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Charleston Conference Future Dates

Editor

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BOOING IS GOOD by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

The author bemoans the near-reflexive standing ovation that has devalued the gesture and lauds loud boos by the audience at the Met’s postmodern extravaganza version of Bellini’s “La Sonnambula. While boos are common in Italy, Americans spring to their feet clapping, showing the audience was involved with what they were seeing, and Francesca said it hurt, but it at least showed the audience was involved with what they had seen and heard.

And in other positive outcomes, Henry James’ play “Guy Domville” was roundly jeered, convincing him to turn his back on the stage and concentrate on novel writing.


INVESTMENT BY BUREAUCRAT by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

“529” plans are a tax-free way to save for your kid’s college education. But they’re “based partly on a false premise: that state bureaucrats are good at managing other people’s money.” Of the 3,506 options, 93% have dropped in value and a third of them by at least 40%.

Properly done, the investment would start heavy in stocks but move into cash and bonds as the student hits college. But Utah kept 65% in stock, and Maine and New Mexico had no allocation to cash.

“In some states, the asset allocation for the 16- to 18-year-olds looks as if it was designed by the 5-year-olds.”


BLACKBERRying YOUR WAY TO HIGH STRESS by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Ah yes, the books that nail down what it is to be an American at a point in time. Max Weber’s The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, (1905); William Whyte’s The Organization Man (1956); John Kenneth Galbraith’s The Affluent Society (1964).

And now we have NYU sociologist Dalton Conley’s Elsewhere, USA where “intraviduals” live as slaves to technology desperately trying to manage multiple data streams, telecommuting and multitasking themselves into perpetual anxiety.

And along the way, he explains the income gap. The computer obliterated low-skill jobs. Any high-tech job needing a human touch was outsourced to India. Low-skill jobs left in America? Food service preparation and home health care.

And then there’s mating habits. Contrary to dogma, men do not marry down; they find their own level. Low-income men end up with low-income women; high-income marry their equals.