

would you believe

Perhaps some of you remember the good old days, when you could curl up in a sunny bay window or in a comfortable over-stuffed chair, and let your imagination take you anywhere in the world — through the pages of a good book.

But the fellas in publishing are suggesting that those days — and books — may belong to the past, to be replaced by an electronic creation unlike any "book" ever known.

Here are some of the ideas that publishers are playing with these days — ideas that may appear in your home tomorrow.

The book of the future may indeed be a real book, but a cheap one that would disintegrate shortly. If you want to read it more than once, it can be scanned by a laser beam and stored in your home computer.

The book of the future may be a cassette that attaches to your TV set and gives you the contents in words and pictures, abridged or complete.

It may even come to this: the book of the future may be a cassette audio-visual tape that connects to your brain with electrodes. Then you (quote) "read" the latest best seller while relaxing in your monorail set on the way to work. (Newscrip)

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Have you ever tried to walk down memory lane, only to find that you can't even find the road — because your memory has gone with the wind? Then you might want to try a new memory drug that comes in the form of a nasal spray.

Seriously folks, a team of European doctors and scientists have discovered a brain hormone called vasopressin that's produced by the pituitary. Testing so far has been limited, but the results have been remarkable.

In one typical incident, a young Spanish man who was injured in an auto accident could not remember what happened in his life for three months before, and three months after the accident. After five sprays of vasopressin over 24 hours, memories came flooding back, and after a week, had returned to normal.

Another team of doctors working with elderly men in Belgium gave the sprays to volunteers. Later tests showed that their memories had improved. (Newscrip)

A Cleveland outing club suggests that storm sewers can be a challenging alternative to caves for city-based spelunkers.

"Sewers get to be like old friends," said Doug Welker, who has guided more than 100 persons through the underground channels to observe the beautiful cave-like calcium deposits and colorful fungi.

"There is quite a variety of living things down there," said Welker who has seen fish, crayfish, frogs and at least one clam.

A word of warning, though, to potential storm-sewer spelunkers — don't go alone; have the proper equipment — and make sure it's not going to rain. (Newscrip)

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It seems that Richard Lazar has made a hobby of staring at people — especially pretty coeds at the University of Colorado. But his hobby has gotten him into trouble with the law.

Last year, Lazar was arrested a couple of times for "staring at and following women around." So Lazar got himself a lawyer, who argued that Lazar has a Constitutional right to stare, especially since his hobby doesn't hurt anyone. Lazar put it this way: "You've got your choice of looking at people or looking at objects and I guess I prefer people."

The court agreed, and now Lazar is back on campus, staring to his heart's content. (Newscrip)

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Since marijuana is in short supply in Japan, people have taken to stealing hemp, not for its rope-making qualities but for its THC, the part that gets you high.

To combat this, farmers have organized vigilante patrols and scientists have developed a new THC-free variety of hemp, according to New Scientist Magazine. Now, farmers are planning to replace the native hemp with the new variety in a program that will take several years.

The only problem with the new THC-free variety is that it easily cross pollinates with the native variety and returns to its wild, potent state. (Newscrip)

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Across the country 15 percent of school lunches end up in the garbage, but in Las Vega, schoolchildren are cleaning up their plates. In a revolutionary program the kids there are being served nutrition-packed, low-fat lunches cleverly disguised as "junk food".

Len Frederick, the program creator, appalled at the waste, and aware that highschoolers were slipping off-campus to eat at the local "greasy spoons," decided to "learn from the enemy". He visited every fast-food operation he could find and studied the menus. Then he modified the recipes to meet federal nutrition regulations. The results include foot-long hot dogs made entirely of turkey meat, low in saturated fat, wheatgerm baked into buns, biscuits, pizza crust, and cinnamon rolls, low-cholesterol salad dressing, vitamin C-enriched French fries, and a milk shake that's almost 97 percent fat-free and uses kelp instead of ice cream.

A quick check of the garbage cans shows that the kids are scarfing down the food — prompting 12 other school districts nationwide to experiment with this approach. (Newscrip)

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Over one quarter of the adult population of mental hospitals are not ill enough to be kept there, according to a two-year survey of the New York State mental health system.

The conclusions coincide with a view — recently evolved among mental health specialists — that mental hospitals are not appropriate places to treat patients who are not sick, or potentially destructive to themselves or others.

The survey found that 28 percent of mental patients could live independent lives outside the hospital, either by themselves, with families, or in halfway houses, boarding houses, or nursing homes.

The patients cannot now be discharged, mental health officials acknowledged, because there are not enough community facilities to provide the service they would require outside of the hospital. (Newscrip)

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Here's good news for women who've had abortions and fear the operations may have affected their ability to have healthy children.

Two researchers from the University of Washington recently reported in "the New England Journal of Medicine" that abortions "do not affect any measure of fetal or infant health, including low birth weight, premature delivery, still birth, . . . miscarriage or congenital malformations." In fact, after studying nearly 5,000 pregnancies, the researchers found that women who had abortions tended to have healthier babies. (Newscrip)

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A Washington, D.C. gas station attendant, who's known for his gift of gab, recently talked an armed bandit out of robbing him.

The attendant first told the bandit that it didn't make any sense to steal, since he (the bandit) could make more money by getting a job. The would-be thief responded to that play by threatening to blow off the attendant's head. So the fast-talker took up another line of reasoning. He pointed out that murder would only make matters worse and could even land the bandit in jail for life.

Oddly enough, the thief agreed. He apologized, shook the attendant's hand and returned 86-one dollar bills. (Newscrip)

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A coalition of feminist groups in Los Angeles recently held a militant memorial service for the victims of the so-called Hillside Strangler, who's raped and murdered at least 12 Southern California women.

The women wore veils to symbolize their mourning and red capes to signify their rage and recited rape statistics on the front steps of City Hall. A spokeswoman from the Rape Crisis Hotline also read off a list of rape-prevention tactics they want the Los Angeles City Government to institute. The demands included self-defense courses in all levels of public school education, the inclusion of rape crisis hotline numbers in telephone book emergency listings and city-support for anti-rape projects. (Newscrip)

For some time now, people tired of war and the bomb have been fond of saying something like, "Man is the only animal that regularly kills its own kind."

It may or may not make us humans feel better, but naturalists are busy proving that statement wrong: bears, wolves, lions, hippos, and many kinds of monkeys also kill their own. None, perhaps, are more dramatic about it than India's sacred monkey, the Hanuman Langur.

Harvard anthropologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy (Pron: Herdee) reports that a dominant male Langur who has just won control of the monkey troop tries to bite to death the offspring of his predecessor. The females in the troop usually cooperate in trying to prevent the infanticide, but eventually give up, and then mate with the new monarch. Hrdy speculates that the grisly practice is the male's way of leaving his personal genetic stamp on the troop as quickly as possible. (Newscrip)

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If you were going to rob a bank, but didn't know the city where the bank was located, wouldn't you buy a map and then rob the bank?

Well, a couple of Montreal guys did it the other way around. They recently held up a bank in Toronto and got away with \$10,000 (dollars). However, the two thieves had trouble getting out of the city and decided to stop at a nearby service station to buy a Toronto map. Police move in and the driver of the get-away-car was arrested. But his buddy who went inside to get the map, got away for the time being. (Newscrip) (Credit: Randy Werle, CFTR, Toronto, Ontario)

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A group of Native Americans have placed a curse on anthropologists from Oakland University for desecrating ancient Indian burial grounds.

The Indians say they will not remove the hex until the anthropologists return some 18 skeletons, estimated at between 700 and 1,000 years old. Oakland University officials have promised to return some of the remains soon, but the anthropologists want to study some of the bones for at least six more months. The Indians then plan to re-bury the skeletons on Indian land near Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. (Newscrip)

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California's Public Utilities Commission has unanimously ordered a ban on automated junk calls which will go into effect at the end of the month. The ban forces phone companies to stop hooking up devices which can dial your number and play you tape-recorded advertisements.

Though this doesn't exactly make such devices illegal, pending further action, the ban will also require phone companies to cut off services to anyone using such devices.

Meanwhile, Congress and the Federal Communications Commission are mulling over possible nationwide regulations controlling the devices. (Newscrip)

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Ouch!!!!

Home accidents kill nearly 2200 persons each year and twice as many people suffer accident-sustaining injuries in the home than in any other environment. On Valentine's day, let's have a special thought for our loved ones and their safety. Here are some questions that may help evaluate the safety situation of a people at home.

- Is there a sufficient number of fire detectors in the house?
- Does anyone in the house ever smoke in bed?
- Has an escape been planned in case of fire?
- Did the fire department check the home for fire hazards?
- Are all medicines and pills clearly labelled and kept under lock, out of the reach of children?
- Are insecticides, household cleaners, disinfectants kept in a closet separate from food and out of the reach of children?
- Are all electrical cords and outlets in good condition?
- Are passageways clear of obstructions at all times and all areas properly lit?
- Are babysitters told what to do in an emergency?
- Is proper equipment on hand for any emergency: flashlight, fire extinguisher, first-aid kit?
- Are the emergency phone numbers for police, fire department and doctor posted at the telephone?

Any negative answer indicates a potentially hazardous situation which should be corrected immediately. There should be no compromise on safety.