September 2017

Future Conference Dates
**Bet You Missed It**

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

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

**Editor’s Note:** Hey, are y’al 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

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**THE JOY OF COOK BOOKS**
by Bruce Strauch (Retired, The Citadel)


Ellis studied architecture at UVA, fell into the food world as a caterer and then a “food stylist” working on such projects as *The Age of Innocence* and Burger King ads.

He views his books as social documents of the history of the South. The holy grail he seeks is a *Domestic Cook Book* by a free black woman named Malinda Russell. He only knows of two in existence.


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**MUST-HAVE ITEMS FOR TEXANS**
by Bruce Strauch (Retired, The Citadel)

Should you dine at a Whataburger in Texas you might very well join the craze of pilfering a “table tent” — an A-frame bit of plastic with your order number on it.

Lucky numbers, birthday or anniversary digits, athletic jersey numerals — all are popular motivators. And for the hard-core, the complete 1-thru-96.


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**REINVENTING JANE AUSTEN AS A RADICAL**
by Bruce Strauch (Retired, The Citadel)

It would seem that everyone knows that Jane Austen dealt not with social ills like the later Dickens but with “individual failings: vanity, greed, pride, selfishness, arrogance, folly.”

But that ill satisfies academe which must now shoehorn her into their jargon. She is being described as an “angry subversive,” at war with the “commodification of women.” And of course slavery, sexual abuse (where exactly?), land enclosure (of all preposterous things), imperialism. And blah-blah.

And we see why the English major is dying.


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**WHAT’S IN A NAME?**
by Bruce Strauch (Retired, The Citadel)

Authors of controversial tracts have often chosen invisibility. Tom Paine hid his authorship of “Common Sense.” Madison, Hamilton and Jay used a joint pseudonym of Publius for *The Federalist Papers*.

And then there was the respectability problem for women. Mary Anne Evans wrote *Middlemarch* and others as George Eliot. Jane Austen’s Sense and Sensibility was signed “By a Lady.” Charlotte Brontë published Jane Eyre as Currer Bell while her sister Emily wrote *Wuthering Heights* as Ellis Bell.

And even Joanne Rowling was advised to become J.K. Rowling to not put off boy readers.


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**BOOKSTORE BLIND DATE**
by Bruce Strauch (Retired, The Citadel)

Sounds sexy, but it’s really just a brown paper book cover with a teasing come-on. And it seems to be wildly popular.

Staff select “under-read classics,” customer selects a whimsical synopsis and then unwraps on Instagram.

The fad seems to have begun in Germany. Among American stores trying it successfully: *Malaprop’s Bookstore/Café* in Asheville, NC; *Book Culture’s* three stores in NYC; *Anderson’s Bookshop* in Naperville, IL.; *Oblong Books & Music* in Rhinebeck, NY; *Chop Suey Books* in Richmond, VA; *The Book Cellar* in Chicago, IL.

“The Hunger Games Played for Laughs.” “Junot Diaz meets Virginia Woolf.” “John Grisham goes to Camp.” Find the appeal?


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**Future Dates for Charleston Conferences**

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