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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 <ksstrauch@comcast.net>. We’re listening! — KS

IF YOU’RE INSECURE, NIT PICK
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

C. Northcote Parkinson wrote, “The No Man has little to lose.” Hence it’s a safe harbor for gutless and domineering managers. Of course they pretend to be perfectionists protecting lofty standards that only they can see.

But the real impact is enormous inefficiency. It’s not just the wasted time of doing things over and over before the boss gives approval because it’s now totally his idea. Productivity is reduced to a crawl. First the abused staff will spend an inordinate amount of time trying to overcome objections in advance. But with ‘no’ still the answer the staff learns that trying hard doesn’t matter because nothing whatsoever pleases.


MALAISE AT A FORMER HIGH FLYER
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

The “Peanut Butter Manifesto” is being circulated at Yahoo, a memo saying the company is spread too thin and even (from online dating to fantasy sports to weather) and calling for a wake up. The company suffers from slumping sales, slow revenue growth, talent defection and no particular focus.

Some Yahoo management argue that refusal to buy Facebook and YouTube is a sign of discipline. But a buyer of Yahoo advertising says Yahoo had the ability to do the Facebook/YouTube staff faster and bigger than anyone else and flubbed it. Meanwhile Yahoo plunked down $2 billion to build a search and advertising business and yet they’re being trounced by Google.


IDLE MINDS IN CYBERSPACE
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

A post-modern economy finds it easy to produce solid objects answering real human needs. So it devotes its energies to elaborate fictions pandering to the public appetite for unrealities. The university is big business in America and plays a key role.

While universities contain departments of “useful arts,” its dominant courses of study in the humanities are dedicated to uselessness and “remains fixed on that strange thing called scholarship, the utility of which has been neither definitively proven nor finally disproved.” America produces more scholarship than the rest of the world combined.

Knowledge is used to make more knowledge, much unreadable, most unread. Gender studies and queer studies do not exist for ideological reasons but to provide new fields for journals, books and footnotes. “A modern university could be compared to an ant-heap, in which the library is queen, her swollen body constantly enlarged by the fertile scholars that cling to her, and surrounded and protected by the sterile bands of student soldiers.”

Information technology, rather than making this “knowledge explosion” more accessible has drowned out understanding with noise. It treats reality and fantasy as equivalent.


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