Bet You Missed It—What do gold and musicians have in common?

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Bet You Missed It

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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

AN AUTHOR’S TRASH IS GOLD

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

And it’s not just an author’s scribblings and rewritten manuscripts that are of value. Tim Leary’s Nintendo Power Glove is preserved by the NY Public Library. Norman Mailer’s bar mitzvah speech can be found at UT-Austin.

The prices? Woodward and Bernstein sold 83 Watertag boxes for $5 million. Norman Mailer got $2.5 million for 1,062 boxes of whatever.

And even with digitization, there is value. Poet of light verse, Wendy Cope, made a recent sale to the British Library: 40,000 emails for $50,000.


MUSICIANS AMONG US

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Let’s read about the musician in society. (1) Arthur Loesser, Men, Women and Pianos (1954) (European & American social history via the piano); (2) Ralph Ellison, Living With Music (2001) (high-ballin’ trains and lonesome guitar chords — delving into history of jazz); (3) Thomas Mann, Dr. Faustus (1947) (Faustian spin on musical mind of Arnold Schoenberg — the artist as “other”); (4) Dimitri Shostakovich & Solomon Volkov, Testimony (1947) (composer trapped in confines of Soviet desolation); (5) Bruce Chatwin, The Songlines (1987) (Aboriginal beliefs on totemic beings who sang the earth into life — those on “walkabout” are on a spiritual journey recreating creation).