SAVE A TREE: LOG UNDERWATER

Our thirst for lumber means that each year we lose a swath of forest about the size of Delaware. Now Triton Logging, based in Victoria, British Columbia, has figured out a novel way to put a dent in deforestation—by harvesting trees not on land but underwater. Until now, logging underwater trees was a dangerous business, with injuries common. But this spring Triton started harvesting ebony, mahogany, and other hardwoods from Ghana’s Lake Volta using its patent-pending SHARC system. SHARC is a barge plus custom excavator with a saw on the end that can find, cut, and retrieve trees at depths even greater than 80 feet, using GPS, video, and sonar.

The innovation may mean big money. The small private firm, backed by institutional investors, estimates that 300 million trees worth $50 billion lie underwater, mostly in lakes formed when dams were built. That’s true of the Ghana trees, which were flooded during a 1985 dam construction and are worth some $1 billion to $2 billion. (Triton signed a 25-year license with Ghana’s government.) —Brian Dumaine

BOOK VALUE

KONG CHRONICLE

Even if you’re not a gamer, the story of Nintendo’s rise is fascinating. Jeff Ryan’s Super Mario [Portfolio/Penguin] delivers juicy details from the Mushroom Kingdom about disappointments like the GameCube. He tracks Nintendo from its arcade games to the Wii and 3DS, offering items like how Popeye inspired Donkey Kong and how mere game distributors Ron Judy and Al Stone became key staffers.

Cocktail party fodder

In 1982, Universal sued, saying Donkey Kong infringed its King Kong. It not only lost (Kong was deemed to be in the public domain), but the judge eviscerated the film giant.—Daniel Roberts

LAWSUITS

NEWS AMERICA’S TENSE TROUBLE

Bill Clinton once said, “It depends on what the meaning of the word ‘is’ is.” For News America Marketing, the $1.2 billion newspaper-insert subsidiary of News Corp., it may also depend on the tense of a word. In 2007, News Corp. sued Robert Emmel—an employee alleging anticompetitive behavior who sent documents to Senate investiga-
tors the day before signing a nondisclosure agreement—for breaching the agreement. Although his information appeared in three different lawsuits against News America alleging unfair practices—all of which were settled, for a total of $654.5 million—Emmel lost his own case in 2009. On June 8 an appellate court reversed the decision, ruling that because the agreement was written in the future tense, it didn’t retroactively apply to past deeds. The lesson, says Mark Nagle, partner at Troutman Sanders, is that language does matter. On the same day, News Corp.’s EVP and general counsel, Lawrence Jacobs, resigned unexpectedly. Published reports linked his resignation to a phone-hacking scandal at News of the World that led to 24 lawsuits. But the Emmel decision may have been the last straw. News Corp. wouldn’t comment. —Betsy Feldman