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Charleston Conference Future Dates

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Top Novels on the Great Depression
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Your reading list for the pending collapse: (1) Now in November, by Josephine Winslow Johnson (Simon & Schuster, 1934); (2) The Big Money, by John Dos Passos (Harcourt, Brace, 1936); (3) Appointment in Samarra, by John O'Hara (Harcourt, Brace, 1934); (4) The Good Earth by Pearl Buck (John Day, 1931); (5) The Day of the Locust by Nathanael West (Random House, 1939).


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 a lack of true engagement on the part of the spectators.

Francesca Zambello’s deliberately provocative 1992 Met production of “Lucia di Lammermoor,” was booed, 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.


Wallenberg Archive
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

The acclaim for Raoul Wallenberg for his rescue of 20,000 Jews in Budapest came long after his arrest and murder by the Soviets. At the time, the craven Swedish Foreign Office was so frightened of alienating Russia that they refused to lift a hand to save him.

His parents and half-siblings spent six decades seeking him, in the process losing their savings, their mental health and the parents’ lives through suicide. They left behind a 50,000-page archive detailing their quest. This story joins the writings of Elie Wiesel, Anne Frank, and William Styron as a history of the Holocaust.


Cocktails of Lit & the Arts
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

H.L. Mencken said a Whiskey Sour “is not a viper, but a sweet singing canary, a faithful house dog, a purring cat upon a hearth rug.”

Philip Marlowe “nibbles” one in a seedy bar in the opening scene of Raymond Chandler’s Farewell My Lovely. Essayist Anthony Lane said it was an appropriate drink as Chandler’s Los Angeles is a “whiskey-sour climate.”

NY theater critic George Jean Nathan used it in reviewing the odd appeal of Katharine Hepburn in the 1942 Philip Barry play “Without Love.” “Although she is hardly the possessor of any overpowering sex attraction, she is appetizing in the same chill way that a whisky sour is.”

Bourbon, fresh-squeezed lemon juice, sugar. In a glass of packed crushed ice, it was known circa 1900 as a Nose-Cooler. Add orange bitters, shake and strain into stemmed glass you have the vintage Buster Brown.


Future Dates for Charleston Conferences
Preconferences and Vendor Showcase Main Conference
2009 Conference 4 November 5-7 November
2010 Conference 3 November 4-6 November
2011 Conference 2 November 3-5 November

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.