringing the Middle East and the Mediterranean into American homes. "Denmark has raised the sandwich to the status of a symphony," read the 1963 edition of the *Esquire Party Book*.

See — **Sara Dickerman**, "Edible Art," *Saveur*, April, 2011, p. 29.

### WHAT HATH TECHNOLOGY WROUGHT?

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

**Jaron Lanier** helped pioneer virtual reality in the 1980s and is credited with coining the term. He was an advisor to the writers of "Minority Report," **Spielberg's** dystopian future movie and has worked for **Microsoft Research**.

In 2010, he published "You Are Not a gadget: A Manifesto" blasting much of the use of digital technologies. **Wikipedia** he calls a triumph of "intellectual mob rule." **Facebook** and **Twitter** he sees as dehumanizing and a sure path to shallow interactions. **Facebook's** face-recognition software will lead to a paranoid society like in Communist countries. He has received rave reviews in *The New York Times* and *The New York Review of Books*.

But he likes Second Life because players create relationships.

See — **Jennifer Kahn**, "The Visionary," *The New Yorker*, July 11 & 18, 2011, p. 46.