

# JOURNAL EXCHANGE

## THE INFORMED READER

Insights and Items of Interest From Other Sources

### ENVIRONMENT

## Canadian Logging Company Brings Underwater Forests to the Surface

[WIRED • FEBRUARY]

**T**HE logging industry is going underwater in a good way.

As a result of the dam projects of the 20th century, there are roughly 45,000 submerged forests around the world. Michael Behar describes how a Canadian company has come up



with a way to more efficiently bring these dead trees to the surface. The technology might even have the power to unite two old adversaries: the timber industry and environmentalists.

Chris Godsall, chief executive of Canada's Triton Logging Inc., has developed a logging submarine, dubbed the Sawfish, that uses a 54-inch chain saw and air bags to lift the wood to the surface. It is operated through remote-control technology similar to what oil companies rely on to maintain rigs

Underwater logging potentially can be much swifter and less costly than cutting down trees on land. That is partly because submerged trees often are stripped of bark and foliage, avoiding a labor- and time-intensive process. Peter Keyes, of Foxboro, Mass.,

wholesaler International Forest Products Corp., tells *Wired* he estimates that Triton Logging's harvesting costs at \$40-a-cubic-meter of wood, compared with the industry's average of \$50.

Environmentally, underwater logging has the advantage of preserving live forests on land and leaving no unsightly clear-cuts. It also is quieter than above-ground logging. Triton plans to market its wood as an environmentally friendlier alternative at home-improvement stores.

### INTERNET

## A French Intellectual Deconstructs Google

[THE DAILY TELEGRAPH • JAN. 14]

What is it about Google that makes some French people nervous? In a review of a new book about Google written by one of France's most prominent intellectuals, Britain's Nicholas Blincoe delves into the discomfort about the U.S.-born search engine and finds familiar fears of American hegemony.

In "Google and the Myth of Universal Knowledge," Jean-Noël Jeanneney, president of France's national library and a former finance minister, says Google's claim to be universalizing knowledge amounts to false advertising. He focuses in particular on Google's venture to make digital copies of books from some of the world's largest libraries. Mr. Jeanneney, whose own library is digitizing its holdings, insists that knowledge cannot be independent of the way it is organized. He believes that since Google is run by English speakers as a profit-oriented business, it will organize information with a bias toward those things. For instance, Google might digitize books in a way that provides language advertisers could link to, rather than producing the clearest possible copies.

Only a government project can overcome such biases and deliver truly universal knowledge, Mr. Jeanneney contends. That challenge is being met with difficulty. Earlier this month, Germany pulled out of a joint venture with

France to fund a European Google-killer called Quaero (Latin for "I seek") over a dispute about how many media the search engine should track.

### SOCIAL SCIENCE

## Behind Black Smokers' Preference for Menthol

[RADAR ONLINE • JAN. 15]

Big Tobacco has played a part in drawing one of the more subtle racial lines in America: Three out of four African-American smokers smoke menthol cigarettes, while only one out of four white American smokers do.

Sarah S. Lochlann Jain, an assistant professor of cultural anthropology at Stanford University, tells *Radar Online* that the disparity might have originated in the 1920s, when accessible eucalyptus- or menthol-laced cold medications were popular with African-Americans.

But the real gap opened in the 1960s after Big Tobacco hatched a successful plan to build on menthols' popularity with a long-term marketing strategy. Tobacco companies placed ads for menthols in magazines like *Ebony* and *Jade*.

The differences in preferences might have health ramifications. *Radar Online* says research has suggested that the anesthetic sensation from menthols could encourage smokers to inhale more deeply, increasing the deadline. This may compound African-Americans' greater susceptibility to lung cancer from smoking.

### PUBLISHING

## Plagiarism Becomes Chic in Some Circles

[HARPER'S MAGAZINE • FEBRUARY]

There have been so many prominent cases of plagiarism recently that it seems almost inevitable that some one would do what Jonathan Lethem has done: write an article on plagiarism that cribbs most of its sentences from somewhere else.

Even the idea for his piece, Mr. Lethem explains, isn't original. Along with high-brow forebears like German literary scholar Walter Benjamin, whose unfinished magnum opus on shopping consisted entirely of quotations, film critic David Edelstein used a similar device in *New York* magazine to condemn Kavaya Viswanathan's plagiarized portions of "How Opal Mehta Got Kissed, Got Wild, and Got a Life."

Unlike Mr. Edelstein, Mr. Lethem believes copying can be a creative form of artistic expression, with his own article offered as Exhibit A. This is equally relevant in literature and business, he says. In one of his only original phrases, he writes: "A corporation that has imposed an inescapable notion—Mickey Mouse, Band Aid—on the cultural language" should consider parodies and other refractions the price of success.

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