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Photograph by ©Norma Jean Gargas/Alamy



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# Cambridge 02138

*Final clubs, the doubly disadvantaged, veterans' memories*

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## CHARTER SCHOOLS

PAUL PETERSON'S call for school reform (September-October, page 37) is an exemplary display of the weaknesses of the charter-led education "reform" movement. Brimming with needless hostility to teacher's unions (which have issues, to be sure, but need to be engaged rather than ridiculed), nowhere does he offer a single suggestion about how schools—charter or otherwise—should attract and retain top-level talent to our nation's classrooms. The world's best school systems (Finland, South Korea, etc.) give teachers excellent pay, terrific respect, up-to-date facilities, union representation, and top-quality public management; why none of this bears any mention is troubling.

The biggest problems with American schools can't be solved by changes in management: many urban schools are trapped in a cycle of poverty, making them unable to attract and retain good teachers (or principals, with the occasional exception that proves the rule), and residential segregation has left them without the resources to provide the wrap-around services (or even decent building maintenance) needed to right the situation. This is a problem competition and choice won't solve; it was in fact created by the choice known as white flight (or, as Peterson puts it, "the affluent already have the options they need"). The urge to competition relegates the poorest tier of students to the losing schools, using charter management to distract the public from the need for more resources and racial integration.

RAPHAEL SPERRY '95  
San Francisco



OUR SCHOOLS are a critical part of the future of the United States. Many schools are failing. Peterson's article explains what has been done, the results, and what must be done, vouchers and charter schools, more persuasively than any of the other pieces

I have read on the subject.

ROBERT C. ARMOUR, M.B.A. '67  
Virginia Beach, Va.

PAUL E. PETERSON'S fantasizing "Post-Regulatory School Reform" is both disappointing and disturbing. Clearly he has spent too long in the ivory tower of the Kennedy School and too long in the heady environment of educational elitism of suburban Boston, God bless it.

What is disappointing about this outdated evolution of the article is a combination of his cavalier commentary embedded in the article, his apparently libertarian view of education policy, his bias against federal support and oversight of American education, and his dismissal of public education at the local level, e.g., "...today's public schools show little capacity to improve on their own." Perhaps the most revealing and ironic aspect of his arguments and data is that neither whites, blacks, nor Hispanics significantly improve in reading and math over extended periods of time. One might suspect that suggested charter school improvements occur simply because of experimental effect, that curious phenomenon seen repeatedly in education reform, medicine, and other research where improvement occurs briefly because people believe it will.

What is disturbing is that Peterson ar-



# Bricks and Mortar

Outside of Massachusetts Hall, undergraduates enrolled in Anthropology 1130: the Archaeology of Harvard Yard are diligently working to uncover pieces of the University's past, the latest in a series of five excavations in the oldest area of campus. Once a week, they carefully sift through dirt to discover fragments of history and glimpses into lives that seem both foreign and familiar. A bone comb, a white clay pipe, and a piece of metal type from Colonial America's first printing press: artifacts that are as much about appearance, leisure, and technology as they are about a different time. How did our predecessors inhabit and experience Harvard? How did they change it?

I reflect on those questions each time we begin a new construction project—an increasingly common occurrence thanks to the Harvard Campaign. Our successors will come to know the University, in part, through the structures we are renovating and creating today. They will inherit a Memorial Church endowed with improved accessibility and—much to the delight of summer and winter visitors—temperature control. The Science Center will feature a first floor that integrates social and study spaces; the Cabot Science Library will combine the best of Harvard's collections with the latest in technology-enabled research tools; and the renewed undergraduate Houses and a revitalized Lavietes Pavilion will create serendipitous opportunities and anchor lifelong relationships.

The Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center, formerly known as Holyoke Center, is coming into view and generating excitement about the possibility of a common space for the entire University. Glass will replace exterior walls on the first and second floors of the building, making visible areas for gatherings and meals, as well as events and performances. The same kind of porousness is also a prevailing feature of a reimagined Kennedy School campus. Construction began last spring, and the project will connect four existing and three additional buildings while raising a central green space that will become a thoroughfare for members of the University community.

Across the Charles River, land described in 1924 as having “no natural beauty in topography or tree growth” is now home to the iconic—and expanding—campus of Harvard Business School. Early aspirations for a “self-contained school” that would “give the best opportunity for contact



between students from all parts of the country” have enlarged dramatically. Tata Hall and the newly opened Ruth Mulan Chu Chao Center welcome more than 100,000 executive education participants each year, and the recently underway Klarman Hall will be a hub of activity and interaction for a community that is more diverse than its founders could have imagined.

Our work in Allston is being undertaken in a context that is not “self-contained,” but thoughtfully unbound. The Harvard Life Lab, which provides equipment and support for promising life sciences ventures founded by faculty, students, postdoctoral scholars, and alumni, recently opened next to the ever-occupied i-lab on Western Avenue. Across the street, the Science and Engineering Complex is taking shape. In four years, it will add nearly half a million square feet to our campus and become an intellectual hub for hundreds of undergraduates and graduate students, as well as the majority of faculty from the Harvard Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

Through time and space, the University has comprised people and place, connecting the two in ways that spark ambitions and shape lifetimes. The growth of Harvard's campus from four buildings in the seventeenth century to more than six hundred buildings today is not just a marker of remarkable progress, but an expression of our commitment to considering and reconsidering all that this very special place can—and ought—to be. We are elevated, now and always, by our openness to change and our willingness to break new ground together.

Sincerely,

**President Faust tours  
Smith Campus Center  
in September**



ROSE LINCOLN

gues for a fantasy. He admits vouchers affect “less than 1 per cent of the school-age population.” Worse, he admits “...school choice already exists for those who have the resources...to live in the suburbs that offer better schools. The affluent already have the options they need.” Still worse, he accen-

tuates the fantasy by idealizing schools “...financed by local donors and major foundations....” We should all be so lucky! Last, but not least, he anticipates a day when local schools will neither be subject to federal guidelines (apparently because they are “private”) nor assisted by public finance and

## 7 WARE STREET

## Do-Overs

LAST APRIL 27, toward the end of an academic year when protests about racial inequity and inclusion disrupted routines on many campuses, especially his own, Yale president Peter Salovey announced, “The name of Calhoun College will remain.” His letter to the community noted that the undergraduate residence, established in 1932, commemorates 1804 graduate John C. Calhoun, “who, while serving as a member of the House of Representatives, senator, and vice president of the United States, was a prominent advocate for and defender of the repugnant institution of slavery.” He maintained that Yale should, and would, confront this odious past.

On August 1, Salovey announced formation of a Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming. Referring to Calhoun, he observed that “many faculty, students, alumni, and staff have raised significant and moving concerns about that decision, and it is now clear to me that the community-wide conversation about these issues could have drawn more effectively on campus expertise,” informed in part by “guiding principles” of the kind the new committee will produce.

Institutions find it no easier than individuals to make such pivots, lest they be perceived as weak. Perhaps Salovey, a psychologist who helped develop the concept of emotional intelligence, is unusually equipped to overcome such concerns. Perhaps he found the evidence, passions, and/or politics compelling. (*The Yale Daily News* reported that hundreds of faculty members had signed letters urging reconsideration of the April decision; in an open letter to Salovey, Coe professor of American studies and history and professor of African American studies Matthew Frye Jacobson asked, “Have you ever reflected on how it might feel to...be assigned to a residential college named for Joseph Goebbels?”)

Whatever the *rationale*, the *effect* of Salovey’s revision merits attention within communities dedicated to considering evidence and progressing toward truth. In this case, citing significant concerns and broader

expertise bearing on the matter at hand, he has reopened a decision. That would seem to be a salutary way of modeling academic conduct, even if doing so comes at a real cost.

Hindsight, of course, is cheap. But one wonders about opportunities for productive do-overs in the Crimson context.

In the three-plus years that the Harvard Corporation and advocates of divesting endowment investments in fossil-fuel producers have crossed swords, the economics of oil and natural-gas production have been transformed by falling prices; solar cells have plunged in cost—but now compete with cheaper fossil fuels; and MIT, which also declined to divest, has promulgated a research agenda on energy and climate change (see “A Modest Proposal,” January-February, page 4). As the world has changed, the arguments for each position have simply been repeated, without visibly advancing a Harvard clean-fuel agenda; and the community remains no more notably enlightened or engaged in what this University is and ought to be doing. Might a different course yield something better than more intellectual dry holes?

Or consider the College’s decision, announced during exams last May, to impose sanctions on members of single-gender social organizations—prominently including the final clubs. It became apparent that the policy may impose collateral damage: to newer organizations serving undergraduate women and, more broadly, to the principle of free association (see [harvardmag.com/free-association-16](http://harvardmag.com/free-association-16)). As at Yale, the issue may prompt broader discussion in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in the form of a debate on aspects of academic freedom: far from the issue the sanctions sought to address. How that debate unfolds may depend on whether the air is cleared first.

~JOHN S. ROSENBERG, *Editor*

P.S. We thank the many readers whose direct support enables us to publish this magazine—see the current list beginning on page 86—and we would, of course, welcome you to join them.

~J.S.R.

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therefore not answerable to local, state, or federal requirements.

Having been a secondary-school teacher for over 30 years in an array of locally funded schools, and having taught students from the most unskilled to the best Advanced Placement, I would suggest Peterson shift his focus to three areas of concern regarding American education policy. First, how to provide education facilities and resources equally to all students across America regardless of local property taxes so the drinking water, the bathrooms, the books, the pencils and paper, and the staff are the same across the board, not dependent upon Bill Gates or the Koch brothers or Larry Ellison. Second, how to provide teachers, to all students across the country, with the breadth and depth of skills and knowledge in their disciplines who will be esteemed and rewarded for those assets. We pay lip service to teachers but prefer to denigrate their worth and pay them accordingly, unlike some European countries. The result is there is simply no reason to become a public-school teacher today if you hope to raise and send a child to college someday. And third, how to address the long-standing concept of local control in American education while providing “equal education for all.”

Perhaps Peterson and Harvard will sponsor another forum on education, include a few realists, and address some of the realities rather the fantasies.

CASPER A. CROUSE III, M.A.T. '72  
Wolfeboro, N.H.

AS ALUMNI, we felt compelled to dispel some of the entrenched myths about public education that Paul E. Peterson treats as fact. His claims that students are “at risk” and that “choice and competition remain the country’s best hope” are not based in evidence.

The myth of students being “at risk” dates back to the Reagan-era report “A Nation at Risk” that Peterson cites as evidence of a long-standing problem. Reports like this are tools for drumming up political support and are often used today to justify closing “failing schools,” which further destabilize low-income communities of color.

According to a 2013 report by the Economic Policy Institute, the United States’s average performance on international comparisons is more reflective of income distribution than poor performance. And performance breaks down along racial and socioeconomic lines.

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The achievement gap is directly tied to broader income inequality and racial inequality in our country. We cannot address one issue without addressing the others.

As Peterson states, “School choice already exists for those who have the resources...The affluent already have the options they need.” So again when we talk about school “choice” we are talking about income inequality.

We all want a good education for our children. But we do not all have access to resources. That is why public education is a cornerstone of our democracy; it is about increasing access to opportunity. But creating charter schools at the cost of defunding public schools does not simply increase options, because it simultaneously destabilizes public educational options.

“Competition” in this context is not the healthy competition that can happen between friends or classmates. It is treating schools as though they were free-market enterprises, gambling with children’s education as an acceptable risk.

JESSICA TANG ’04, ED.M. ’06; ERIK BERG ’89;

NATALIA CUADRA-SAEZ, ED.M. ’14;

PAUL R. TRITTER, ED.M. ’12;

SUZIE MCGLOONE, ED.M. ’04

*Boston*

CAITLIN GIANNINY, ED.M. ’13

*Somerville, Mass.*

CHRIS BUTTIMER, ED.M. ’10, ED ’17

*Decatur, Ga.*

PAUL PETERSON attributes the demise of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to the “regulatory regime” of the Bush and Obama administrations. That regime, he writes, is “in ruins.” That leaves market-based school reforms “as the country’s best hope.” Nonsense.

The problem was not regulation. The problem was inane regulation. NCLB assumed that schools would improve if students were tested more rigorously and if schools then were graded on year-to-year changes in test scores. Those assumptions and their supporting regulations ignored what we know about how to encourage good teaching and successful learning.

Well conceived, regulation works. Millions of special-needs students receive services under the regulatory regime spawned



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by the Education of All Handicapped Children Act. Title IX regulations expanded women’s opportunities in sports.

Peterson’s faith in market-based reforms ignores other options, possibly better ones. High-performing nations work harder than we do to recruit and retain good teachers. Many nations do more to forestall school-readiness deficits. We divert money to testing companies and publishing

houses and sports complexes and then we expect teachers to buy their own supplies. Are our priorities right?

Vouchers and charters have not proven to be any more successful than regular schools. Maybe they will. Meanwhile, we should try smarter regulation, less ideology, willingness to learn from other nations, and more learning from the experiences of successful schools, whatever their type. That, after all, was the core justification for market-based school reform. Appropriate regulations could help.

DAVID L. COLTON ’59

*Albuquerque*

UNFORTUNATELY, Paul Peterson gives only slight mention to what I believe are the two fundamental difficulties of urban education: a lack of excellent professional staff, and a mismatch between the lives of many of the students and the expectations of the institution.

The characteristics required of an excellent teacher are generally in high demand: being well educated, intelligent, articulate, perceptive, hard-working, internally motivated, persistent, and able to work under less than ideal conditions with little supervision.

Against the allures offered by the business world, schools have little to attract and hold people with these characteristics. Salaries do not match those offered by business and sta-

#### SPEAK UP, PLEASE

*Harvard Magazine* welcomes letters on its contents. Please write to “Letters,” *Harvard Magazine*, 7 Ware Street, Cambridge 02138, send comments by e-mail to [yourturn@harvard.edu](mailto:yourturn@harvard.edu), use our website, [www.harvardmagazine.com](http://www.harvardmagazine.com), or fax us at 617-495-0324. Letters may be edited to fit the available space.

tus remains low. In addition, in many schools training is very weak, there is little or no time for consultation, classes are large, and facilities are substandard. One result is that many teachers quit the profession, leaving the urban schools with inexperienced staff.

Urban kids often come from living conditions not conducive to acquiring the characteristics necessary to be successful in school: persistence, the ability to delay gratification, language proficiency, and a respect for school. Unfortunately, our society makes little effort to provide the living conditions necessary for these characteristics to flourish.

Peterson proposes that charter schools and school choice are solutions to what ails the schools. They do not, however, address the two underlying problems. This is hardly a surprise: they lie outside the control of schools. Indeed, until the society as a whole changes its attitude toward formal education and securing adequate living conditions for all, I fear they are not problems to be solved but conditions to be endured.

JOHN H. GILLESPIE, ED.D. ’73

*Old Lyme, Conn.*

#### REGULATING FINAL CLUBS

THE ARTICLE about retired professor Nancy Rosenblum was fascinating (“The Democracy of Everyday Life,” September-October, page 50). How ironic and perhaps quaint is her view of freedom. “I am always guided by a love of liberty, and particularly freedom of association. I would say that’s our most important constitutional freedom.” Freedom of association for undergraduates is, of course, about to be virtually eliminated by President Drew Faust and her acolyte, Harvard College dean Rakesh Khurana—all, naturally, in the name of political correctness. The pretext of addressing sexual assault is a transparent hoax that probably could be perpetrated only on a college campus. Harvard and apparently much of higher education, with a few shining exceptions such as the University of Chicago, has sunk into the quagmire of intellectual bullying and dictated conformity that is common to totalitarian states. How depressing.

RICHARD P. CHAPMAN JR. ’57

*Brookline, Mass.*

#### AIIDING THE DOUBLY DISADVANTAGED

I HEARTILY SECOND the ideas reported in Marina Bolotnikova’s “Aiding the Doubly Disadvantaged” (September-October, page





PHOTO BY TONY RINALDO

**A performance artist from Cuba.**

**A biomedical tissue engineer from Australia.**

**A civil rights historian from Harvard Law School.**

**An opera composer from Syria.**

**A mathematician from the Broad Institute.**

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## LETTERS

11). It would be important to help "doubly disadvantaged" students learn to approach professors, question accepted ideas, speak up in class. But I would add: remember that these students do not come from money! In the summer class you envision, I think it would be crucial to teach these kids about money: how to prepare themselves to obtain it, invest it, use it, share it, and how not to feel guilty about having it. It won't necessarily help them get a deeper academic education, but will help them survive in the world when they graduate—still disadvantaged.

JOYCE SCHMID '63  
Palo Alto

## CLIMATE CHANGE

I AM A 1976 HBS graduate, and I am embarrassed by your editorial policy regarding climate change. You are supposed to represent one of the greatest intellectual institutions on the planet, and you continue to promote the obvious partisan big lie that Earth's climate isn't stable enough and that it is determined by trace gases rather than by the sun. Shame! A tremendous discredit to yourselves and Harvard.

ERIC HOLTZE, M.B.A. '76  
Kansas City, Mo.

*Editor's note:* The magazine does not have a policy on climate change, or other issues. It does cover the research of faculty members active in this, and other, fields.

## VETERANS' MEMORIES

LIKE ROBERT M. PENNOYER and his friends in the class of '46 (The College Pump, September-October, page 72), my Significant O, Edward P.H. Kern '46, joined NROTC and zipped through Harvard in two and a half years, graduating into the arms of the U.S. Navy in 1944. Commissioned as a lieutenant j.g., he was sent through Pearl Harbor to the Pacific, where at age 20 he served as the navigator on a cargo ship carrying fuel to battle-ships. He relied on a compass, sextant, math skills, and astronomy—no GPS back then!

Edward considered himself lucky, first to be at sea, then to come back alive. (Had he been drafted into the army, he might have been sent behind enemy lines, as he spoke fluent German—and he might very well have been killed.) After hostilities ended, he went back to Harvard for a year, then became a writer-editor for *LIFE* magazine. Edward died in November 2004. The College Pump brought up poignant memories



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## LETTERS

of the stories he had told me over the years... and tears to my eyes for the classmates who didn't make it back.

JACQUELINE LAPIDUS, M.T.S. '92  
Brighton, Mass.

CONGRATULATIONS for including an excerpt of Bob Pennoyer's comments about his WWII experience. For the full story, your readers should treat themselves to his wonderful memoir, *As It Was*, published by Prospecta Press and available on Amazon.

PAUL HICKS, LL.B. '61  
Rye, N.Y.

## AMPLIFICATIONS & ILLUMINATIONS

*SPLATTERED TYPE:* Judy Bass '80 alerted us to our misspelling of Jackson Pollock's surname in "Sesquicentennnial Soirée" (September-October, page 23).

*Bogey:* John W. Stimpson '58 and Wally Stimpson '59, M.B.A. '64, pointed out that Dick Friedman's golf profile ("Strokes of Genius," September-October, page 31) erred in not identifying Edward S. Stimpson II, B.S. '27, captain of Harvard's golf team in 1926 and 1927, as the inventor of the Stimpmeter, used to measure the speed of golf greens. Friedman offers his profuse apologies.

*Mmeasurements:* Gerald Newsom, Ph.D. '68, writes, "I enjoyed 'The Plastic Earth' (September-October, page 46), but on page 47, the text states that, between 1993 and 2010, the average global sea level rose about 3 mm per year: about 51 mm for the 17-year span. But the map on that page shows the amount of sea-level rise over this same interval was generally less than 5 mm, less than one-tenth what the text says. Which is right?" Author Jon Shaw responds: "The text is correct. The chart should have been labeled 'millimeters/year.'"

*Shining light on medieval manuscripts:* In "Illuminations" (September-October, page 22), Jeffrey Hamburger notes that the text should have referred to the prayer book of Julius III, not Julius II, and regrets the error. Also, the Noyon Missal is not by Villard de Honnecourt, but painted in a manner familiar from the so-called "Sketchbook" of Villard. And the exhibition catalog, distributed by the University of Chicago Press, is published by the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College, one of three institutions mounting the exhibition.

*Clouded Vision: How It Works and What Can Go Wrong* (Off the Shelf, September-October, page 61) was written by John E. Dowling and his brother, Joseph L. Dowling Jr., who was misidentified. We apologize for our error.



# Right Now

The expanding Harvard universe

COLLARED FOR CORPORATE CRIME

## Letters from Prison

**W**HY DO senior business executives engage in misconduct that ends with prison? Eight years ago, Jakurski Family associate professor of business administration Eugene Soltes began to wonder what led wealthy, successful corporate leaders, many with families and sterling reputations in the business community, to commit white-collar crimes. “These are people we celebrate, invite to speak at commencements,” he says. One night, after watching an episode of the MSNBC show *Lockup*, he decided to ask some of them why, staying up into the morning hours writing letters to inmates who had been leaders at Tyco, Computer Associates, and Enron. A few months later, responses began to trickle back.

What he learned became, first, a case study—“A Letter from Prison,” taught at Harvard Business School (HBS) in the traditional first-year M.B.A. class on financial reporting—and then expanded into a book, *Why They Do It: Inside the Mind of the White-Collar Criminal*, published in October. Soltes has spent years corresponding with his subjects, meeting them and their families before, during, and after prison. The result is a complex account of the individual perpetrators, the shifting backdrop of cultural and legal norms governing ethical business conduct, and the competitive corporate contexts that can lead to ethical lapses ultimately deemed illegal.

Few of Soltes’s subjects express re-

morse; some never saw prison coming, and still don’t understand why they are there. Soltes clearly empathizes with their plight—but not, he says, as the result of any inclination to write a hagiography. These guys are no saints. He deliberately avoids judgment, he explains, because he wants to convey their perspective: that business conduct is not always black and white. Take the CEO of a bank faced with a liquidity crisis who reads an internal report showing that customers are hurriedly withdrawing money. “We could say that an entirely forthright leader would tell investors, ‘We are deeply concerned that

we are experiencing a run on the bank, and if this continues, we’ll go bankrupt,’” says Soltes, but that could easily become a self-fulfilling prophecy. On the other hand, if the executive tries to reassure investors that everything is okay, and the bank later fails, those reassurances could be seen as deceptive and perhaps even fraudulent. Knowing how to navigate such situations, he argues, *not* the inclination to see the situation as right or wrong, is the mark of successful executive.

This is what he tries to teach at HBS, where ethics is now a component of many courses (see “An Education in Ethics,” September-October 2006, page 42). In his classes, “There is always a cohort of students who confidently say, ‘I would never manipulate earnings.’” Backdating contracts to inflate a prior quarter’s earnings is a clear violation and can lead to jail—but what about hold-



ing contracts over into the next quarter to boost results then? “What happens if it’s the final Thursday in a quarter, and you have already hit your quarterly target, and your fax machine comes through with a couple more contracts that were just signed? Do you need to process those now or should you just go out, have some drinks with friends, and celebrate, and wait to process those on Monday to start the next quarter out strong? In the real world,” reports Soltes, “most people wait until Monday.”

“You don’t blow past your targets,” he continues, conveying student reactions, “that just raises expectations and creates more work. Most people want to take it easy. That is manipulation in the same way, but now instead of overstating earnings, which everyone recognizes as wrong, you are understating performance.” There are legal ways to manage earnings—accelerate a release, postpone a writedown, reevaluate a pension assumption—and there are others deemed illegal by courts, such as backdating a sale from a Monday to the previous Friday, which landed eight people in jail at Computer Associates. Soltes says he tells these stories to teach his students humility. Many of the people he writes about went to the Business School, the Law School, or the College. They are more like than unlike the students he sees every day.

But Soltes does identify patterns of misconduct that could help his students avoid similar mistakes. In many of these crimes, the perpetrators don’t perceive the harm. Operating on intuition, often under pressure to make quick decisions, with no apparent victim in view, they miss the significance of signing a document or approving a strategy that on reflection might seem questionable.

He also advocates strategies for avoiding such mistakes. His favorite example involves venture capitalist Ben Horowitz, who routinely consulted an outside legal adviser whom he trusted—a practice that saved him from jail. For a software company he’d founded, Horowitz hired a talented CFO who suggested that, to be more competitive, the firm ought to backdate options as part of executive compensation, a practice that had become common among technology companies in the 1990s. Her previous employer’s legal counsel and their auditors had designed the process and said it was acceptable, whereas Horowitz’s adviser from outside Silicon Valley told him, “I’ve gone over the law six times and there’s no way that this practice is strictly within the bounds of the law.” (A few years

later, the CFO briefly went to prison for her involvement in backdating options at the previous company, Soltes reports.) Horowitz believes he avoided prison only because he had good counsel, good luck, and “a good compliance system,” says Soltes. That story “has resonated with me more than any other,” he continues, “because it shows that staying on track is not always about one’s moral compass or having ‘good values.’ Instead, avoiding consequential mistakes is sometimes simply knowing where we might unexpectedly go astray, and putting in a place a system—like review by an outsider—to prevent missteps.”

Uber offers another kind of example that reflects how technology sometimes outruns regulatory frameworks. The company, which Soltes calls “a remarkable firm that upended

the transportation market,” and “one of the most valuable” of the twenty-first century, “clearly skirted laws and regulation in the United States and abroad,” he points out: “two of their executives in France” have been convicted of violating transport and privacy laws and fined. “Sometimes being innovative and skirting the law will make you an Uber,” he says, “and sometimes being too aggressive will lead to the same end as Enron and Jeff Skilling [M.B.A. ’79], who has been sitting in prison for nearly a decade. Figuring out which side of that line you’re on, students learn, is sometimes hard.” ~JONATHAN SHAW

EUGENE SOLTES WEBSITE:

[www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/profile.aspx?facId=541710](http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/profile.aspx?facId=541710)

#### BENEFITS OF BLISS

## Can Happiness Make You Healthier?

IN THE QUEST to study human happiness, including its causes and effects, even agreeing on a definition is a formidable undertaking. Joy, euphoria, contentment, satisfaction—each of these, at times, has been used as a proxy or emphasized in research studies.

Studies that probe the link between happiness and health outcomes are still relatively rare in scientific work, but the new Lee

Kum Sheung Center for Health and Happiness at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health aims to change that as it pursues a new approach to health maintenance: focusing on specific factors that promote the attainment and maintenance of high levels of well-being. In this, the center represents a sharp departure from traditional medicine that focuses on risk factors and





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treatments for disease. Among the center's first goals: to catalog and standardize the measures used to describe and evaluate happiness and related factors. "There are more than 100 different measures already in use for the various forms of well-being," says Laura Kubzansky, the Lee Kum Kee professor of social and behavioral health. "And it may be that the instrument we need for our research does not yet exist." Happiness, after all, is a term that encompasses physical, emotional, and social factors. Although the different facets of well-being frequently occur together, measuring one does not always shed light on whether the others are present; thus, different measures may be needed to capture these distinctive facets.

The researchers also hope to solidify evidence that emotional health influences physical health, and not just the other way

## "Happiness" encompasses physical, emotional, and social factors.

around. This notion was challenged last year, when *The Lancet* published a study finding no connection. But critics (including Kubzansky, who coauthored a letter of response in the same journal) took issue with the study's methodology, noting that in adjusting for self-rated health (which is partly defined by emotional well-being), the study's authors essentially adjusted for the very factor they were trying to investigate as a predictor.

The debate exemplifies the tension underlying research in this area: the public seems to find the subject enormously compelling, but some segments of the scientific community remain skeptical. Kubzansky and her colleagues aim to amass enough evidence of biological connections between emotional

and physical health that eventually the link will be taken for granted, much as exercise is generally regarded as beneficial.

Yet even if that link is established, how can it be applied? If some people are innately happier than others, are the latter doomed to ill health? To answer such questions, the researchers seek to identify social policies that may be relevant as well as to test interventions with the potential to increase happiness: exercise, mindfulness, and cultivation of a positive mindset, for example. Other studies will aim to establish best practices for corporate wellness programs by testing their efficacy.

Another prong of research will be led by Kasisomayajula "Vish" Viswanath, Lee Kum Kee professor of health communication, who studies the impact of movies, television, advertising, and social media on health and happiness. For example, watching or reading news with a focus on negative events such as war, terrorism, and crime may influence people's sense of well-being: "If you feel that the entire world is coming apart, that affects your emotions," says Viswanath. Researchers will also investigate how media can be used to positively influence happiness and health.

Research about happiness gets headlines more readily than grant funding. Kubzansky notes that to date, her projects—including studies of veterans that link post-traumatic stress disorder with poor heart health and a positive outlook with improved heart health, and studies of older men that link hostility with diminished lung function—have capitalized on existing data. That allowed her to conduct work on this topic without the level of grant support that an original study design and data collection would require. That

is why the \$21 million underwriting the new center—a gift of the Lee Kum Kee family, whose Hong Kong-based companies make products such as sauces, condiments, and herbal supplements—is critical to investigating the relationship between happiness and health. Such research represents a paradigm shift, Viswanath explains, and that has been one reason for funding challenges. Until very recently, he says, "We have always treated health as the absence of disease"—and the existing funding framework for both government investment and private philanthropy focuses principally on understanding and preventing specific diseases.

The new center will focus instead on factors that can lead to positive outcomes. "Unhealthy lipid profiles, high blood pressure: these are biological processes that have been shown to lead to poor health," says Kubzansky. "The question is, are there biological processes that we have not yet identified, or that we don't characterize well, that lead to better health?" She and Viswanath envision the center as a place that brings together researchers from Harvard and beyond, complete with funds for pilot-testing ideas that may generate the initial data necessary to obtain support for full-scale studies.

"People focus on problems because that's what catches our attention, and people want to solve them," says Kubzansky. But she is optimistic that the culture will begin to shift, thanks to the new center: "My hope is that with a convening platform to pull people together, we'll be able to change how people think about health," and how to maintain it throughout their lives. ~ELIZABETH GUDRAIS

LEE KUM SHEUNG CENTER FOR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS WEBSITE:

[www.hsph.harvard.edu/health-happiness](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/health-happiness)

### MODULAR ANTIBIOTIC ASSEMBLY

## Super Drugs for Super Bugs

**L**AST SPRING brought alarming reports of the first known case of a germ resistant to colistin, considered an antibiotic of last resort. The bug, a strain of *E. coli*, was found in a culture taken from a Pennsylvania woman with a urinary tract infection.

Thomas Frieden, director of the Cen-

ters for Disease Control and Prevention, responded by warning that "the medicine cabinet is empty for some patients," with few new antibiotics in development to fight drug-resistant super bugs. As of 2013, only four international pharmaceutical companies were still attempting to produce new

options; in May, *The Economist* noted that, given the expense of drug development, companies prefer to focus on medicines for chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, which patients take indefinitely.

The Pennsylvania woman's infection happened to respond to other existing antibiot-



ics, but the failure of colistin renewed conversation about the dangers of multiple-drug-resistant infections and the startling lack of remedies (discussed at length in the feature “Superbug: An Epidemic Begins,” May-June 2014, pages 40-49).

The dearth of new treatment options led Andrew Myers, Houghton professor of chemistry and chemical biology, to create with his students a platform that may speed the process of developing macrolide antibiotics. “Macrolide” means “large ring,” and describes the circular chemical structure of this class of antibiotics. These popular drugs are generally well tolerated by patients, but increasingly ineffective against a range of bacteria, Myers explained in an interview.

His method uses eight commercially avail-



JAMES O'BRIEN

able chemicals, or substances derived from them, to make building blocks that can be assembled into new ring-shaped molecules. The molecules are then tested for their ability to fight pathogens. In a research article

published in the journal *Nature*, Myers and his colleagues (including post-doctoral fellows Ian Seipel and Ziyang Zhang) reported that they used the method to construct more than 350 new compounds. “The majority of those compounds had antibiotic activity, and two had activity against clinical isolates with fierce combinations of antibiotic-resistance mechanisms,” Myers said.

These new molecules are fully synthetic, unlike the first macrolide, erythromycin, which was discovered in a soil sample from the Philippines in 1949. “That was the post-penicillin era, a time when many pharmaceutical companies were scouring the globe, looking for new natural products that might be antibiotics,” Myers pointed out.

Erythromycin was approved for human use

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in 1952, just three years after the initial discovery—a rapid pace unheard of today, Myers noted. After that, scientists seeking new antibiotics often started with the erythromycin molecule and carried out “one or more chemical reactions to change the structure, but not in a drastically different way,” he explained. This approach, known as semi-synthesis, “has dominated discovery of new antibiotics in this and other classes for many decades.”

His team, instead, has built its molecules “from the ground up.” The researchers determined that they could break the macrolide molecule into eight modules, or building blocks, that could be made from the commercial chemicals. The next step—a challenging one—was to map ways to reassemble the modules into macrolides. His students, he said, “worked very hard to identify chemical reactions that would allow us to link the building blocks in the precise way that was required, in some cases even inventing new transformations.”

The modular approach eliminates the difficulties of working with erythromycin, a complex natural product. “It is very challenging to conduct chemistry specifically

and efficiently on just one portion of the molecule without affecting others,” Myers explained. “By building from scratch, it is possible to modify just about any position of the molecule that one wants.”

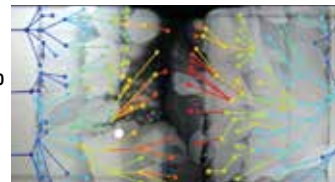
The lab continues to make new macrolides by systematically assessing different chemical combinations, and then testing them against a panel of bacteria, including drug-resistant super bugs. “We’re going to have to make a lot more molecules before we’ll find what might be a drug candidate,” Myers added. Any promising molecule that emerges will face an arduous and expensive process lasting a decade or more, including preclinical animal studies and three phases of human studies before it reaches the Food and Drug Administration for regulatory approval.

This research builds on similar work the lab undertook to develop new tetracycline antibiotics, which led his team to found Tetraphase Pharmaceuticals in 2005. The company has made several thousand synthetic tetracycline molecules, including one drug that has completed a phase 3 trial.

But funding this research has been difficult: “In my experience, there is no mon-



Visit [harvardmag.com](http://harvardmag.com) to see a video that shows bacteria developing antibiotic resistance in just 11 days.



ey coming from the National Institutes of Health to support actual antibiotic discovery,” Myers said. He has run these projects on smaller grants from Alastair Mactaggart ’88 and his wife, Celine, the Gustavus and Louise Pfeiffer Research Foundation, and Harvard’s Blavatnik Biomedical Accelerator. Last year, he founded Macrolide Pharmaceuticals to commercialize the new process.

Myers is motivated to continue pushing toward new drugs. “This is a scary situation,” he stressed. “People talk about going backward to a pre-antibiotic era where you could go in for knee replacement surgery and lose your leg, or even your life, to an infection. I hope it won’t come to that.” ~ERIN O’DONNELL

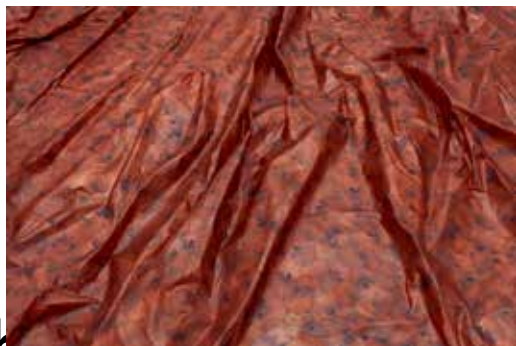
ANDREW MYERS WEBSITE:

<http://faculty.chemistry.harvard.edu/myers/home>

## Harvard Art Museums

Fogg Museum  
Busch-Reisinger Museum  
Arthur M. Sackler Museum

# Doris Salcedo



© Doris Salcedo

## The Materiality of Mourning

Photo: Joerg Lohse; courtesy of the artist and Alexander and Bonin, New York, and White Cube, London.

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## I6J The Blue Hills

*Winter hikes with the Appalachian Mountain Club*

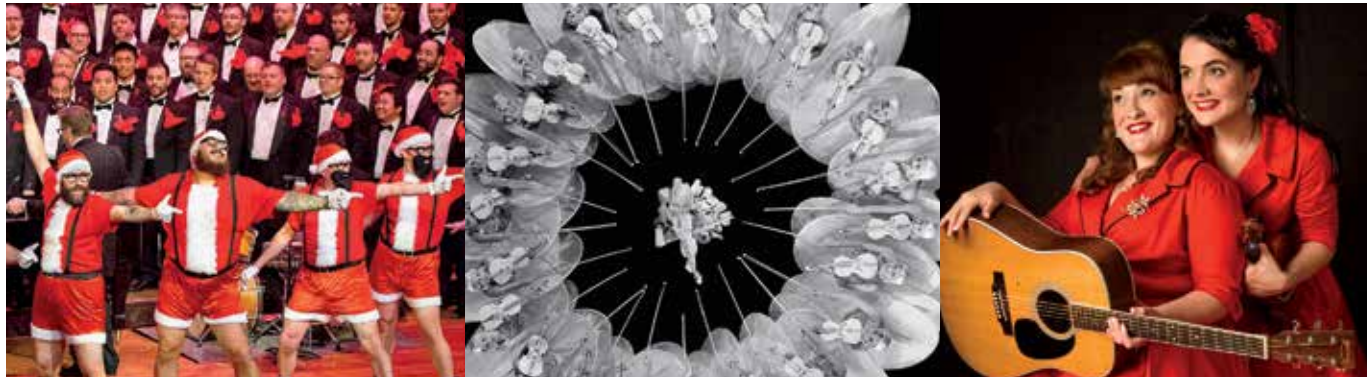


## I6L Steampunk Art

*Reimagining Brockton's shoe-making legacy*

DANITA DELIMONT / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO





# Extracurriculars

*Events on and off campus during November and December*

## SEASONAL

### The Game

[www.gocrimson.com/sports/fball/index](http://www.gocrimson.com/sports/fball/index)

The annual competition takes place at home. (November 19)

### Boston Gay Men's Chorus

[www.bgmc.org](http://www.bgmc.org)

**Jingle All the Way.** Performances throughout December, at New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall.

**From left to right:** The Boston Gay Men's Chorus; an intricately staged dance scene from *Busby Berkeley's Gold Diggers of 1933*, at the Harvard Film Archive; The Sweetback Sisters combine Appalachian sounds and urbane sensibility at the A.R.T.'s Oberon stage.

### Radcliffe Choral Society and Harvard Glee Club

[www.boxoffice.harvard.edu](http://www.boxoffice.harvard.edu)

**Christmas in Sanders: A Community Holiday Sing!** Traditional tunes, and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Paul Moravec's *Winter Songs*. Sanders Theatre. (December 2)

### The 107th Annual Christmas Carol Services

[www.memorialchurch.harvard.edu](http://www.memorialchurch.harvard.edu)

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## WHY I JOINED THE HARVARD CLUB OF BOSTON

There are many different reasons to join the Harvard Club of Boston. Kay Foley, 28, is a Harvard alum and former co-captain of the Harvard varsity women's swimming and diving team. Here's why she joined: "My time spent at Harvard was the best 4 years of my life so far. When I graduated, I wanted to maintain a connection to the tremendous people I had met and a connection to the College. I joined the Harvard Club of Boston to do just that. The Harvard Club has become my go-to spot in Boston. I go to the club for social events, to meet with people, and now to work out as well. It's a great feeling to have a place in the heart of the city to connect with existing friends and to make new ones along the way." - **Kay Foley '10**

For more information visit [harvardclub.com](http://harvardclub.com)







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## HARVARD SQUARED

**Harvard University Choir** will be held at St. Paul's Church, in Harvard Square, because Memorial Church is being renovated. (December 11 and 13)

### POETRY

#### Woodberry Poetry Room

[www.hcl.harvard.edu/poetryroom](http://www.hcl.harvard.edu/poetryroom)

Award-winning poet and translator Forrest Gander discusses, and reads from, his latest book project, *Then Come Back: The Lost Neruda Poems*. (November 29)

**Boston Originals: Season Finale** highlights the Boston-area poets **Keith Jones, Tanya Larkin, Sandra Lim, Jill McDonough,** and **Clint Smith**, among others. (December 8)

### FILM

#### Harvard Film Archive

[www.hcl.harvard.edu/hfa](http://www.hcl.harvard.edu/hfa)

**The Films of Busby Berkeley.** Screenings of the Hollywood director and choreographer's iconic American entertainments, such as *The Gang's All Here* (1943), in which a chorus line wields giant bananas dur-

ing Carmen Miranda's pioneering, sexually charged performance of "The Lady in the Tutti Frutti Hat." (December 9-January 20)

### MUSIC

#### Antioch Chamber Ensemble

[www.harvardchoruses.fas.harvard.edu](http://www.harvardchoruses.fas.harvard.edu)

The ensemble presents compositions by students who have been working with American composer Robert Kyr, Ph.D. '89, as part of the "new music initiative." Holden Chapel. (November 12)

#### The Harvard Department of Music

[www.boxoffice.harvard.edu](http://www.boxoffice.harvard.edu)

Conductor and Wolff Distinguished Visiting Scholar Nicholas McGegan leads *Italian Baroque Music from the Jewish Ghetto*, with music by Salamone Rossi and guest artists from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and San Francisco's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Paine Concert Hall. (November 17)

#### Harvard-Radcliffe Chorus

[www.harvardchoruses.fas.harvard.edu](http://www.harvardchoruses.fas.harvard.edu)

**HRC: American Contemporary Choral Works** features composers John Corigliano,

Rick Sowash, and Gwyneth Walker. Sanders Theatre. (December 3)

### EXHIBITIONS

#### Harvard Art Museums

[www.harvardartmuseums.org](http://www.harvardartmuseums.org)

**Doris Salcedo: The Materiality of Mourning** includes hanging "blouses" that are formed of woven raw silk and thousands of needles, from the *Disremembered* series (2014-16), and the museums' recently acquired *A Flor de Piel* (2013), a hand-sewn tapestry of preserved red-rose petals honoring a nurse tortured to death during the Colombian civil war. (Opens November 4)

#### Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery

[www.radcliffe.harvard.edu](http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu)

**Calm. Smoke rises vertically.** Artist Wendy Jacob, RI '05, often incorporates architectural design, physics, and tactile sensations. Byerly Hall. (November 16-January 7)

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## NATURE AND SCIENCE

### The Arnold Arboretum

[www.arboretum.harvard.edu](http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu)

Boston University professor James Lawford Anderson talks about **"Six Ice Ages in One Billion Years, Climate Change, and Boston's Earthquake Problem"**

## Spotlight

**Mount Washington**, the Northeast's highest peak, has always captured the imagination of climbers, artists, and naturalists. This winter, the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire, celebrates that iconic legacy with its new exhibit, *Mount Washington: The Crown of New England*. More than 40 paintings and photographs, along with historic prints, scientific reports, and guidebooks, are on display through January 16, including *The Emerald Pool* (1870), by Albert Bierstadt—shown in New England for the first time since it was painted. The 10-foot-wide canvas, based on the Hudson River School artist's numerous trips to sketch the landscape, depicts an idyll near Pinkham Notch. Also featured is the 1854 photograph *Reflected Ledge* (above), by John Ad-



ams Whipple and James Wallace Black, on loan from the Harvard Art Museums. The mirror images of the region's rocky, undulating terrain and shoreline forest reveals a simple majesty often taken for granted. **Currier Museum of Art**  
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(November 30), then follows up by taking visitors on a roughly three-mile walk through the Arboretum to highlight evidence of ancient geological formations in the landscape. (December 3)

## LECTURES

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## HARVARD SQUARED

Chakrabarty discusses **"The Human Condition in the Anthropocene."** (November 10) Thomas professor of the history of art and architecture Joseph Koerner examines **"Art in a Stage of Siege: Hieronymus Bosch in Retrospect"** (see page 68). (November 15)

**The Environment Forum** features Duke University School of Law Everett professor of law Jedediah Purdy '97. (December 8)

## Radcliffe Institute

www.radcliffe.harvard.edu

In **"American Amnesia: Forgetting What Made Us Prosper,"** Jacob S. Hacker, Resor professor of political science and director of Yale's Institute for Social and Policy Studies, emphasizes the critical role of an effective public sector. (December 1)

Events listings are also accessible at [www.harvardmagazine.com](http://www.harvardmagazine.com).

## STAFF PICK: Holly Day Fair

**Holly Hill Farm**, in coastal Cohasset, Massachusetts, celebrates winter and nature at its annual Holly Day Fair.

Visitors gather in the greenhouse, where a wood stove burns amid pots of homemade soups and trays of cakes, cookies, and pies. Local food vendors and artisans also sell jams, breads, soaps, jewelry, ceramics, and other artwork great for wholesome holiday gifts. Fair-goers can check out the barnyard creatures, and make gingerbread, seeded pinecones for winter bird-feeding, and wreaths of freshly cut grapevine decorated with holly, juniper, and white-pine sprays. Some 30 marked trails throughout the farm's 140 acres are open as well, from dawn to dusk, for walking, skiing, or snowshoeing. "We try to make everything local, using what's around, and get people outdoors," says Jean Miner White '57, who started organic farming at Holly Hill in 1998 with her late husband, Frank White '55, whose family has

owned and lived on the property for generations. (His father, Richardson White '27, was a gentleman farmer and sculptor, and the couple's daughter, Jennifer White '81, and nephew, Arthur White '94, are members of the Friends of Holly Hill Farm board of trustees.)

The fair crowd includes longtime customers and volunteers devoted to the non-profit Friends group that manages not only the arable fields but also a summer camp and year-round educational programs for children, adults, and school groups. The core environmental mission incorporates the farm operations, historic structures, and diverse habitats—an ethos that also extends to fair vendor and nephew Malcolm White. A teacher and woodworker, he ingeniously entwines pieces of wood scavenged on the property to create rustic furniture "without nails or screws," his aunt reports. "He just fits it all together naturally."

—N.P.B.



COURTESY OF HOLLY HILL FARM



HARVARD MAGAZINE/JC

The fair includes hand-crafted furniture (above) and traditional wreath-making (below); Holly Hill Farm's picturesque working barn



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# “Going Aboard?”

The New Bedford Whaling Museum’s *Moby-Dick* marathon  
by EVANDER PRICE



DANITA DELIMONT / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



**Marathon-readers gather beneath whale bones and beside the *Lagoda* (top and below left). The museum’s exhibit “From Pursuit to Preservation” (above) elucidates whales; its antique scrimshaw collection (detail below) is the largest in the world.**

**A**T THE New Bedford Whaling Museum’s annual *Moby-Dick* Marathon, all 136 chapters of the great American epic—from “Etymology” to “Epilogue”—are read nonstop, out loud, in a gallery overlooking the harbor. In years past, the reading took place under the sweating bones of Kobo, the rearticulated skeleton of a juvenile blue whale suspended

from the ceiling of the Jacobs Family Gallery like a cetacean Sword of Damocles. Kobo (short for “King Of the Blue Ocean”) is one of five whale skeletons the museum has on display, but he is unique. Because his bones weren’t properly prepared, they have, for the past 16 years, wept whale oil, drop by drop, filling the gallery with an anachronistic musk that was ubiquitous in New Bedford 150 years ago.

To smell whale oil today is an uncanny

novelty, a means of olfactory time travel possible only in rare places like this museum. It smells of strenuous work and wealth, of a maritime economy responsible for keeping the world lit at night, of a century of environmental hubris; it is the smell of Melville, and it must be experienced in person. By the mid nineteenth century, New Bedford was the whaling capital of the world, responsible for nearly half the global industry. The museum, founded in 1903, is uniquely prepared to inspire the maritime muse, and to illustrate and grapple with its complex history.



GINDY HOPKINS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO





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## ALL IN A DAY: Take to the Hills

**The Blue Hills Reservation** spans more than 7,000 acres, forming a scenic chain of largely unspoiled nature, just south of Boston. It's the largest state-owned green space that caters to year-round recreation—and, even rarer, it's accessible by public transportation.

In the winter, the golf course is transformed into a cross-country skiing haven, and other sections of the park are earmarked for downhill runs, mountain biking, rock climbing, and horseback riding. Urban-dwelling hikers especially flock to the reservation's 125 miles of trails, notes Catherine MacCurtain, a leader of the Appalachian Mountain Club's Southeastern Massachusetts chapter: "Otherwise we have to drive all the way to New Hampshire." The park's 22 hills offer a surprising array of treks, she assures, from beginner paths to the challenging Skyline Trail, which stretches across the range, offering perfect views of Boston's skyline and the harbor islands.

The chapter organizes free hiking trips throughout the year. MacCurtain herself prefers winter jaunts—"No bugs and it's cool"—and swears she's not alone. Consequently, she and fellow leader Paul Brookes have organized a weekly hiking series from December 27 to March 14 that roughly coincides with the winter solstice and spring equinox. The group will meet at different locations each Tuesday morning for four-hour expeditions. But anyone can take on the larger goal: hiking the length of every single trail in the park during the wintertime—although not necessarily within one season. (To traverse all 125 miles in three months, "you would be out there at least three or four times a week, in addition to the Tuesday hike," MacCurtain concedes.) About 20 hardy hikers joined the series last winter and averaged six miles each week. (For those seeking a mellower outing of three miles or so, the park hosts its own SE Mass Adult Walking Club series; see the website for programs.)

The point, really, is getting people together to enjoy winter, instead of leaving them to sit around the house. "We've found," MacCurtain adds, "that once they get the right clothing and get out there, they're not cold at all, and they enjoy it." The group stops

Appalachian Mountain Club  
Southeastern Chapter  
[www.amcsem.org](http://www.amcsem.org)



COURTESY OF THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB

along the way for snacks and lunch, but the pace is brisk; non-Appalachian Mountain Club members and fledgling hikers are welcome, but they should be in reasonably good physical condition. And, at least after the first snowfall, proper attire, hiking boots, and tread spikes or chains that increase traction are required.

Even without the winds and ice, winter hiking is more arduous than sunny-weather climbs. "Last year we didn't have much snow," MacCurtain recalls, "but we had many cold and rainy Tuesdays, which can be worse, because no matter what gear you wear, you get wet. We'd do five or six miles; then everyone would want to go home. But at least you're all in it together, so it's always more fun that way."

—N.P.B.



LORNA RUBY

**The Blue Hills Reservation offers winter treks, along with cross-country and downhill skiing.**

The 2017 marathon, itself akin to an epic journey, begins around noon on January 7, and concludes approximately 25 hours later. Prospective readers (roughly 150 volunteers are required) sign up online at [www.whalingmuseum.org](http://www.whalingmuseum.org) for the opportunity to read for about 10 minutes. (Last year, there were 110 people on a wait-list.) One after another after another, readers take the stage to deliver their allotted share of the story; the group sails along at a flank speed of around 30 pages per hour. For many green hands, this is the first encounter with the great white book. Others, those experienced old tars,

have read *Moby-Dick* more times than they can remember. Anyone is welcome to come and listen to any portion of the marathon; the truly tenacious Ishmaels try to sit *and stay awake* for the whole voyage.

What is it about this book that entangles so many readers? How has this American epic maintained its steadily growing *Rocky Horror*-esque cult following of those who insist on a yearly migration to the New Bedford Whaling Museum to ship out, as Ishmael and Melville did nearly two centuries ago, in the dead of winter?

It could be the tight sense of community at the museum. The marathon draws a diverse crew of scholars, students, conservationists, art historians, teachers, scientists, sailors, politicians, musicians, museum professionals, and local residents, all of whom revel in the collective identity that binds them to a book in the lines, sheets, and monkey ropes; each reader demonstrating his or her claim to the title of "aficionado." One never quite knows who may show up. Even Melville's great-great-grandchildren, and now great-great-great grandchildren, come to read.

Perhaps it is the challenge of trying to swallow an epic in one big gulp. The book is a notoriously slippery fish, a hodgepodge of literary genres that has, since its publication in 1851, defied categorization and been invoked in an endless myriad of analogies. The casual reader generally sips *Moby-Dick*, drinking in a few chapters at a time. Marathoners strive to sail the seas of literary en-



duration. Inevitably, this effort ends with a sudden, sublime perspectival shift of realizing one has been encapsulated by the very thing one was trying to contain, chased by the thing one was pursuing—swallowed whole by the great book.

What elevates New Bedford's *Moby-Dick* Marathon above all others held around the country is the whaling museum itself, which possesses deep collections of exhibitions and materials unparalleled for the task of illuminating a multisensory, multimedia performance of Melville's classic. No other marathon audience walks *en masse* from the galleries to the Seamen's Bethel across the street, the "Whaleman's Chapel" described by Melville: "few are the moody fishermen, shortly bound for the Indian Ocean or Pacific, who fail to make a Sunday visit to the spot." Built in 1832, the chapel is among the many structures that constitute the city's historic district; its interior walls bear the inscribed names of local whalers and fishermen who have died at sea. There, Father Mapple's sermon (part of the chapel scenes in chapters seven through nine) is performed live by a selected, talented reader who channels all the fire and brimstone of Jonathan Edwards himself from the bow-shaped pulpit. Marathon readers become one of Mapple's flock, singing alongside Ishmael "The Ribs and Terrors in the Whale," the doleful foreshadowing hymn that Melville wrote to accompany the scene. Listeners can even sit in the same pew, according to a label affixed to it, that Melville used when he visited New Bedford.

Another advantage: for readers at the marathon, surrounded by the museum's collections, whaling jargon is no longer a mystery. Here one can cut through the Gordian knot of vocabulary: sheets, lines, sails, and slang are easily learned aboard the *Lagoda*, an 86-foot, half-scale whale-ship model, the largest of its kind in the world, which is celebrating its centennial this year. Readers and listeners are free to roam the exhibitions around the *Lagoda* to see, and in some cases touch, all sorts of harpoons and whalecraft that animate the dangerous business of attempting to kill a 90,000-pound sperm whale with what is, compared to the whale's bulk, a metal-tipped toothpick. What could possibly compel men to pursue such a mad mission?

What of the whale itself, which Ishmael contemplates time and again? Chapter 32, "Cetology"—notorious for its difficult and lengthy taxonomy of the various species of

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whales known in the 1850s—is performed with humor and insight with the help of the accompanying permanent exhibition, *From Pursuit to Preservation*, which corrects Melville's qualified—but mistaken—assertion that the whale is, in fact, a fish. The exhibition is full of marvelous ecological, biological, and historical information about whales, such as the strange fact that sperm whales do not grow teeth until around 10 years of age, and why they were known as the “carpenter fish,” a fact which provides surprising insight into the ending of *Moby-Dick*. And then there is the euphemistically titled chapter 95, “The Cassock.” Many an innocent reader has blithely overlooked this digression without realizing that Melville is hilariously describing the whale penis and its many uses. The whaling museum is happy to elaborate on those functions and uses, and, should curiosity strike, visitors

might well ask the staff to see the dried penis displayed prudently under the label “*grandissimus*.”

Then there is the challenge of the ever-growing list of allusions and references Melville makes as the pages turn, which can be matched only by the depth of the museum's tremendous archive of maritime texts and artifacts—anything Melville read, it has acquired; anything Melville alludes to, it has examples of. Take the bedeviling catalog of art depicting the history of whaling mentioned in chapters 55, 56, and 57: “Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales”; “Of the Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales”; and “Of Whales in Paint, in Teeth, &C.” During the author's smorgasbord of obscure art historical references, marathon-goers can meander through the galleries to see some examples of the works themselves—like *Pêche du Cachalot*, one of several aquatints by Ambroise

Louis Garneray, or *Baleinier Français en Pêche*, a lithograph by Jean-Baptiste Henri Durand-Brager—which Ishmael believed depicted “by far the finest, though in some details not the most correct, presentations of whales and whaling scenes to be anywhere found.”

Participants can also peruse the museum's collection of every edition of *Moby-Dick* ever published, and its shelves of scrimshaw: what Melville defines as “lively sketches of whales and whaling-scenes, graven by the fishermen themselves on Sperm Whale-teeth.” Under the aegis of senior curator emeritus Stuart Frank, no fewer than three dictionaries have been published about scrimshaw; a fourth is dedicated solely to the museum's collection.

Marathoners come as close to the truth of whaling as Melville himself believed was possible without going to sea. The celebratory reading bridges the chasm between a

## CURIOSITIES: Steampunk's Sole

In *Shumachine*, a shoe-shinee's regal seat fronts what looks like a kooky scientist's air-propelled time machine housed within the skeletal frame of a covered wagon. This prime example of Steampunk's aesthetic playfully melds imaginary and historic constructs—and highlights the Fuller Craft Museum's exhibit “New Sole of the Old Machine: Steampunk Brockton—Reimagining the City of Shoes.” *Shumachine* creator and guest curator Bruce Rosenbaum incorporated vintage machinery and equipment: the stand (salvaged from a Cape Cod hotel), curvaceous cast-iron legs from a McKay sole-sewing machine, and an early model of the “Krippendorf Calculator” (used to optimize the amount of leather required to fabricate shoes). Steampunk, he explains, is “a fashion and a visual art, but also a *maker's* art, and a way of thinking and problem-solving”; ingenuity, he adds, is spawned by “fusing opposites: past and present, form and function, arts and science, man and machine.”

Fuller Craft Museum  
www.fullercraft.org

Science-fiction writer K.W. Jeter coined the term in the late 1980s, and the movement identifies with the fiction of H.G. Wells and Jules Verne. The style typically embodies technology-driven sci-fi motifs, Victorian-era “Great Explorer” adventurousness, and the Industrial Revolution's practical,

polished precision.

At the Fuller, regional artists made “Steampunk” works reflecting Brockton's foundation in footwear. By the turn of the twentieth century, Brockton's more than 90 factories employed thousands and shod citizens nationwide. For the whimsical *Shoe Carousel*, found-object sculptor Michael Ulman repurposed elegant metal and wooden shoe forms. John Belli's toy-like *Ladyslipper: Land Speed Racer* (named for a shoe-industry magnate's car), incorporates a wooden pulley and drive-belt from a local manufacturer and a cockpit that mimics “a heavy boot upper.” Artist Jim Bremer's mother worked in a shoe factory, inspiring him to honor the quality craftsmanship and “creativity, hard work, and team work” that built New England's manufacturing hives. (For *The Sky's the Limit*, Bremer and his wife, Ruth Buffington, hand-sewed hundreds of beads, buttons, watch gears, and pins onto the image of an airship.) In their *One Giant Step for Brockton*, a statuesque mannequin sports gold leggings, platform shoes, and an antenna-topped aviator cap as she strides through a riveted doorframe: a benign *Metropolis* warrior princess, of the sort who might someday recharge a city, like Brockton. ~N.P.B.



Clockwise from top: *Shumachine*; *One Giant Step for Brockton*; *Ladyslipper: Land Speed Racer*; and a detail of *Shoe Carousel*







**Father Mapple's fiery sermon from *Moby-Dick* draws a crowd at the historic Seamen's Bethel; *Pêche du Cachalot* depicts the risks of hunting with harpoons (right).**

solo, silent reading of *Moby-Dick* at home, safe and comfortable in one's own bed, and the multimedia sensorium of the museum. That extends even to the tasting of food. In an often under-examined passage in chapter 15, Melville describes a bowl of New England clam chowder:

Oh, sweet friends! hearken to me. It was made of small juicy clams, scarcely bigger than hazel nuts, mixed with pounded ship biscuit, and salted pork cut up into little flakes; the whole en-

riched with butter, and plentifully seasoned with pepper and salt.

The passage comes paired with a steam-bing bowl of hot chowder: metaphor is made material; reading is made reality.

Midnight at the museum is a quieter affair, much like the scene evoked in Chapter 51, "The Spirit-Spout": through the "serene and moonlight night," the pages "roll by like scrolls of silver," under the watch of the skeleton crew of marathons who keep the ship steady while others sleep.

Fast-forward to the early morning. The sun has risen and those stoic palinuruses who have endured for a whole night approach the finale. The monomania of Ahab

and Melville has become their own.

A marathon described cannot compare to a marathon read. For this year, the twenty-first anniversary of the *Moby-Dick* Marathon (which, coincidentally, is the very age Melville was when he set out on the whaler *Acushnet* in 1841), the titular question posed in chapter 21 abides:

*Going Aboard?*

*Evander Price, A.M. '15, a doctoral candidate in American studies and a Lowell House resident tutor, is a former intern at the whaling museum and two-time veteran of the Moby-Dick Marathon.*



STAN TESS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

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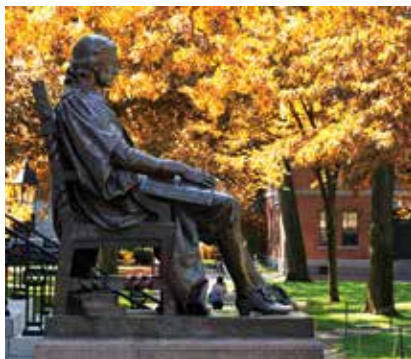
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# JOHN HARVARD'S JOURNAL



## Artful Campus

VISITORS to Harvard Business School (HBS) know its corridors are enriched with a significant, thought-provoking, collection of contemporary art (see “Rethinking the Walls,” January-February 2013, page 40). Now the grounds are enlivened as well: not only with new edifices and lush landscaping, but with a temporary installation of four sculptures on loan from contemporary artists. On the Spangler lawn, shown here, *Ernest and Ruth* (2015), a whimsical, open-ended cartoon balloon in steel plate and pipe, by Hank Willis Thomas, invites passersby to fill in the blank—or avail themselves of what is a bench, too. Framed in the distance is Tony Tasset’s *Arrow Sculpture* (2015), in painted aluminum. The artist describes the work as a graphic emblem of trending, suited to the

contemporary environment of chronic evaluation; perhaps, subliminally, the business-leaders-to-be will absorb a message about quarterly earnings—and the resulting movement of stock prices. (Jaume Plensa’s *Inés*, 2013, appears right, on the Aldrich lawn.)

“We’ve been doing a lot of things over the past few years to activate our outdoor spaces,” said Gabe Handel, assistant dean for administrative and educational affairs. Placing tables and chairs on the Spangler lawn, for example, changed it from a transit way to a popular social space—even a venue for al fresco classes. Now that appeal is augmented. “Art has been so successful indoors in activating the campus,” he continued, “we thought it belonged outside, too.” The first loaned works were installed last April, as spring beckoned; new sculptures, chosen by a committee of staff members and

students interested in art, will rotate in next April, sparking renewed visual excitement. Temporary exhibits, Handel noted, encourage those who like a sculpture to cherish it, fleetingly; those who don’t will be mollified relatively quickly. HBS, he said, is eager to convey both that it is rooted in tradition and that it is “very innovative,” and “art is a wonderfully visible symbol of that.”

On a University campus known for its cherished mix of green lawns and red brick, and its relative paucity of outdoor art, perhaps HBS’s artistic entrepreneurship will plant a welcome aesthetic seed. ~J.S.R.



## The Endowment Ebbs

THE UNIVERSITY'S endowment was valued at \$35.7 billion last June 30, the end of fiscal year 2016—a decrease of \$1.9 billion (5.1 percent) from a year earlier. The fiscal 2016 depreciation reflects a *negative* 2.0 percent investment return, and the effects of distributing \$1.7 billion for Harvard's operating budget, offset somewhat by gifts received as a result of the Harvard Campaign (see “\$7 Billion, and Counting,” page 21).

The investment losses, announced in a September 22 letter from Robert A. Ettl, who became acting CEO of Harvard Management Company (HMC) last May, are a clear disappointment. While pointing to difficult external conditions (he cited a “low interest rate environment and market volatility”), Ettl also bluntly wrote, “[W]e recognize that execution was also a key factor in this year's disappointing results.” Indeed, HMC's aggregate performance trailed its market benchmark by 3.0 percent: a gap of well more than \$1 billion. The latest results reduced HMC's cumulative annualized returns for the past five- and 10-year periods to 5.9 percent and 5.7 percent; during the past year and five- and 10-year periods, a domestic portfolio consisting of 60 percent stocks and 40 percent bonds (essentially, an unmanaged, indexed pool of funds) yielded 5.0 percent, 8.9 percent, and 6.9 percent.

The year was supposed to have begun a crucial transition for HMC, with revamped asset-allocation systems, internal investment processes, new personnel, and strengthened relationships with external money managers—all outlined in 2015 by new HMC president and chief executive Stephen Blyth—setting the stage for stronger investment returns. (His sweeping agenda is detailed at [harvardmag.com/](http://harvardmag.com/)

[hmc-overhaul-15](http://hmc-overhaul-15).) He set as goals earning a real return of 5 percentage points above the rate of inflation in higher-education costs (to accommodate annual distributions of about 5 percent of the endowment's value,

in many years,” as several of those managers also “held closely correlated portfolios,” particularly in underperforming sectors, “further impacting the performance of the asset class.” Internal performance was such that the management team was downsized in June, with assets being transferred to outside investors. The foreign and emerging-market equity portfolios had returns of negative 14.2 percent and 12.0 percent, respectively (in difficult markets for those sectors); they and other equity portfolios are scheduled to report to a new head of absolute-return and public-markets funds, who is to be hired.

Natural resources has long been an area of significant strength, with successful, pioneering investments in timber and agricultural lands and, in recent years, deft portfolio management to avoid the fallout from plunging oil, natural gas, and commodities prices. No longer: in fiscal 2016, HMC's assets produced a negative 10.2 percent return, versus positive market performance. A new managing director is on the way, following the retirement of the head of alternative investments last year.

Private-equity, fixed-income, and absolute-return results hovered around benchmark returns. The aggregate result, unfortunately, was to dilute the strong performance of real-estate investments, where HMC's strategic redirection at the beginning of the decade now appears to be yielding the hoped-for strong returns. (A full report on HMC's performance and the challenges of improving it, outlined below, appears at [harvardmag.com/endowment-drop-16](http://harvardmag.com/endowment-drop-16).)

HMC's results, of course, are not merely of interest to handicappers: the endowment now funds about 35 percent of Harvard's operating budget—a reality underscored by that \$1.7-billion distribution. In the year just reported, investing in the same sectors and market conditions, MIT's endowment returned a positive 0.8 percent, Yale's 3.4 percent, and Stanford's negative 0.4 percent. During the past 10 years, Yale's annualized return is 8.1 percent. That is 2.4 percentage points higher

### Harvard Management Company 2016 Investment Performance

Asset Class	HMC Return	Benchmark Return	Difference
Public equities	(10.2)%	(6.1)%	(4.1)%
Private equity	2.6	2.2	0.4
Absolute return	(1.2)	(0.3)	(0.9)
Natural resources	(10.2)	1.4	(11.6)
Real estate	13.8	9.4	4.4
Fixed income	5.5	6.2	(0.7)
<b>Total endowment</b>	<b>(2.0)%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>(3.0)%</b>

while securing its long-term purchasing power); a sustained aggregate performance of at least 1 percentage point above HMC's market benchmarks; and top-quartile performance compared to 10 university peers (versus Harvard's bottom-quartile ranking in the four most recent five-year periods).

Instead, measurable progress toward these long-term goals appears to have been disrupted. Blyth himself went on medical leave Commencement week, and relinquished his HMC positions in July. (The University announced his successor, N.P. Narvekar, on September 30. Narvekar has overseen Columbia's smaller endowment since 2002, and has recently achieved relatively strong long-term returns—in part because its losses during the financial crisis in fiscal 2009 were far less severe than peer institutions'. For details, see [harvardmag.com/narvekar-16](http://harvardmag.com/narvekar-16).)

Although Ettl's report conveyed a strong sense of continuity with the directions Blyth had outlined, the investment performance was brutal in certain asset classes (see chart), and new challenges emerged.

The domestic equity portfolio, for instance, produced a return of negative 4.9 percent (versus a positive 2.5 percent benchmark return); as Ettl noted, “Unfortunately, a number of our domestic equity external managers underperformed for the first time



N.P. Narvekar

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than HMC's return, worth about \$850 million in investment return this year at the Harvard endowment's current size, compounding annually if that margin were sustained—and, over time, about \$40 million to \$45 million in annual income for the University's academic operations. (Considering only the 5.4 percent-age-point margin in fiscal 2016, the gap rises to nearly \$2 billion: closing in on \$100 million of distributable income annually—and also compounding if HMC's underperformance were to persist.)

The Harvard Campaign has fortunately been infusing hundreds of millions of dollars into the endowment. In the near term, that buffers its value when investment returns are weak, as in fiscal 2015 (5.8 percent), or negative. But the campaign itself entrains higher University operating costs to be defrayed (for the upgraded undergraduate Houses, for instance—see “Paying a \$1.4-Billion Repair Bill,” page 20—and the 550,000 square feet of new engineering and applied sciences facilities under construction in Allston). In the longer term, the new assets, contributed to bolster financial aid, underwrite professorships, and underpin entire schools (public health, engineering and applied sciences), must be invested so as to support significant annual distributions and growth above inflation. Any capital campaign is premised on a surge in current-use gifts—now happily amounting to more than \$400 million per year for Harvard, about 10 percent of operating revenues—followed by a gradual ramping-up of distributable investment income, as pledges for endowment gifts are fulfilled, the assets are invested, and funds begin flowing to their intended purposes. The deans whose schools are on the receiving end now must hope that the expected investment returns on those cam-

paign capital gifts indeed materialize, as current-use giving levels off or declines post-campaign.

Under the Corporation's distribution formula, the fiscal 2016 decline in the endowment's value is likely to turn anticipated growth in the funds sent to the schools in fiscal 2018 into level sums instead (after a 6 percent increase in the distribution during fiscal 2016, and a scheduled 3 percent rise this year). That should prompt prudent belt-tightening this year. The University as a whole, a \$4.5-billion enterprise, can manage as the Corporation



Visit [harvardmag.com](http://harvardmag.com) to learn how the Corporation sets the endowment distribution.

## HARVARD PORTRAIT



### Matthew Wittmann

**Matthew Wittmann** has three tattoos. Two mostly stay hidden: the giraffe on his shoulder, which marked the 2012 publication of his two books on the American circus, and Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*, which landed on his arm after he finished his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan in 2010. Most visible is an inky star between his right thumb and forefinger, dating back to college—a tattoo popular among nineteenth-century whalers, he explains. A cultural historian, Wittmann specializes in traveling entertainments (like “minstrel groups, magicians, and circuses”) and the Pacific—interests kindled by a peripatetic navy-brat childhood on the West Coast and in Hawaii. “Having lived so many places when I was young, I don’t get hung up on, you know, home,” he says; neither does he pile up personal possessions. Now the new curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection at Houghton Library, he’s charged with the care and development of the oldest performing-arts library in the country. Recalling his initial reaction to the job description—“Oh, dear”—Wittmann describes his duties as “expansive.” That word also applies to Harvard’s holdings, which are “so vast that every day, I am finding things that you couldn’t believe”: a bronze of actress Sarah Bernhardt, given her by Harry Houdini, sits near his desk. The collection has strengths in some areas he’s less versed in (notably ballet), but Wittmann is unfazed. When he became an assistant curator at the American Numismatic Society, he wasn’t an expert on coins. “It gave me the experience of having to learn wholesale a sort of language and a field and a history that I wasn’t that familiar with.” In turn, he hopes to bring something new to the archive, expanding its scope to include more pop entertainment. Curtains up for the next act.

—SOPHIA NGUYEN

taps on the brakes, constraining growth in one-third of revenues. But for highly endowment-dependent units—the Radcliffe Institute, Harvard Divinity School, and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) all derive more than half their income from those distributions—adjusting may be much more uncomfortable. For units operating at a loss now (on a cash basis), including FAS and its engineering school, and Harvard Medical School, the squeeze is tighter still. And beyond these current impacts, deans will have to lower the trajectory of their long-term financial projections.

The leverage is huge. The University's financial model assumes it can distribute about 5 percent of the endowment's value each year. At present, if investment returns reach 10 percent, the annual increase in value enables Harvard to fund the operating distribution and retain an equal sum to support its future academic programs. But in a year like fiscal 2016, when the assets *depreciate* modestly, and the University makes normal distributions for

the budget, the decline in value essentially offsets *all* gifts for the endowment received during the course of the capital campaign to date (\$1.5 billion from fiscal years 2011 through 2015, plus the 2016 sum to be reported this fall); the proceeds realized from six years of concerted private and public fundraising.

Middling returns, like HMC's 10-year annualized rate of 5.7 percent, condemn the University to treading water—at best. In real terms, the endowment is now worth several billion dollars less than its value before the financial crisis in 2008, and it is being relied upon to support a University budget that is about \$1 billion larger. The intersection between that rate of return and the distribution rate means that the endowment's purchasing power *erodes*. The nominal principal (not catching up with inflation) would then essentially grow only to the extent that it is augmented by gifts—and relative to a nearly \$36-billion corpus, those gifts would have to be large to make a difference. Absent that level of philanthropic largesse year after year,

if investment returns failed to sustain both the current distribution percentage and real purchasing power, the Corporation would confront an excruciating choice: running down the value of the endowment—foundational assets, meant to exist in perpetuity; or reducing the distribution rate—thus upending the financial model on which Harvard's academic operations depend.

So fixing HMC's performance is critical. How to proceed?

Without question, the organization needs to cultivate stronger relationships with demonstrably superior external asset managers. Blyth and others have acknowledged that, following the financial crisis, those relationships frayed as Harvard had to bolster liquidity: steps that required HMC to reduce commitments to fund future investments it could no longer assuredly pursue, and to limit the size of new commitments no matter how promising the potential opportunity. HMC will also likely want to gain experience with its more flex-

## Paying a \$1.4-Billion Repair Bill

An article on “House Renewal Gains and Challenges” in the September-October issue (page 17) reviewed the successes of the College's renovation of undergraduate residences to date, the schedule for the next renewal projects, and the status of fundraising for the program, which has been estimated to cost \$1.4 billion. It also noted inflating Boston-area construction costs, rising 5 percent to 7 percent annually—and raised, but could not fully answer, questions about how the full program could be paid for in a timely way.

Additional information made available after that article went to press was published online (see “House Renewal Update,” available at [harvardmag.com/houses-16](http://harvardmag.com/houses-16)). These are highlights:

- Decapitalizations.** During fiscal years 2011 through 2015, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) drew upon \$358 million of appreciated endowment funds for House renewal: \$253 million to pay for project costs; and \$105 million to pay down existing

debt (most of it incurred to build science facilities in the prior decade)—in effect creating room for future House-renewal-related borrowing.

- Income effect.** Subject to several assumptions and variables, those decapitalizations are calculated to reduce FAS's flow of cash, distributed from the endowment and applicable to its most pressing needs, by about \$25 million through the renewal project's projected conclusion in fiscal 2025. The loss of income of course continues thereafter, given the permanent withdrawal of capital from the endowment and forgone appreciation and distributions. (See “The Endowment Ebbs,” page 18, for discussion of the faculty's reliance on endowment distributions, and the challenges of weak investment performance.)

- Spending.** Through May 31, FAS had spent \$391 million on planning and architectural costs; completed reconstruction of Stone Hall, Leverett McKinlock, and Dunster House; preliminary work on Winthrop House, where full construction began just after Commencement; and design and preliminary work on Lowell House, scheduled to ramp up next summer. The funds came from FAS's decapitalizations, its reserves, and campaign gifts and pledge payments. The pace and scale of spending are now rising rapidly, for the Winthrop and Lowell projects.

Remaining project financing depends on continued robust fundraising, and on some form of borrowing. The details will require the Corporation to determine how much FAS can borrow and on what terms; what part of the program, if any, might be deemed a University priority (as is the case for the new Allston facilities for FAS's engineering and applied sciences faculty), among other competing aims; and how long Harvard can wait, in light of escalating construction and materials prices, to bring the remaining River Houses up to twenty-first-century standards. —J.S.R.



Winthrop House is being renovated and enlarged.

KRIS SNIBBE/HFAC



## \$7 Billion, and Counting

**The academic year** began, promisingly, with the announcement that The Harvard Campaign—launched publicly in September 2013 with \$2.8 billion raised toward a \$6.5-billion goal—had secured gifts and pledges totaling “more than \$7 billion” as of this past June 30, the end of fiscal year 2016. In nominal terms, not adjusted for inflation, that sum exceeds the previous higher-education record, established when Stanford concluded its campaign in 2011 with \$6.2 billion committed. Harvard’s fundraisers remain hard at work, hoping to fulfill remaining priorities—notably, undergraduate House renewal; the 550,000-square-foot engineering and applied sciences facilities in Allston (price tag: \$1 billion); financial-aid endowment funds across the University; and the remaining goals at units such as the Graduate School of Design, the Divinity School, and the Medical School. Their attention is being focused by the approaching formal end of the drive, now firmly set for June 30, 2018.

Some tangible fruits of campaign gifts are already evident, most

visibly in the construction projects transforming the campus (see “Harvard Loves Hard Hats,” September-October, page 14). The news announcement also highlighted \$820 million then raised for financial aid (\$460 million of that for undergraduates) and funding for “nearly 90 professorships” across the University, a mixture of existing and new positions.

“I am deeply grateful to everyone who has participated in this outstanding effort so far,” said President Drew Faust in a statement. “Our aspirations speak to our larger hopes not only for a better Harvard, but also for a better world—a world changed by the students we educate, the knowledge we pursue, and the discoveries and innovations we generate every day on our campus. The support we’ve received thus far resounds with confidence in the enduring value of this work and the essential role that Harvard—and all of higher education—plays in society.”

For a detailed report on the campaign, with updates on individual schools’ results, see [harvardmag.com/7billion-16](http://harvardmag.com/7billion-16).

—J.S.R.


ible asset-allocation model and to further develop its search for investment ideas that cross conventional asset classes (priorities Blyth and Ettl both emphasized). As noted, the organization continues to recruit new personnel—most consequentially,

the appointment of Narvekar as the new president and CEO, effective December 5. Above all, perhaps, HMC needs stable senior leadership, given the transitions from Jack R. Meyer to Mohamed El-Erian to Jane L. Mendillo to Blyth, with interim CEOs

filling the gaps, just from 2005 to 2015.

Depending on Narvekar’s strategy, it is also conceivable that further instability lies ahead locally. HMC’s hybrid system, with a significant share of assets invested internally, means that it has a large staff


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## Yesterday's News

From the pages of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* and *Harvard Magazine*

**1921** Thirteen female students from the Graduate School of Education apply for tickets to the Yale Game. The *Bulletin* reports that three ticket clerks “whose temperaments are especially nervous have followed the advice of their physicians by resigning.”

**1931** The Corporation decides that Harvard will not participate in a fundraising postseason football game for unemployment relief, to avoid setting a potentially troublesome precedent and further commercializing college football by playing only to raise money. Collections at the Dartmouth, Holy Cross, and Yale games, however, raise more than \$20,000 for the same purpose.

**1941** Two freshmen enliven hour-exam period with their *Crimson* classified: “Wanted—Information where one may obtain a human corpse in reasonable condition.” The 42

phone calls in response range from students wishing to be embalmed after hourlies to several funeral directors, the police department, and the morgue. The Yardlings plead simple curiosity as the impetus for the ad.

**1961** Among alterations proposed for the Harvard School of Business Administration after a two-year study initiated by its dean is a change of name. The *Bulletin* reports a “widespread feeling” that the present name “does not imply an institution of professional stature, and that there should be...a Harvard Business School.”

**1981** The Harvard-Radcliffe Conservative Club publishes the first issue of *The Harvard Salient*. Its editors all “commend free enterprise, limited government, a redoubtable national defense, the integrity of community, and the sustaining prescriptions of tradition,” and promise not to practice the incendiary journalism of the year-old *Dartmouth Review*.

**2001** A new plaque installed in Memorial Church honors three Radcliffe alumnae—Lucy Nettie Fletcher '10, Ruth Holden '11, and special student Helen Homans—who died in World War I while serving as nurses.

(175 to 250 people during the past decade or so)—and that its leader has significant day-to-day management responsibilities. Many peer endowments like Columbia's, which rely largely or exclusively on external investment managers, select them and oversee their performance with a small core staff (typically, 20 to 40 people in all). In such systems, the leader of the team is principally a chief *investment* officer. Transitioning from HMC's recent performance record toward the ambitious, essential return goals Blyth outlined will take time: many existing assets are invested in illiquid, long-term portfolios, and as assets and future cash flows are redeployed, the hoped-for, improved returns will emerge only gradually (as in the real-estate results cited above). HMC's new leader already faces a huge performance challenge; meeting it may also require him to make the most basic decisions about what kind of investment operation the University requires to succeed in the twenty-first century.

—JOHN S. ROSENBERG

## Online-Education Updates

FOUR YEARS after Harvard and MIT launched edX, their online-course venture, in May 2012, MIT scholars have published “Online Education: A Catalyst for Higher Education Reforms,” a review of the field. Its lead authors—Karen Willcox, professor of aeronautics and astronautics, and Sanjay Sarma, Flowers professor of mechanical engineering and the institute's vice president for open learning—look beyond the massive open online courses (MOOCs) that attracted such hoopla when edX was conceived. They focus instead on education and learning more broadly, and the implications for campus classrooms.

That emphasis is especially notable for two reasons. First, in the wake of MIT's broad strategic embrace of new approaches to learning (see “What Modularity Means for MOOCs,” [harvardmag.com/mit-edx-l6](http://harvardmag.com/mit-edx-l6)), two-thirds of its undergraduates are reported to have taken courses that incorporate the edX interactive instructional software. Second, underwriting MOOC technology both for free use by self-motivated learners around the world and for its application in classrooms on this residential cam-

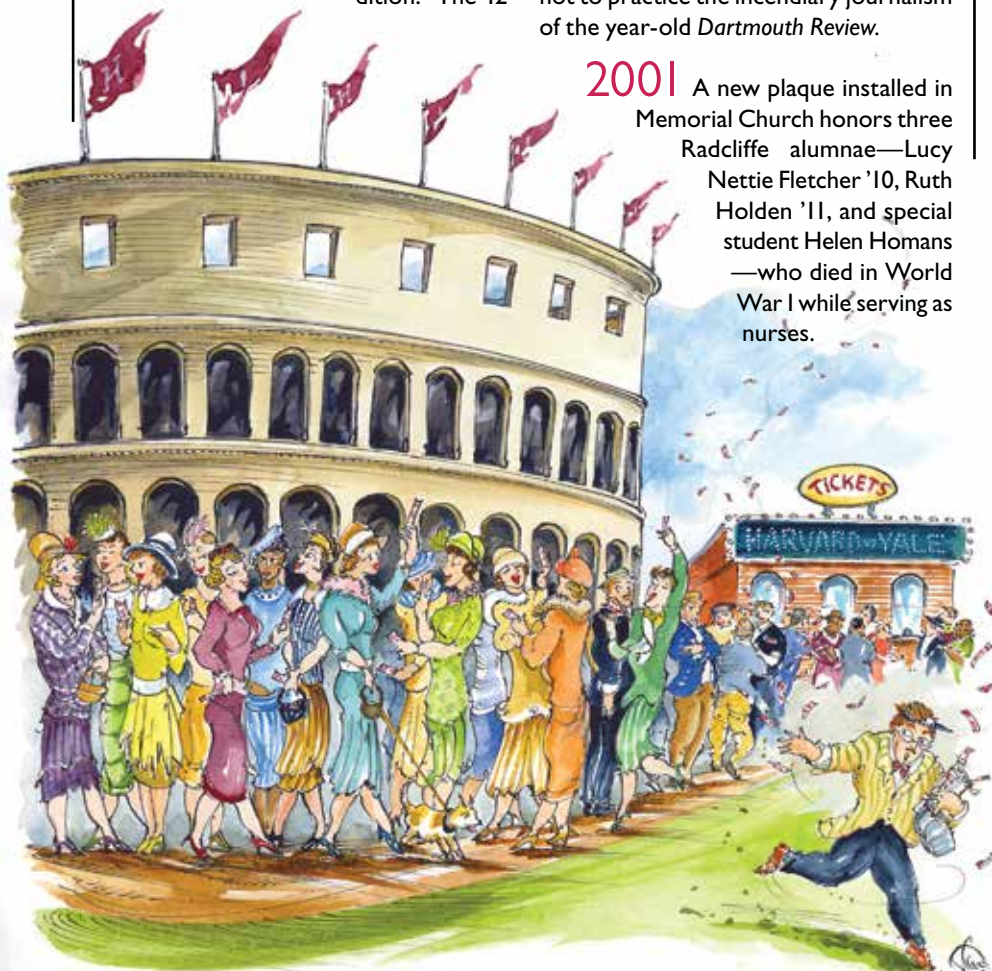


Illustration by Mark Steele



pus remains one of the foremost rationales for Harvard's own investment (see Provost Alan Garber's perspective in "Teaching and Learning: Taking Stock," January-February, page 24). To date, it has been challenging to determine how to encourage such adoption, and to assess the effects.

The MIT authors emphasize that online courses will not supplant teachers: "[R]ather, we believe that the value of in-person education can be *enhanced* by blending in online experiences." They outline a "dynamic digital scaffold" of "instrumented" learning, assisted by, for instance, interspersing videos with "interpolated testing"; spaced practice with material introduced days, weeks, and months earlier; designing problems to become more challenging as students' skills broaden; and adapting course content to each learner's needs. The aim is to "support teachers and allow them to free up time from conveying content to focus on high-value in-person interactions with students," in a truly blended approach to learning.

To support such pedagogy, the MIT authors advocate systematic, interdisciplinary research on education, learning, cognition, and neuroscience. To bring those discoveries into teaching, they propose that universities cultivate as a profession the "learning engineer." In contrast to current "learning designers," who apply digital technologies to course content, they envision postdoctoral professionals with both Ph.D.-level command of a substantive discipline and immersion in learning science and technologies for classroom use.

These general findings resonate with other MOOC-related developments. For-profit MOOC distributor Coursera recently put its courses on a new platform so they can be offered nearly continuously, rather than only at limited, set intervals that mimic semester-based campus courses. President and co-founder Daphner Koller told *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that students who enroll in MOOCs "know their own mind [and] what they're looking for" is very different from the current campus experience. "They're looking for shorter, more-to-the-point modules of knowledge...for things that have direct relevance to the problems that they're trying to solve...." Because "MOOC students have the option to walk away," they cannot be taught in the same way as on-campus learners. But the Coursera and edX technologies, of the sort the MIT report covers, suggest to Koller that "maybe what we should be pro-

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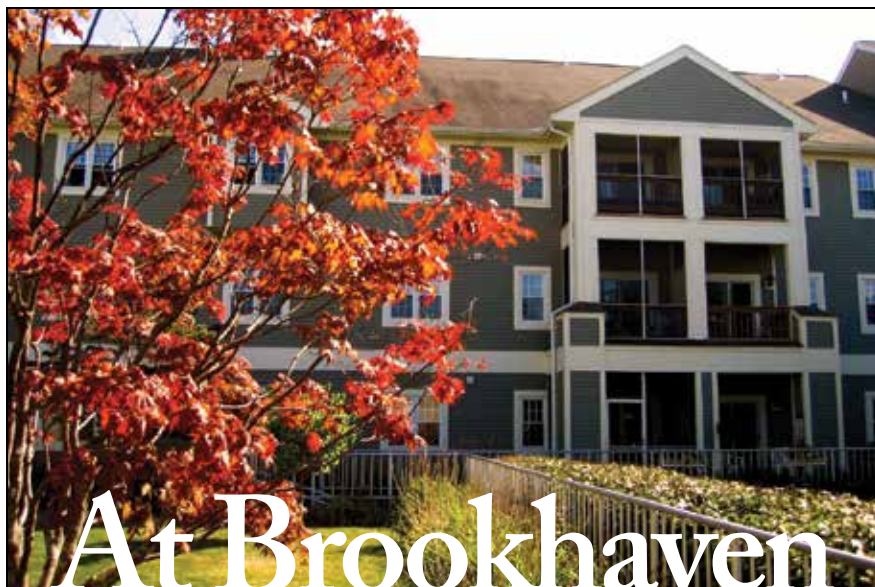
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viding to our on-campus students is actually more like what we're providing to our MOOC students."

As HarvardX continuously unveils new course offerings, attracting more users, their form is evolving. HarvardX's faculty-driven courses are of general, or at least broad, interest; it is *not* competing with the Division of Continuing Education or the professional schools' programs—all of which generate significant revenue. But HarvardX is experimenting; its eight-week "Plus" courses in biochemistry, contracts, and other subjects (with "Premium content. Deeper engagement") feature limited enrollments, closer connections to fellow students and Harvard faculty members and teaching assistants, and branded credentials—at a cost of fees from \$195 to \$495.

The move toward collecting fees, primarily through explicitly vocationally focused courses, is broad. This fall, edX launched MicroMasters. Following an MIT pilot course in supply-chain management, more than a dozen other institutions have rolled out suites of four to 10 MOOCs, equivalent to one-quarter to one-half of the content for a master's degree in subjects like artificial intelligence, Android program development, project management, or social work. Learners take those courses: for free; or paying for credentials certifying their completion of the work—after which they may apply for admission to each school's master's program, to complete formal degree work. If accepted, their course of study would be shortened, and made less expensive, because of the prior work online.

And in a step toward universities' practice, edX has begun offering financial aid, discounting the fees charged for verified course certification; edX is nonprofit, and the assistance is being funded with philanthropic support. ~JOHN S. ROSENBERG



COURTESY OF HPAC

## Laura Levis

**The staff of Harvard Magazine** mourns the loss of Laura Levis, who contributed significantly to our efforts to serve readers online and through social media, while also writing articles on a broad range of subjects. We were privileged to work with her from 2011 through this past spring, when she moved to the University's public affairs office. The death of a young colleague, following a sudden, severe asthma attack, is particularly painful. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her husband, parents, and entire extended family.

## John Adams at Harvard

### *What he learned, and what he made of it*

*Editor's note:* As early-action applicants to the College class of 2021 anxiously await a response, the account of an admissions ordeal in 1751 may offer perspective. Richard Alan Ryerson '64 includes the passage in his new book, *John Adams's Republic: The One, the Few, and the Many* (Johns Hopkins), as background on the future president's intellectual development. The author is former editor in chief of The Adams Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society and former academic director and historian of the David Library of the American Revolution.

\* \* \*

IN THE SUMMER of 1751, an anxious 15-year-old set off from Braintree on the 12-mile route to Cambridge. His schoolmaster had promised to accompany him to his admissions exam at Harvard College, but was indisposed that morning. Our subject picks up his story:

terrified at the Thought of introducing myself to such great Men as the President and fellows of a College, I at first resolved to return home: but foreseeing the Grief of my father and apprehending he would not only be offended with me, but my Master too whom I sincerely loved, I aroused myself and collected Resolution enough to proceed....Arrived at Cambridge I presented myself...and underwent the usual Examination by the President Mr. Holyoke and the Tutors.... Mr. Mayhew into whose Class We were to be admitted, presented me a Passage of English to translate into Latin. It was long and casting my Eye over it I found several Words the latin for which did not occur to my memory. Thinking that I must translate it

without a dictionary, I was in a great fright and expected to be turned by, an Event that I dreaded above all things. Mr. Mayhew went into his Study and bid me follow him. There Child, said he is a dictionary, there a Grammar, and there Paper, Pen, and Ink, and you may take your own time. This was joyful news to me and I then thought my Admission safe. The Latin was soon made, and I was declared Admitted...I was as light when I came home as I had been heavy when I went.

This revealing portrait of the social world of mid-eighteenth-century Harvard College—recorded by the future lawyer, congressman, diplomat, and political theorist who became the second president of the United States—suggests, through the informality and immediacy of the admissions process, how small the institution was then: a president, two professors (already occupying endowed chairs), four tutors, and about 100 students in four classes. The College had no electives; every student took every course, in the same order. The single tutor assigned to each entering class handled its basic instruction until graduation. Professors Edward Wigglesworth (theology) and John Winthrop (mathematics and natural philosophy) offered the only specialized instruction.

John Adams says little about his college courses or instructors, with the exception of his favorite teacher, Professor





# Brevia

## Lasker Honorand

Professor of medicine William G. Kaelin, of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, shared the Lasker Basic Medical Research Award, among the premier prizes in medicine, with two other scientists for their discovery of the pathway by which cells sense and adapt to changes in the availability of oxygen.

## Addressing Slavery

As Harvard begins to acknowledge its past connections to slavery (see [harvardmag.com/harvard-slaves-16](http://harvardmag.com/harvard-slaves-16) and [harvardmag.com/no-shield-16](http://harvardmag.com/no-shield-16)), Georgetown University, which profited from the 1838 sale of 272 slaves who worked on Jesuit plantations in Maryland, will give preference in admissions to descendants; rename buildings which honor the presidents who administered the sale; and promote research, among other actions.

## Humanities Honorands

Recipients of the National Humanities Medal this year include Bass professor of English Louis Menand; trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, D.Mus. '09; and Elaine Pagels, Ph.D. '70, LL.D. '13, of Princeton, an historian of religion....Separately, other Harvard affiliates were nominated for



KRIS SNIBBE/HPAC

National Book Awards, including poet Kevin Young '92 (featured in "Elbow Room," March-April, page 32); novelist Colson Whitehead '91 (profiled in "The Literary Chameleon," September-October, page 32); and Adam Cohen '84, J.D. '87, author of "Harvard's Eugenics Era" (March-April, page 48). See the complete report at [harvardmag.com/hum-medal-16](http://harvardmag.com/hum-medal-16).

## Biomedical Boost

In September, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, an unusual philanthropy backed by the wealth of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg '06 and his wife, Priscilla Chan '07, a pediatrician, unveiled a \$3-billion, decade-long biomedical-research program.



**MEDICINE'S MAN.** Pioneering stem-cell scientist George Q. Daley '82, M.D. '91, has been appointed dean of Harvard Medical School, effective January 1. He succeeds Jeffrey S. Flier, who concluded nine years of service on July 31. During an announcement-day conversation in August, Daley stressed the "very dynamic and exciting new curriculum" for current M.D. students and the "superb" research community—"one of the most creative and impactful on earth." Funding that work will be a challenge, so the school will "necessarily be partnering" with local pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies—a sector Daley knows well. Diversifying his Crimson portfolio, he earned a Ph.D. from MIT in 1989, as a student in the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology; he has since seen long service on the medical and scientific advisory board of MPM Capital, a venture-financing firm. A profile of his work and emerging agenda appears at [harvardmagazine.com/daley-16](http://harvardmagazine.com/daley-16).

Recipients of an initial \$600 million for a "biohub"—meant to bring scientists and engineers together, create new tools and technologies, and encourage more government and philanthropic support for the sector—are three Bay Area institutions: Stanford, Berkeley, and the biomedical-ly focused University of California, San

Francisco. When *Boston Globe* reporters somewhat anxiously waved the flag for the hometown biomedical academic-industrial complex, the program's director, Cori Bargmann, of Rockefeller University (whence Stanford's new president came), reassuringly said, "I'd bet on Boston being part of it."

## Funding the Faculty

Moving to allay rising professorial anxiety over scarce research funding, Faculty of Arts and Sciences dean Michael D. Smith last spring made \$25 million of new resources from his office available over the next five years, to support their scholarship. The Dean's Distribution, discretionary funds provided to each ladder faculty member annually, will rise from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for those with past sponsored-research funding, or in departments that get such funding, and to \$4,000 for others. A Dean's Competitive Fund for Promising Scholarship will make awards of \$5,000 to \$50,000 (up to \$2.5 million per year) to enable promising new inquiries, bridge financing to sponsored support, or pay for essential equipment. Applications for initial funding were accepted in September and October; they are being reviewed by a multidisciplinary committee chaired by Barbara Grosz, Higgins professor of natural sciences.

## On Other Campuses

Gearing up for a 15 percent expansion of its undergraduate enrollment as two new residences accommodating 800 students near completion next fall, Yale announced completion of a snap two-year financial-aid fundraising campaign: it brought in almost \$286 million, exceeding the \$250-million goal....Facing continued budget stress, Berkeley has suspended a planned global higher-education "hub," effectively a new satellite campus at which it and collaborating foreign institutions would launch professional-degree programs....Stanford has banned hard liquor from campus student parties, except for events attended exclusively by graduate students....Princeton, which plans aggressive spending given its strong endowment (see "The Tiger

Roars,” 7 Ware Street, May-June, page 2), has begun outlining major building ambitions under its 10-year campus plan; areas of emphasis include engineering and applied science and the environmental institute; new residences to accommodate a 10 percent expansion of undergraduate enrollment; and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle routes....General Electric Co., newly headquartered in Boston, joined and contributed \$7.5 million to MIT’s energy initiative....USC alumna Suzanne Dworak-Peck endowed that institution’s School of Social Work with a \$60-million gift; it has been named in her honor.

### Nota Bene

**RECRUITING RESTRAINT.** The Ivy League has proposed that Division I members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association prohibit verbal offers from coaches to potential recruits until September 1 of the student’s junior year of high school, along with other limitations on telephone contact and recruiting at camps or clinics until that date. The intent is to end excessively early recruiting—including informal offers to women soccer and lacrosse players as early as middle school.

**VIRTUAL CS50.** For 2016, the phenomenally successful introductory computer-science class is going more or less class-

room-free. Instructor David J. Malan noted on the course blog: “I daresay we’ve been nearing the point for some time whereby it’s a better educational experience to watch CS50’s lectures online than attend them in person.” Accordingly, students are “asked” only to attend the first and last lectures in person; students who want to participate in intervening lectures that lend themselves to such interaction can sign up in advance “if they’d like to partake.”

**AAA AFFIRMATION.** As Harvard prepared to refinance some \$2 billion of long-term debt in early October, Moody’s Investors Services reconfirmed its Aaa (highest) rating, citing the University’s “exceptional strategic positioning” (with “extremely strong student demand and fundraising”) and “robust liquidity and superior absolute wealth” as “key credit strengths”—offset by “heavy budgetary reliance on endowment spending in the face of more muted investment performance, significant investment complexity requiring close oversight, and high financial leverage.” (On the endowment, see page 18.)

**RESHAPING THE SQUARE.** Out of Town News, located in the former headhouse of the subway, faces replacement with that building’s pending conversion into a public information center; plans are being reviewed by the City of Cambridge, which owns the facility. And the iconic wedge-shaped building opposite, at the intersection of John F. Kennedy

and Brattle Streets, now home to retailers such as the Curious George book store and Urban Outfitters, has been sold to developers who plan to expand and reconfigure the entire complex, extending down both street fronts, into an upscale retail mall and offices, “The Collection at Harvard Square”; regulatory review of the proposal is under way.

**GIFTS GAZETTE.** Former New York mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, M.B.A. ’66, LL.D. ’14, is collaborating with the Kennedy School and the Business School on a \$32-million executive-education program to train mayors and their aides; the funds will pay for research, curriculum development, and fellowships and travel expenses for the trainees.... And in a nifty bit of naming, the under-construction Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center, already honoring the donors who financed the makeover of Holyoke Center, will have a Moise Y. Safra Welcome Pavilion, recognizing a gift from the eponymous foundation of the Brazilian philanthropist, whose three children attended the College.

**MISCELLANY.** Hawaiian shirts come to Allston, as Trader Joe’s leased space for a store at Continuum, the mixed-use complex, created through a partnership between Harvard and a private developer, at the crossroads of new campus development: the intersection of North Harvard Street and Western Avenue....Gotham alumni on the move: Joseph Kahn ’87, A.M. ’90, has been appointed managing editor of *The New York Times*, the second-ranking position in the newsroom; effective January 1, Faiza J. Saeed, J.D. ’91, a mergers-and-acquisitions specialist, becomes the first woman presiding partner of the Cravath, Swaine & Moore law firm....What do the politically inclined do in an election year? The longtime executive director of the Kennedy School’s Institute of Politics, Cathy A. McLaughlin, resigned to work on a presidential campaign, and IOP director Margaret A. Williams took a leave of absence to co-chair the transition team of Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee.



David J. Malan



Michael R. Bloomberg

WIKIPEDIA/CREATIVE COMMONS

### AN APP FOR THAT?

By reputation, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences students lead lonely lives of solitary research, apprenticing in the ways of scholarship. Harvard has given them a place to commune at Dudley House, in Lehman Hall, right on the Square. Diners in Dudley Cafe this fall found tabletop tent cards introducing the digital-era gateway to community: an invitation to download the Thrive@Harvard app.



Winthrop. But he does offer a few clues to understanding a large part of a Harvard education—in the 1750s as much as in 2016: the intellectual and social impact of the students upon each other. To appreciate this effect, one must understand two facts about colonial Harvard: its primary purpose was to educate future members of a learned ministry and an effective civil government; and it did this in a highly structured social world. From the 1640s to 1770, the president and faculty ranked the members of each entering class in the fall of their freshman year according to their perception of the social standing of each student's parents and other close relatives. This order was largely preserved until graduation day, at which time several students who had done exceptionally well were finally recognized with speaking parts, regardless of their social standing.

As the son of a Braintree farmer, church deacon, and town selectman, Adams was ranked in the middle of his class and awarded a scholarship. As an undergraduate, he responded with enthusiasm to three opportunities not available in Braintree. He seriously engaged the College's relatively liberal curriculum in theology, mathematics, and natural science; he made friends with students from different social classes, often those above his own; and he joined a speaking club where his performances so impressed his classmates that they suggested he would make a better lawyer than the minister his pious father desired. (He would become the only graduate in his class to hold a Hollis scholarship and not become a minister.)

Harvard acknowledgments of Adams's intellectual engagement came quickly. A speaking part at graduation in 1755 earned him his first job, as a teacher; he used his salary to pay for his legal studies. His use of the College library after graduation sustained him until he could build up his own impressive collection in legal and political history. And in his master's thesis address in 1758, a rite of passage for most ambitious Harvard graduates, he defended a theme that would increase in significance for the rest of his life: that civil government was necessary for man.

By the mid eighteenth century, Harvard had become, above all else, a recruiter of intellectual talent and a unifying cultural force in Massachusetts and neighboring New England colonies. In this respect Adams, born into a family thoroughly committed to its own small community, did just

what the College hoped. As the idealistic celebrant of New England's religious and civil history in *A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law* (1765); as the lead attorney courageously defending the British soldiers indicted in the Boston Massacre (1770); as the congressman who led the final floor fight for Independence (1776); as the principal negotiator of America's peace treaty with

Britain (1783); as the author of *A Defence of the Constitutions of the United States* (1787-88), the longest and most learned political work by an eighteenth-century American; and, as president, when defending America's maritime independence in the Quasi-War with France (1797-1800), he adopted broader views and higher aspirations in religion, in law, and in politics.

## THE UNDERGRADUATE

# "A Few Writing Projects"

by MATTHEW BROWNE '17

SOMEWHERE around the beginning of June, I received a kind note from a magazine editor—really the sort of kindness you see only in a letter of rejection, where somehow the formality almost stings more than if the note were just rude. After this, the latest in a string of

rejections for the miniscule group of paid editorial positions that I'd tracked down, I decided that, if I really wanted to break into the writing world, maybe my best efforts would be spent *actually* writing. The calculation was simple: I had three months of free time ahead of me and was lucky to have a

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place to stay at home with a loving and supportive family. Yet, the idea was nerve-wracking.

For many Harvard students, the pathways to postgraduate careers are relatively clear and regimented, and ample summer internships are a fixture of the schedule. This is not to say that, for example, the reported 40 percent of the class of 2016 who ended up working in finance or consulting weren't wrestling with existential quandaries about their futures. I'd bet that most were. But, given the extensive recruiting process, the on-campus interview program, the tailor-made internship-to-analyst-to-business-school job runway, an attractive to-do list emerges that makes it easier to manage the confounding idea of one's own future. Fully knowing that their path wasn't mine, I still couldn't help but feel worried about the relative lack of structure in my summer routine.

Harvard undergraduates interested in entering the arts commonly complain that the first steps down the path are not so obvious. For hopeful writers, the landscape can seem bleak. As print publishing continues to suffer and media further conglomerates toward Google & Co., there seem to be fewer and fewer entry-level positions. Many print internships are unpaid, which makes the paid gigs fiercely competitive. Some outlets that received grief and legal trouble for not paying interns, most famously Condé Nast, have decided to eliminate their internship programs to avoid the hassle, replacing them with "fellowships" not meant for matriculated students.

Given all these hurdles, I had to, jobless and on my own terms, declare myself a writer. When I shuffled around to places with my parents over the summer and people asked me what I was doing, I said, sheepishly, "I'm working on a few writing projects." I thought back to all the superficial things that helped attract me to writ-



ing in the first place, all the flourishes that extend beyond the words on the page. I remembered how Albert Camus looked on the dust jacket of *The Stranger* in my little high-school library: thick pea coat, collar popped, cigarette dangling from lips, knowing eyes peering. I remembered how smart and right everything looked the first time I walked into the *Advocate*, the juniors and seniors dressed in black, sipping wine in the candlelit clapboard house, projecting their 20-year-olds' sense of writerliness. I remembered walking through a writer's house and, upon finding a thudding coffee-table book of writers' houses, paging through glossy shots of Hemingway's house, with its taxidermy, yellow tile, and floral upholstery. It looked just like his writing.

Not only was my writing life not that sexy, it wasn't as straightforwardly productive as I thought three open months would yield. When I was lucky, things would snap into

focus for a few hours and my writing life looked like me, alone in a room, typing away. But I spent an excruciating amount of time sitting in front of my laptop, just staring at the screen. When two hours would pass with barely any progress, thoughts would creep in about prior jobs, where my work was measured in clocked-time as much as it was measured in finished product and I could always feel like I was putting in a full day.

Most of the time, my writing didn't look like what I expected. It invariably looked like waking up later than I'd promised myself I would the night before. I slept in the basement, where there was a small rectangular window seven-eighths of the way up the wall, level with the front lawn, and by the time I woke up and squinted at the room, light was already streaming through at both a strength and an

angle too high for just waking up – a calculus the body just does implicitly. I experimented with how much coffee I should drink, surely inundating landfills with punctured Keurig pods. I went on walks around the neighborhood with my dog, the sky soupy and car hoods sizzling with July radiation. I ate dozens of bowls of watermelon, primarily because my mom is a fanatic and knows the ripeness litmus tests that involve mysteriously smacking the fruit. I watched hours of bad TV: *Family Feud*, reruns of *Seinfeld*, and a dating show where 20 people living in a house have to find their true love for "a shot at a million dollars." I drove my little brother and his best friend around late at night to play mini golf and get ice cream, blasting Kanye West at top volume and talking about the life of 15-year-old boys.

A lot of my time, in this respect, seemed aimless. But respecting this aimlessness was the best way to keep writing when I could. As fall arrived, thrusting me back into the



structure of college life – the dining hours, the meetings, the endless stream of emails – it made me reflect on the summer even more. I recently read a *Paris Review* interview with the great short-story writer Amy Hempel that framed this nicely. She suggests of her writing process, “...another way of doing it—to live in the two landscapes of that Charles Wright poem. ‘One that is eternal and divine / and one that’s just the backyard.’” While trying to write, I felt caught between embracing an abstract, sort of lofty, sense of inspiration and the well-trod minutiae of everyday life. I hoped always to connect to this inspiration—call it eternal and divine, or whatever you choose. I thought I’d be able to reach it through brute force: locking myself in a room and putting in enough time

that good work would flow out. But the only way I could consistently get to that out-of-reach place was to spend the majority of my time in the backyard, fooling around.

If writing, or doing any sort of creative work, is about learning your own method to negotiate these two landscapes—fitting one into the other, forcing both to influence each other, living between and in both—then there’s no internship that can promise this lesson, at least directly. My peers and I who are annoyed by the relatively unclear path to an artistic career should perhaps find solace in this fact. As the summer went on, I think I grew more confident in this conviction. I hadn’t yet articulated it as such, but I could feel my writing getting better as I tried inflecting it more with a sense of the back-

yard. In retrospect, the fiction that resulted was only able to circle around Big Ideas—evolving masculinity, the spirit of growing up, whatever it was—by reacting sensitively to all the things I did with my little brother, my parents, and my friends in my lazy hometown. I worked on lots of projects over the summer—a senior thesis, magazine journalism, a comedy musical, short stories—but if I can just manage to take forward the idea of living sensitively in the backyard in my writing, and my life at large, I’ll consider those few months, waking up late in the basement, a huge accomplishment. ▢

*Berta Greenwald Ledecy Undergraduate Fellow  
Matthew Browne ’17 is looking for a writing job despite all this.*

## SPORTS

# Rebuilding...or Reloading?

*In the early going, the Harvard football team was enjoying its accustomed dominance.*

IT WAS EITHER sheer inertia or a heartfelt tribute to Tim Murphy that made the voters in the Ivy League’s preseason football poll place two-time defending champion Harvard on top again for 2016. More likely it was the latter; in his 22 seasons on the Crimson sideline, the coach had produced nine titles, plus a startling 15 consecutive seasons with seven or more wins. Moreover, in the previous three seasons Harvard was an omnipotent 28-2. Still, could any program survive the loss through graduation of 13 All-Ivy performers (including the league’s 2015 offensive player of the year, quarterback Scott Hosch ’16) and deserve to be tabbed number one? Wasn’t 2016 a season for lowered expectations?

In the early going, the wisdom of the crowd seemed to be confirmed. Spearheaded by Hosch’s replacement, Joe Viviano ’17, the Crimson got off to a strong start, with easy victories over non-conference foes Rhode Island and Georgetown sandwiched around an impressive road triumph over league rival Brown. The tougher part of the schedule loomed—particularly back-to-back away games with Princeton and Dartmouth—but Harvard at the least would present a formi-



dable hurdle for other aspiring titleholders.

In the preseason, Murphy set about replacing departed members of the class of ’16 who were among the all-time Crimson gridiron greats. On defense, the most glaring holes were those left by an All-Ivy linebacking corps: Matt Koran, Jake Lindsey, and Eric Medes. On the offensive line, the coach needed to find successors to three players

**New quarterback Joe Viviano ’17 unfurled passes with force and finesse, even as defenses had to account for his dangerous running ability.**

who were in NFL camps: Adam Redmond, Cole Toner, and Anthony Fabiano. Gone also were tight end/H-back Ben Braunecker (to the Chicago Bears’ practice squad) and rambling running back Paul Stanton Jr. At the



**Tight end/H-back Anthony Firkser '17** riddled Brown with four receptions for an eye-popping 19.5-yard average. In the season's first three games, Firkser scored four touchdowns, including a 75-yarder against Georgetown.

game's most important position, Hosch's shrewd decision-making and winning touch were hard-earned intangibles that might be difficult for a neophyte to grasp.

Opposing coaches were shedding no tears: Harvard still had formidable weapons. Most notable was quicksilver receiver/return specialist Justice Shelton-Mosley '19, last season's Ivy League rookie of the year. Tight end Anthony Firkser '17 caught any ball that came his way, then shrugged off would-be tacklers. Running back Semar Smith '18, while not as brilliant as Stanton, had a similar nose for the end zone. The two holdovers on the offensive line—guard Larry Allen Jr. '18 and tackle Max Rich '17—were potent piledrivers and dependable pass-blockers. On the other side of the ball, captain Sean Ahern '16 anchored the defensive backfield, while the line—seniors James Duberg, Miles McCollum, and Doug Webb, and sophomore Dj Bailey—was close to impregnable against the run.

The major question mark was at quarterback. The 6-foot-5 Viviano, who had seen limited action in 2014, was strong and athletic. Last year he might have supplanted Hosch as the starter but for a preseason foot injury. How would he fare once handed the keys to the offense? It didn't take

long to find out: two minutes and eight seconds of the opening game against Rhode Island, under the lights at Harvard Stadium before 12,167. (Almost all those in attendance were seated on the home side, not unusual these days in the Ivy League.) That was the elapsed time of the Crimson's scor-

ing drive on its initial possession, a trek that covered 61 yards in a brisk six plays and culminated in a 15-yard touchdown strike from Viviano to Firkser (the first of two scoring hookups between the two). By the end of the first quarter Viviano—with arm, legs, and aplomb—had staked the Crimson to a 21-0 lead.

In the eventual 51-21 rout of the Rams, Viviano played a bit more than three quarters. He was 24-of-32 passing for 290 yards and three touchdowns (and no interceptions). He rushed 10 times for 51 yards and one scintillating touchdown. Above all, he was in command. Murphy, a tough critic, was pleased, especially given that this was Viviano's most extended outing since his days at Conestoga High School in Berwyn, Pennsylvania. "Joe will get better, but I give him a very high grade," said the coach afterward.

Viviano's highlight-reel play came near the end of the first quarter. Ahern had forced a fumble that McCollum recovered on the Rhode Island 22. Runs by Smith and Viviano took the ball down to the Rams' eight-yard-line. Then Viviano proved a master of escape. Dropping back to pass, he bounced off one Rhode Island rusher and spun away from another. Seeing an alley, he dashed into the end zone. He then spiked the ball—"I was excited," he explained—incurring a 15-yard penalty (assessed on the ensuing kickoff) for unsportsmanlike conduct. He could be forgiven: it was his first touchdown since his Conestoga days, and had been a

long time coming. He recovered his equanimity enough to direct the Crimson to three more scores, the last one set up by a beautiful 36-yard pitch to Shelton-Mosley.

The following Saturday, at sun-splashed Brown Stadium, Vi-

viano hit his stride in the Ivy League opener, a racy 32-22 Crimson victory. He rushed for a net of 76 yards and two touchdowns on 15 carries. (He was sacked for 22 yards' worth of losses.) He also completed 17 of 31 passes for 205 yards. Unlike most of today's quarterbacks, who are primarily passers, Viviano acts almost like an old-fashioned single-wing tailback, passing or running depending on the design of the play or his whim. With his loping stride, he is very hard to stop—and a fearsome weapon for whom opposing defenses must account.

This was the first Harvard game played using an Ivy League experimental rule under which the ball is kicked off from the 40-yard line rather than the 35. The object is to promote safety by means of boots into or out of the end zone, thus curtailing kick returns, the plays on which the most concussions occur. (Another Ivy safety-oriented sanction this season: no hitting during prac-



**Against Rhode Island and Brown, 2016 Ivy League rookie of the year Justice Shelton-Mosley '19** picked up where he left off, amassing 15 receptions, some spectacular.

tices.) Against Brown the collateral damage was done to the kick-return career of Shelton-Mosley, who watched two kicks by the Bruins' strong-legged Jake Wilner sail deep into the end zone for touchbacks; another three were either onside kicks, or squibs that permitted limited runbacks. (Of the 11 kickoffs in the game, four resulted in touchbacks, and only three provided conventional runbacks.) Asked afterward if he was frustrated, Shelton-Mosley said he

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wasn't—but the smile on his face showed he had been thinking about it. The safety-conscious Murphy was unmoved. "It's a good rule," he said.

It was Murphy's 221st game on the Harvard sideline, moving him past Joe Rescic (1971-93) for most games by a Crimson head coach. Murphy marked the occasion with some trademark trickery. After Harvard had spotted Brown an early field goal, the Crimson came back with 25 second-period points. After the second of three touchdowns—a seven-yard Viviano bolt up the middle—Harvard lined up for an extra-point kick. But when the ball was snapped to the holder, backup quarterback Cam Tripp '19, he did not put it down for placekicker Jake McIntyre '20 to boot but instead picked it up, rolled to his right, and cantered into the end zone for two points, with nary a Bruin within 20 yards.

There were other strong elements. The defensive line stuffed the Brown running attack, limiting the Bruins to 74 yards. Running behind the emerging offensive line, the workhorse Smith gained 89 yards on 22 carries and rumbled for two touchdowns. Linebacker Tanner Lee '18 and defensive back Wes Ogsbury '19 made interceptions to blunt Bruin drives. And while you can create kickoff rules that might contain Shelton-Mosley, you can't stop him, as proven by two plays from scrimmage: a splendid, stretching, 34-yard grab of a Viviano bomb and a slick 33-yard reverse, each triggering a score.

The next week, at the Stadium against Georgetown, Harvard played without Shelton-Mosley and Rich, who were held out

with minor injuries. They weren't needed. The Crimson pushed the Hoyas up and down the field, racking up 33 first downs to Georgetown's nine and winning the total-offense battle 535 yards to 266. Nevertheless, the final score was restrained: Harvard 31, Georgetown 17. This was partly due to two big-play Hoya touchdowns (a 76-yard pass and a 74-yard run), and also to Viviano's playing only 17 minutes. In that span, however, he completed 15 of 21 pass attempts for 210 yards and three touchdowns, including a 75-yarder to Firkser.

So far, so good. But the meat of the schedule—and, perhaps, health—would determine whether the media had gotten it right.

**IN MEMORIAM:** Chester M. Pierce '48, M.D. '52, died in September after a long illness. He was the first African American to play in a major college football game south of the Mason-Dixon line when he suited up at tackle in 1947 at the University of Virginia over the initial objections of its administrators. (The game passed without incident.) Pierce went on to become a distinguished psychiatrist and educator; the Division of Global Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital is named in his honor. (For more, see "New Faces," January-February 2011, page 64.)

**TIDBITS:** With the victory over Georgetown, the Crimson is now 14-0 in night games at the Stadium....Under Murphy, Harvard is 18-5 in its Ivy League openers.... In geographical representation on the 2016 roster, California leads with 17 players, followed by Texas (16), Georgia (9), Connecticut (8), and Ohio (6). ~DICK FRIEDMAN

## "Acting As If" for 35 Seasons

*Basketball coach Kathy Delaney-Smith lives, and inspires with, her motto.*

HARVARD WOMEN'S basketball coach Kathy Delaney-Smith insists that her accomplishments are not "extraordinary." But as she enters her thirty-fifth season, she is the second-longest tenured head coach in Division One women's college basketball. She has the most overall wins of any coach in Ivy League men's and women's basketball history (546-375 overall, 322-142 Ivy). And

she is the lone coach (male or female) to lead a 16-seed over a one-seed in the NCAA tournament (the Crimson's 1998 victory over Stanford, 71-67, on the Cardinal home floor).

Many coaches who have enjoyed such enduring success are associated with a specific style of play. Pete Carril—the former Princeton men's basketball coach who is second to Delaney-Smith among Ivy coaches on the all-time win list, at 514—created the Princeton Offense, a methodical system that slowed the game and allowed the Tigers to compete with more athletic opponents.

Delaney-Smith, in contrast, is most closely associated with three words that at first glance have nothing to do with any sport: "Act as if." The subject of an eponymous

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documentary by former player Melissa Johnson '00, "act as if" involves convincing oneself that challenges are surmountable and goals are attainable. As Delaney-Smith explained in the film, she encourages players to act as if they are not tired and to act as if they are great shooters. "The body," Johnson wrote in a *New York Times* essay accompanying the film, "follows where the mind leads."

"Act as if" embodies Delaney-Smith's belief that performance is at least 80 percent mental. She has long drawn on motivational techniques from academic disciplines like psychology and leadership. As Maura Healey '92 and Trisha Brown '87 recalled, their coach employed visualization, mindfulness, and sports psychology in the 1980s, decades before they were in vogue. She and her players are currently studying Harvard Business School associate professor Amy Cuddy's work on body language and presence. And for new approaches, the coach can always turn to her bookshelf, which is lined with still more Crimson academic volumes, among others, like Ron Heifetz's *Leadership on the Line* and Rosabeth Moss Kanter's *Confidence*.

Delaney-Smith complements these motivational techniques with a knack for forg-

ing strong relationships, a critical skill for recruiting and molding top athletes. She connects with people through her approachability (her players call her "Kathy," not "Coach") and sense of humor. She also demonstrates concern for her players' holistic development—an attribute that, as Healey said, is critical for young women at a pivotal stage in their lives.

Nonetheless, Delaney-Smith is unusually

**Kathy Delaney-Smith, the winningest coach in Ivy League basketball**

candid, even during the recruiting process when many coaches bombard prospects with praise and attention using social media and text messages. As former player and assistant coach Lindsay Hallion '08 noted, Delaney-Smith makes more limited use of these techniques; she prefers instead to speak to players directly and openly. One



## New-Look Lavietes

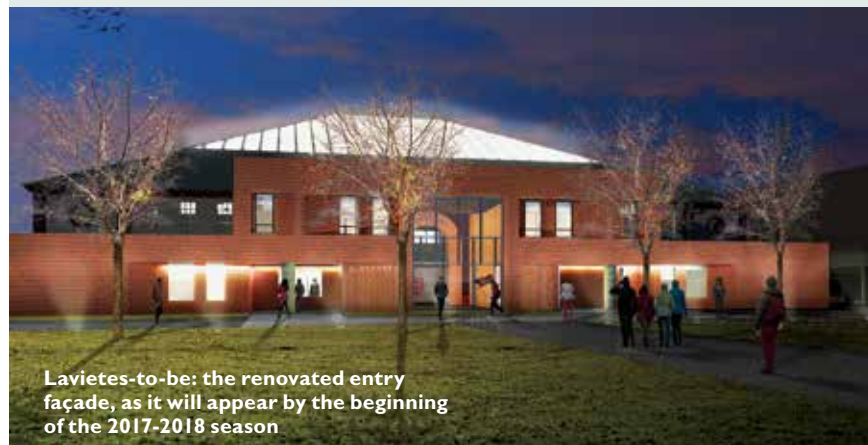
**Basketball Fans** will navigate through construction-work-in-progress, temporarily in abeyance during the Crimson's season, as they enter Lavietes Pavilion for this season's games. Although the University's 2013 master plan for Allston construction envisioned a new and larger arena located farther down North Harvard Street, well past Harvard Stadium, that would have been an

expensive and long-term project, with no certain date for completion.

Now, the decision has been made to overhaul Lavietes, which was built in the 1920s as an indoor-track center and converted to basketball use in 1982. The visible construction extends the front façade, ultimately yielding 5,000 square feet of additional space to accommodate new team locker rooms and coaches' offices. When the work is completed, before next season, fans will pass through a new entry, and be served with upgraded concession, merchandise, and restroom areas. The bleacher seating will be replaced; all the heating, cooling, electrical, and lighting systems will be modernized; and there will be that most au courant of amenities: a jazzy video board and sound system.

The renovation will retain the intimate scale of Lavietes and its proximity to the main campus in Cambridge, and is obviously ready soon—perhaps, one can hope, as a venue for the new Ivy League conference tournament, which launches next March at Penn's venerable Palestra. Read complete coverage at [harvardmag.com/lavietes-16](http://harvardmag.com/lavietes-16).

—J.S.R.



Lavietes-to-be: the renovated entry façade, as it will appear by the beginning of the 2017-2018 season

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of the first things she did when recruiting Kit Metoyer '16 was tell the future Crimson co-captain that she wasn't a good defender. The comment stung, Metoyer recalled, but that candor—which, several alumnae noted, continued throughout their time at Harvard—proved beneficial. “You don't always love the person who holds the mirror up to you and shows you all of your weaknesses... while you're growing,” said Katherine Rollins '09, “[but] when you're on the other end of it...[you] respect that person so much.”

Delaney-Smith's emphasis on psychology and relationship-building does not come at the expense of managing her players' game; rather, it gives the squad the confidence to play in the coach's adaptive style. On offense, she encourages her teams to run (i.e., move the ball quickly up the floor) and look for a three-pointer in transition—a play she emphasizes, she explained, because it is a relatively easy and high-yield shot. But she's prepared to emphasize getting the ball into the post during years when she has tall, talented forwards and centers. When the other team has the ball, Delaney-Smith mixes aggressive man-to-man defense with unorthodox permutations and shifts. These unusual defenses—along with trick plays on offense—keep opponents off guard and provide opportunities to engage in “risk-taking” that she and her players enjoy. Finally, Delaney-Smith aims to avoid overcoaching—she doesn't want to dampen her players' instincts and self-assurance with excessive schemes and instructions.

Delaney-Smith's competitive drive and her ability to form relationships and mold her teams have produced extraordinary success. A case in point was that 1998 upset of Stanford. According to Allison Feaster '98, the fifth pick in that year's WNBA draft, the win was the perfect culmination of four years of building cohesion. Still, that victory would not have been possible without Feaster, a three-time Ivy League Play-

er of the Year who committed to Harvard in part because she sensed that Delaney-Smith was a “strong woman”—something she picked up on thanks to the coach's hyphenated last name.

That points to Delaney-Smith's long advocacy for women and women's sports. Before coming to Harvard, she coached at Westwood (Massachusetts) High School, where she compiled a 204-31 record—and filed four Title IX lawsuits to ensure that her players had the resources they needed, including equitable access to the school gym. She received numerous college coaching inquiries, but the only call she took seriously was Harvard's, because the hiring committee demonstrated a commitment to gender equity.

Nonetheless, Delaney-Smith has had to continue her advocacy in Cambridge, soliciting financial support and promotional coverage for her team and, at times, directly confronting sexism. Several recent alumnae recalled arriving for a pre-game shoot-around on the road and discovering that the opposing school's men's team occupied the floor. Delaney-Smith—who subsequently voiced her concerns to the host university's administrators—instructed her players to stand at the edge of the court, basketballs in hand.

Such stances have made an impression. Stemberg Family coach of men's basketball Tommy Amaker noted parallels between Delaney-Smith's journey and that of Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton. Similarly, Maura Healey, now attorney general of Massachusetts, depicted her coach as leading by example, and a formative influence on her career in civil-rights law.

Delaney-Smith identifies her mother as her own role model. Peg Delaney laid the foundation for “act as if” by encouraging her children to push through injuries. She also coached Delaney-Smith at Newton's Sacred Heart High School, where her daughter became the first woman in Massachusetts high-school history to



**Close and candid bonds with players have helped fuel Delaney-Smith's success.**

score 1,000 points.

Delaney-Smith set that record playing the now-outmoded six-on-six version of basketball, so when she began coaching at Westwood, after graduating from Bridgewater State, she had to learn how to coach five-on-five—the first “act as if” moment in her career. She has not stopped since, even during the 1999-2000 season, when she underwent chemotherapy for breast cancer.


Several years ago, following a disappointing season, Delaney-Smith considered retiring. But while watching the NCAA Tournament, she started diagramming a play—a signal that the game still energized her. She also has a very concrete goal. Having last won an Ivy title in 2008, the coach is emphatic about her top priority now: “Winning a title. Period.”

With the addition of a talented recruiting class led by McDonald's All-American Jeannie Boehm '20 and the return of a young nucleus from last year's NIT team, the Crimson has a legitimate chance of achieving that goal soon. Delaney-Smith is poised for a dramatic final act. ~DAVID L. TANNENWALD

## Harvard Hardwood

Follow the men's and women's teams all season long: visit [harvardmag.com/basketball](http://harvardmag.com/basketball) to read game dispatches and analysis by David Tannenwald '08, and sign up at [harvardmag.com/email](http://harvardmag.com/email) to receive basketball alerts.





# Educating Teachers

Harvard gets serious  
about training undergraduates  
for the classroom.

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by Sophia Nguyen



"THIS IS SOMETHING that's interesting about HTF," Quan Le '15 said. "We literally cry every day."

Le was recalling the Harvard Teacher Fellows' first collective classroom experience: a two-week stint at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood. Many of the fellows had taught before—at schools in Botswana or the Philippines; at after-school programs; at summer camps—but few

had ever stood at the front of a classroom as the teacher of record. Sitting in a lounge at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) in July, Le—soft-spoken, tattoos of escaped birds flying up his forearms—articulated their general distress: "It felt like these kids deserve so much more. Why are we *here*? It didn't feel like their teachers were providing adequate supports, and we come in and—we don't know how to teach. We don't know how to help them."

SOMETIMES the crying became infectious. On one morning in early June, the fellows sat in a basement classroom for their daily "teaching lab," where they studied and rehearsed classroom management strategies that they could try out on the high-schoolers later that day. They broke up into two discussion groups, and, while debating last night's reading on cultural sensitivity, one-half of the room broke down. Voices rose: *I just want to push back a little on what you said. I think this is very problematic. I'd like to ask you to unpack this point. I don't think that's the culture of low-income people—I think that's a deficit-based model.* The fellows, freshly graduated from the College, were fluent in left-leaning liberal-arts classroom etiquette. Yet the conversation grew tenser, then tearful, even as everyone insisted they had no real conflict. Someone burst out, frustrated, "I agree with you!"

"It's not like class," one of them said, finally, face in hands. "It really matters to me. I feel really attacked. I care so much about this stuff, and when the whole group disagrees with me, I can't take it."

Noah Heller, HTF's master teacher-in-residence for math, interceded gently. "We need to work on tuning together. I don't hear people disagreeing with you, I really don't. We're having a robust discussion."

"It's so exhausting. I'm so sorry, I cry all the time." The fellow took a breath. "I'm getting really defensive. I think we all really need to remember that we're all here to help kids." At some point, everyone in the circle of chairs had begun holding hands. "There's not always agreeing or disagreeing," someone offered helpfully. "Sometimes it's just—this stuff is really hard, and we're just trying to figure out what we feel."

Meanwhile, their other classmates were wrapping up an amicable group problem-solving session, supervised by the English language arts (ELA) master teacher, Sarah Leibel. Told about what had happened on the other side of the room, Leibel responded with upbeat equanimity. It had been a tough first week: "There have been a lot of successes, a feeling of real delight and triumph, as well as feeling discouraged and disappointed in themselves." Those fellows who'd been educated in excellent, competitive high schools might be experiencing culture shock, she said, while others, more accustomed to under-resourced institutions, saw a school "working hard to

turn around." Leibel continued: "There are all kinds of emotions around that, connected to the kind of schooling you've had."

"Turn around" is something of a technical term. For years, Madison Park teetered on the edge of a "chronically underperforming" designation and state takeover. It had six leadership changes in as many years, a 65 percent graduation rate, and, at least that week, unsupplied girls' lavatories: after several deliberate floodings, the rolls of bathroom tissue had been removed. "They're not mature enough to have toilet paper!" an English instructor informed the fellows, seeming to find the situation much funnier than they did.

The fellows were teaching during a supplemental period ordinarily set aside to prep for state achievement exams. This late in the year, the students mostly spent the time watching movies. "So we're not doing a *ton* of harm," Le concluded. "Like—even if we taught badly? It's not affecting their grades or their ability to pass these tests. I think that made us feel a bit better." Madison Park did expose the cohort to "the reality of urban education," in another fellow's words; the schools where they would do their residencies the following year were uniformly stronger and better-run. Still, the fellows were troubled by their relative privilege, and more specifically by the thought that their learning resulted from their students' deprivation. As that fellow put it, "For a lot of us, this was the first time we had seen an urban high school on the brink of failure. That was a shock. And I think there were these questions of—obviously, this is the kind of school that needs the best teachers, and we had never even taught a lesson. What are we doing here?"

Working in an adjoining room during the lab, Stephen Mahoney, HTF's associate director, compared this classroom exposure to the experience of being a

first-time parent: the fellows were shell-shocked, petrified about doing something wrong. Mahoney, who has taught for 26 years and been a school principal for 17, has the jocular energy of a coach in an inspirational sports movie. "Hey, Victor," he called to Victor Pereira Jr., HTF's master teacher of science, as he walked in. "Do you remember what it was like, when you and your wife brought home your first kid from the hospital?"

Pereira took up the theme. "They help you put the baby in a carseat, and you're on your own." His eyes widened. "You get home and



**Rebecca Park '16 said of the teaching fellows' first classroom experience, "It was difficult for a lot of us to feel like, why are we here? We're not saviors from Harvard trying to fix things." Opposite: Quan Le '15 guides a biology lesson.**

you're like, *now* what do I do?" The fellows were starting to put the classroom theory from their coursework into practice. "The pieces," he said, "aren't fitting together just yet."

### "The Ultimate Human Endeavor"

THOUGH the Harvard Teacher Fellows program's unofficial mantra was, "We are a start-up" (and, later, "*We have it covered*—kind of"), for senior lecturer Katherine Merseth, Ed.D. '82, "It has been a long labor of love."

Until recently, Harvard undergraduates interested in education had two main options. There's Teach For America (TFA), which runs its corps members through a five-week summer boot camp before the school year, and requires a two-year commitment. At peak popularity, it received applications from nearly 20 percent of the seniors. Though campus attitudes toward the organization have chilled—erupting in 2014 as protests at the College—TFA still recruits aggressively. Then there's the Undergraduate Teacher Education Program, founded by Merseth in 1985 to certify Harvard undergraduates as teachers. The co-curricular program draws a more committed, smaller crowd—some 20 students are enrolled at any given point, she reported—but many others balk at the prospect of piling fieldwork and coursework onto their existing commitments. "It's hard on kids' schedules," she said. "It's hard when you're the only one in your suite of roommates getting up at 7 A.M. to teach."

Merseth imagined a new pathway: longer, more gradual, and with much more support, instilling newcomers with the practices and mindset to make teaching a sustainable career. The fellows would start coursework at HGSE in their senior year, including discipline-specific training led by "master teachers in residence." (HTF drew their original three—Heller, Leibel, and Pereira—from the nonprofit Math for America, Brown's master's in teaching program, and HGSE's

**Members of the founding cohort of HTF outside the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where they took methods courses in their senior spring and throughout the summer**

own Teacher Education Program; all had taught at low-income urban high-schools.) College diploma in hand, the fellows would continue taking education courses while also teaching summer classes in the Boston area. In the fall, placed at high-needs schools in cities nationwide, they would teach a half load, spending the rest of their day on professional development—research, perhaps, or shadowing more experienced teachers. At night, they'd continue their Harvard schooling long-distance and also receive coaching from their HTF mentors. The following summer, they would return to Cambridge for a second round of student teaching and coursework to earn their teaching license, and, if desired, a master's degree.

HTF would offer up-front, on-the-ground training, without imposing the equivalent of a full-time job on students' schedules. It intended to ask more of its members—a four to seven-year commitment—without scaring off those undergraduates skittish about declaring themselves "career teachers." Though the cohort is wholly devoted to

the program's overall social aims, said Mahoney, "I don't think any of them see themselves doing *anything* for 'the rest of their lives.'" Some of the fellows admitted that the four-to-seven figure gave them pause. After being accepted to the program, several gathered in the dining hall to confer: "Is this something we want to do? Is it worth it for us?"

Merseth has called herself the godmother of HTF, but Mahoney went one further: "Kay Merseth is Gaia, as far as this program is concerned," he said. "The mother of us all." Fellows often cite her famously oversubscribed lecture course, "Dilemmas of Equity and Excellence in American K-12 Education," as what drew them to the field. She makes a point of inviting all her students to office hours, and maintains a stack of oversized index cards filled with her notes on their personal interests and backgrounds. "I want them all to come and talk to me," Merseth said. She has perfected her pitch: leaning in, looking students in the eye, and saying, in no uncertain terms, that they should consider a career in education. Not just policy, but teaching; not higher ed, but children. "If you love your subject matter, teaching is like eating ice cream," she said. "And it is *endless*. Teaching is the ultimate human endeavor."

Merseth's original proposal, drawn up in 2003, hovered in committee purgatory until the arrival in 2013 of the school's new dean, James E. Ryan, who raised \$14.5 million for the program's founding. HGSE unveiled HTF in the fall of 2014, including plans to enroll 40 students in the inaugural class. In the fall of 2015, the program received 28 applications, accepted 22, and wound up with 18 in its pioneering cohort. Still, Merseth holds steadfast to her vision: of a fellowship as coveted and prestigious as a Marshall

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or a Rhodes, its design adopted by other universities, and with 100 fellows in each graduating class at Harvard. In a recent interview, she asserted, matter-of-factly, “They’ll get there in two or three years.”

### “We Are A Work in Progress”

ON A TYPICAL DAY in HTF’s spring semester class, “Introduction to Learning and Teaching,” students entered their lime-green classroom in Longfellow Hall to the soundtrack of Disney’s *The Lion King* and started on a “Do Now” warm-up activity, like writing responses to passages from the previous night’s reading. Their professor offered little encouragements, odd if heard out of context: “Grammar and spelling don’t matter for this—ideas do,” or, “If you get stuck, go back and re-read your quote,” and again, more emphatically, “If you get stuck, go back and re-read your quote.” (Describing the atmosphere, one fellow said, “In the best way possible, I felt like I was in a high-school classroom again.”) A smartphone mounted on a tripod swiveled silently in the back of the room, recording the goings-on—a test run of the technology that might be used, next year, to observe the fellows remotely in their classrooms.

Meetings often served a dual purpose. First was the content: the tools and methodologies useful for their teaching practices. They learned about Bloom’s Taxonomy of cognitive processes (*understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create*) in order to devise thorough assessments; they read *Other People’s Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* by Lisa Delpit, Ed.M. ’80, Ed.D. ’84, to mull over what it meant to be “social justice educators.” But the class’s format was its own object lesson. Halfway through, the fellows would be asked to reflect on the opening activity. “What did that get you?” the professor prompted. This left an opening for students who hadn’t done the homework to participate in the lesson, one fellow suggested. It had a low threshold for entry, someone else chimed in, but asked for high critical thinking.

Later in the semester, the fellows began training in their specific subject areas: math, science, English Language Arts, and history. One day in April, the history fellows pored over a text in which Hull House founder Jane Addams decried dance halls. First things first, said HTF director Eric Shed: what did the document say?

“It seems like she’s interested in, like, their bodies as this animalistic thing?” suggested one student. Shed, the unflappable former director of secondary history and social-studies education in Brown’s master’s program, didn’t blink: “How are you going to explain that to children?” he asked, not unkindly. Teaching seemed to ask that the fellows unlearn their collegiate instincts to skip several steps ahead to the next, knottier, insight. “It can definitely sort of...warp your expectations of what kids should be doing,” said Jesus Moran ’16, a government concentrator who would teach world history in Oakland in the coming year.

Alongside this formal training, the faculty stressed “cohort-building”—pure camaraderie—as an essential resource in the fellows’ first year of teaching. In the spring, Victor Pereira hosted a retreat for the program at his home in Foxborough; reminding the students not to be late, Mahoney ribbed them, “*Maybe* we’ll save some tofu eggplant hot dogs for you.” (But the fellows didn’t need too much encouragement; by March, a group text asking, “Why haven’t we seen each other drunk yet?” occasioned their first party.) During the summer, the cohort bunked together in the law school dormitories, and were offered stress relief and free food at weekly “family dinners” hosted at the Ed School. The program encouraged the fellows to find housing with one another in their new cities. (In the notoriously



expensive Bay Area, an anonymous donor’s largesse enabled five fellows to share a house in Berkeley.)

“We are going to be each other’s best friends,” Mahoney told the fellows. “Living together is going to be intense.”

**Sydney Jenkins ’16, shown here at Chelsea High School, was placed at a charter school in Brooklyn to teach eighth-grade English.**

### “It’s Hard to Feel Deficient in *Everything*.”

The numbers say that Chelsea High School, located six miles north of Harvard’s campus, serves 1,521 students. More than a third of those students are considered economically disadvantaged, and more than a quarter are “English Language Learners” (versus 5.6 percent statewide). Absenteeism is chronic. The Massachusetts education department reports that in recent years, the school has narrowed proficiency gaps somewhat, but not enough. Its gains in student achievement are higher than elsewhere in the district, but compared to the rest of the state, Chelsea High especially lags in math and science.

The school could also be described in other terms. Its hallways are sunny and clean, fellow Anthony Schiappa Pietra ’16 pointed out. Student work is displayed on the walls: posters detailing science experiments, summarizing some plot point in the *Aeneid*. Schiappa Pietra, a self-described “class clown” and “super space cadet,” attended well-off private schools in Miami’s suburbs growing up, but he’d learned to read the walls. These are signs of a classroom culture that tells kids their work is valued, he said, that lets them then contribute to their environment. You can tell when a school is cared for.

About a quarter of Chelsea’s students needed to make up classes to move to the next grade or graduate, according to Adam Goodstone, a director of its summer school. “We recruited really aggressively,” he says—visiting classrooms, sending letters to parents inside report cards, and phoning students’ homes. Some 250 students signed up for the 15-day classes, which were pass-fail and had a strict “three strikes” attendance and tardiness policy. The fellows largely ran classrooms in pairs, teaching one lesson each, while supervised by a mentor teacher from the school.

In the early days of summer school, faint anxiety thrummed in

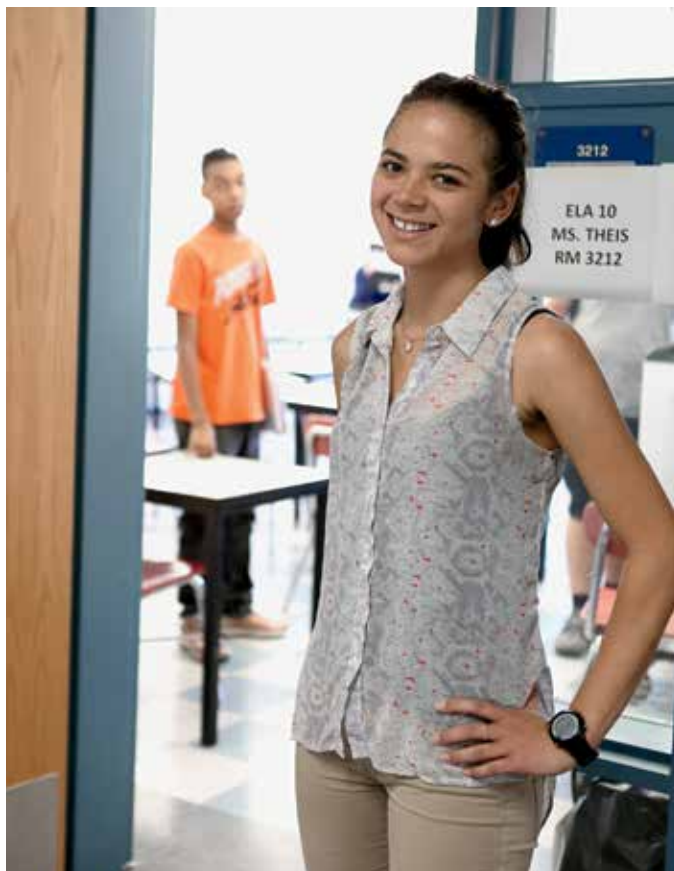
the background. The fellows' morale was determinedly high. Grace Kossia '16—a mechanical engineering concentrator from the Democratic Republic of Congo, by way of Texas—conducted a lesson on metrical units. Her system of class participation, drawing names randomly from a cup, was stymied by the fact that only four students had shown up: “He’s not here...she’s not here either...” One floor down, Jonathan Young '16—a rower who grew a mustache over the summer, perhaps to look older—was momentarily flummoxed by how to get his students started on researching historical photos with laptops. “It’s funny, the little things you don’t know at the beginning,” his mentor teacher, Sam Baker, commented with a smile. “How to break kids up into groups, how to clarify instructions without talking too much.”

Rebecca Park '16—raised in a family of teachers in Boston—came over to ask Baker, in a whisper, “Do you think it would be good or bad to put on music?” The energy in the classroom seemed low. After a pause, more diplomatic than contemplative, he answered, “I usually don’t.” When it was Park’s turn to lead class, she told the students to stand up. “Let’s have a seventh inning stretch! Whoo! I’m so excited to write about documents!” One kid, head on his desk, emitted a muffled moan: “Ohh, *shit*.” (Park said later that the

summer taught her that students would respond better to sunniness that’s cut with self-irony.)

Others had more openly rebellious classrooms. Kia Turner '16—who wrote her history and literature thesis on “Reclaiming the Power of the Black Narrative in Activist Achievements Against Harvard,” and speaks

**“I think when you let things slide in a classroom,” says Kia Turner '16, “it shows kids that you’re just like everybody else and you don’t even expect that they can behave.”**



in a crisp and authoritative rapid-fire—said of her students, “They were very tough at the beginning. It was really difficult for me because it was a lot of like—who the hell are you? Cursing at me in the classroom, cursing at each other when I first walked in.” Turner had pictured herself teaching young children in elementary or middle school, not young adults. “With sixth-graders, you can look at them from across the room and they’ll stop doing what they’re doing, or you can call them out and they’ll stop. But if you do that with a 20-year-old boy? Who is going through a ton of stuff in his life? You’re gonna start a *war* in the middle of the classroom.” Her no-excuses persona sometimes backfired: “I’ve really learned that you can’t get to that extreme, serious strictness until you have trust from kids. Once you do, they’ll listen to you. But if you just walk in like that—it doesn’t work in the way that it does for younger kids.”

Maya Park '16, partner-less at the head of her history class, struggled to draw her students into an activity about evaluating source material: a scenario where they had to act as school principals, using witness testimonies to decide which kid to suspend after a lunchroom food fight. As a high-schooler, Park had dreamed of performing on Broadway, and when her mentor teacher stepped in to finish the lesson, she looked like she’d been allowed to retreat off-stage, the muscles in her face and shoulders relaxing.

The mentor, entering her ninth year of teaching government, seized the room with the unsmiling decisiveness of a drill sergeant. “How big is the cafeteria?” A murmur. “It’s big, right? If you’re on the red side, can you see what’s going on in line? Well, that would affect what the witnesses could see. Now, imagine that Max’s dad worked at Market Basket [a nearby grocery store] and imagine that Justin’s dad was the new boss....” Her local details grounded the exercise in reality—and unlike the often coaxing style of greener educators, none of her sentences really ended in question marks.

“It’s hard to feel deficient in literally *everything*,” Park said later. “My mentor teacher keeps telling us to accept that we’re struggling—which we are! We accept it!” She sighed. “But we want to know how to get better.”

As they got deeper into their field experience, the fellows at times seemed visibly impatient with their own coursework, for which they returned to campus in the afternoons. Some of the units were helpful—the one on special education, for instance—but in general, their papers and projects seemed disconnected from their realities. They didn’t want theory; they wanted *moves*. At the last session of “Education Psychology,” in late July, professor of education Jon Star opened by asking for input about how to structure the remote coursework for the coming academic year. But the requests quickly spiraled:

“I want specific strategies we can use to help students with motivation.”

“Where does empathy enter the picture? Also, maybe we’ll get to this, where does—just super loosely—where does race enter this picture? I think there’s so much there and I don’t want to damage students.”

“I don’t know if this is your area—but, ways to remain sane throughout the year?” someone asked. One of her classmates added, “Ways to separate yourself from student pain, or student hurt?” “Like when a kid is doing narrative composition and telling us all the shit that’s happening to them,” a third specified. “Or just *students*,” the first fellow deadpanned.

“Is that in the domain of educational psychology class?” someone else asked, grinning.



Star suggested, tactfully, that their classes should be distinct from group therapy—“though it may be sorely needed,” he added. Eventually, the discussion swung back on-topic: how to instill a sense of autonomy, how important it was to make their students feel good at *something*. “If they think they can, they will. If they think they can’t, they might not, even if they can,” one fellow said. Another pointed out how an encouragement like, “It’s not as hard as you think,” could accidentally demoralize kids, make them feel stupid. “It is hard, miss,” one of her students had told her.

Since this class would not reconvene until the fall, Star left the fellows with some advice. Starting out, he’d adopted a “teacher persona” that he felt he had to put on and take off—a strenuous performance that had made him unhappy. But over time, those two sides of himself seemed to get closer. He was happiest as a teacher when he felt more like himself, Star said, and he was happiest in his outside life when he felt more like a teacher.

His Harvard students were not completely comforted. “Imagine becoming even *more* of a teacher?” one asked his peers, under his breath.

### “We’re Going To Have To Brute-Force It.”

IN THEIR OWN CLASSROOMS, the fellows grappled with how to adjust their expectations. Rebecca Park was unsure of how to assess the weaker students in her class: “Am I supposed to pass them? They worked hard and did all their work. They certainly demonstrated improvement. For sure, if we had a whole year, I think I could get them to proficient. What does it mean that I’m sending off students who sort of struggle to write paragraphs?” Kia Turner said that she realized, “As hard as I worked, 15 days is not enough to get students from writing sentences where they don’t have sub-



**Sarah Cole '16 addresses a student at eye-level, rather than stand above her—a gesture encouraged by the HTF faculty.**

before they pulled up to Chelsea High and had to assume the mantle of adult authority, sat shooting the breeze—swapping advice about birth control or anecdotes about sleep-away camp, sounding very young. Quan Le, speaking even more gently than usual, wrapped up a surprise phone call—“You’re already there? All right. I’ll see you in 10, 15 minutes, okay?”—and, hanging up, explained that it was one of his students, “the one who’s failing really badly.” He’d come in early, before the 8:00 A.M. start of class, for extra help.

“Two more days!” said Evan Weiner ’15—tall, red-headed, unmistakably Californian—greeting the first student who ambled into his algebra classroom. Between sips from a jumbo iced latte, the student corrected him: “One more day.” “Today hasn’t even started yet!” Weiner responded, unruffled. “You’re only, what, two fingers into your coffee?” He turned to greet the next arrivals. “*Two more days!*” “One more day,” they replied.

The day’s class was on exponential functions, with a life lesson about the power of compound interest sneaked in at the end. But first, Weiner asked them to calculate the total price, with tax, of a pair of Steph Curry’s signature basketball shoes.

The “Do Now” exercise was simple, meant to build confidence from the jump. But nearly no one came up with the answer. “I kinda forgot how to do this,” one student volunteered. Before Weiner could respond, another observed, “You look kinda surprised.”

“Well—I thought this would be an easy warm-up for you, since we talked about your summer jobs the other day. But, if this is hard, that’s fine, let’s talk about it,” Weiner said. He seemed to come to a decision, clapping his hands. “All right then! Let’s do percents! What does *por cien* mean? Which Spanish speaker can tell me?”

A girl whose head had been cradled in her arms perked up to answer, “Of a hundred.”

“That’s right!” said Weiner. Her head went back down. He turned to the dry-erase board, muttering, “What’s the easiest way to do this... you can simplify the fraction. You probably know how to do that. You’ve been doing fractions since, probably, the third grade.” Then he changed his mind—they should use decimals instead. And calcula-

**“My mentor keeps telling us to accept that we’re struggling—which we are! We accept it! But we want to know how to get better.”**

ject-verb agreement and capitalization to “writing with a clear and consistent style”—the standard suggested by the summer school.

Even so, going into the penultimate day of school, the fellows had a lot they wanted—needed—to get done so their students could pass. In his writing workshop, Anthony Schiappa Pietra had a small group who, for one reason or another, had fallen behind on their final project. An incomplete would, in effect, cancel out an entire month’s worth of work. He suspected that they’d do just about anything to avoid having to share their stories with the class. “We’re at DEFCON five,” he said. “It’s *delicate*.”

Yet the bus ride from campus went as usual on July 28. People brought coffee for each other; there were stragglers, hair still damp from their morning showers. They counted off—everyone present—and left late. Some reviewed their lesson plans: an ELA fellow, who was teaching Emma Donoghue’s novel *Room*, asked aloud, “What’s the Spanish word for *civil*?” Others, in this scant half-hour

tors. After those were distributed, he set the example of a \$10 tube of toothpaste—“That’s an expensive toothpaste, but so it goes”—which had a 10 percent sales tax on top of it. “Tax should only be a couple of dollars, a couple of cents. Tax should not be as much as the price. We’re not—importing caviar,” Weiner explained. “That’s always a good check: does this make sense with what I know about the world?”

The pop-culture caricature of a difficult class is noisy, disruptive, all tough talk and spitballs. What gets less play is the long, suffocating siege against a silence that can mean anything—inattention, indifference, sullenness, confusion. Weiner set up a series of problems for the students to work through, and when he was satisfied that they had a handle on percentages, they turned back to the originally planned activity: writing values down in a pre-printed table to track the escalating cost of a car loan, left unpaid month to month. Circling the room, he handed out little blue paper tickets (“shout-outs”) to whoever he saw “on-task”—eventually, all of them. Unprompted, a bespectacled student looked up to inform him, “This class actually helped. I didn’t think I would get any better than before. But it’s easier.”

“Thanks. I appreciate it,” Weiner replied. He’d hoped to complete that table by 9 A.M.; they were still working on it by the time the bell rang at 10:30. Weiner raised his voice above their exiting clatter to call, “Be careful with loans! Pay off all your debts! See you last day of summer school.”

Pens stuck through her long plait, Gianina Yumul ’16 sprang into action before the next group entered. Weiner’s class had been her prep period, and while working in the back of the room, she saw the trouble

**Grace Kossia ’16 led a physics class at Chelsea in preparation for teaching the subject in the Bronx this fall.**

he had and quickly drew up a new worksheet on percentages. She cut a different figure at the front of the room: self-contained, less quick to quip. (“Emotionally level,” her mentors had told her.) Like Weiner, Yumul habitually narrated every action: “I’m going to turn off this projector.”



“This calculator is giving me a hard time.” (The fellows had been taught the value of “giving windows into” why they asked their students to do things, she explained later.) But she also paused to tell the class, “This is summer school, and it is my job to help you understand this. Not only is it my job, but I really *want* to be here.”

When she sensed they were totally stuck on the car-loan activity, she switched to a different exercise. A boy has a penny, a nickel, a dime, and a quarter in his pocket: how many different sums of money could he make with them? The object of the exercise was twofold: to model a problem-solving strategy, and help students visualize exponential growth by organizing the sums into a kind of tree.

“Can someone name a sum for me?” Yumul asked, drawing a table to display their answers on their board. She got only a couple of volunteers, so she began cold-calling: “Not participating is not an option.”

**“I think they’re over-achievers,” said one principal. “The first year of teaching has rattled so many people.”**

Everyone seemed disengaged (though one student, his curly hair squashed under a Bruins cap, took to the problem so well he asked if there were more like it on the Internet). But the cause of the disconnect was mysterious: did the students not follow the reasoning, or were they uninterested in where it led—since, at the end of the day, this hypothetical kid still had only 41 cents in his pocket.

After class, a couple of especially determined students returned for extra help. In a corner, one conferred with Weiner over a worksheet. Weiner’s Spanish, halting at first, warmed up quickly. “*No tiene la misma variable*,” he explained, in a murmur. “*No se puede combinarlas*.” (“You don’t have the same variable—you can’t combine them.”) Meanwhile, Yumul flipped through a make-up quiz while a skinny boy in a sky-blue shirt stood by, shifting nervously from foot to foot. After entering the grade into an online system, she looked up from the screen with a grin. “You’re passing!” she told him, adding, “You did so much work today.” Relief flooded his face. He asked if he could see for himself, saying, “I thought I was going to pass by, like, 61 or something!”

Sitting at the back of the classroom and taking copious notes was the fellows’ Chelsea mentor, Wesley Peacock. When they were alone in the room, Peacock—a business analyst before he’d joined Teach For America—turned to Weiner and Yumul. “What do we think, team?”

“About the day?” asked Weiner.

“About the holding pattern I was in for *an hour and a half*?” Yumul emitted a classic *Peanuts* cartoon groan: “Aughhhh!”

In Peacock’s sympathetic assessment, “There was a lot of teeth-pulling today. We worked too hard today.” More experienced teachers, he explained, use less direct instruction in their lessons. Instead, they structure the hour around individual and group activities, checking in with students individually to coach them through tricky bits. “Otherwise,” he said, “it’s hard to build relationships.”

For their last day, he suggested they come up with a project for the kids to work on during class. “Do we feel happy about not doing direct instruction?”

“Somewhere between happy and overjoyed,” Yumul answered.



"I want to emphasize that this does not let you off the hook for planning," Peacock warned. The best advice he'd ever been given, he said, was to never appear to work harder than your kids *in class*. All the work happened at home, preparing resources that would guide the process.

They came up with a problem set that ran the gamut of the summer's math skills, from simplifying algebraic expressions to distinguishing between linear and exponential relationships. What about kids who just didn't know anything, who struggled with the most basic concepts? Weiner asked. "We're going to have to brute-force it," Peacock replied.

The team drafted a battle plan on the whiteboard, planning the flow of exercises so they built on one another, with periodic "stop and checks" where a teacher would review students' work before they proceeded. "Imagine you're a student who knows *nothing*," Peacock instructed them. "Can you pick this packet up and get all the way to the end?"

They also needed to set a new tone for the class—rearranging the tables, putting on music. "It'll be important to keep up momentum, going in," Peacock said. And the students should be paired off strategically—friendly, but not so friendly that they became distracted; people with different strengths. If the pairs had "mixed abilities," Weiner and Yumul should ask the weaker students how they'd arrived at the answer. Even if they couldn't do all the math independently, if they at least went through each step and could explain the flow of thought, concluded Peacock, "That's not nothing."

"I felt *hot* during that percentage lesson!" Weiner said, as they exited Chelsea for the day. "Like—*bam*, here's a whole lesson out of my sleeve! Check out my adaptive practice!"—the profession's term of art for thinking on your feet—"Then..." A sigh. "The next hour and a half happened."

### "This Is Gonna Work"

EARLIER, IN MARCH, Stephen Mahoney had stood at the podium during a conference at which the Harvard fellows would be matched with their schools. What the HGSE faculty so often told the fellows, he also relayed to the administrators looking to hire them: "We're a work in progress. We'll be a *hot mess* in progress, no doubt, for three, four, years." But no one, he added, would have a bigger impact on what the program could become. "This is a moment you're going to look back on and say, 'I was here at the start of this thing.'"

The school leaders seemed prepared. "It's almost hard to describe all the things that make the first year of teaching difficult," David Krulwich, the principal of the Urban Assembly School of Applied Math and Science, in the Bronx, said during a recent phone call. He ticked off a few: lesson-planning takes far longer, and when those best-laid plans go awry, first-years are more startled, and—seeing an opening—the class misbehaves even more. Over time, though, "When a kid is doing something nutty, you say, 'Okay, I've seen this before.'"

The principals also suspected that the Harvard teachers might over-work themselves. In the spring, Shawn Benjamin, Ed.M. '05, said that the four fellows she had hired for Leadership Public School-Richmond, in California, were already asking if they could take on Advanced Placement classes or extra-curriculars. "It makes me won-



**Jing Qiu '16**  
surveys her  
math classroom  
at Chelsea.

der if they're not aware of what the challenges are. I think they're overachievers," she said over the phone, with a small laugh. Recalling her interviews with them, she said, "I think I probed pretty hard, with these guys, about their ability to overcome challenges. I think that might be hard for them because they have been so successful, and the first year of teaching has rattled so many people." Straight-A students might be used to pulling all-nighters and writing a great paper, or cramming for a midterm—but "Teaching doesn't work that way. There is a learning curve," she said. "How do they see feedback, and how do they see failure, and how do they respond?"

A month later, the fellows took field trips to visit the schools where they'd been placed. During the subsequent class session, they were told to write thank-you cards: one to someone—a colleague, a future mentor, a student—who had made the trip special; the second, said Mahoney, to themselves. "Everyone had a moment when you looked at yourself and said, 'Yep, this is gonna work.' I want you to write a note that says, 'Hey, remember that moment?'"

Round-robin, they shared what they had written. That moment was the school guidance counselor, tearing up over the photos of college-bound students. It was meeting a bunch of juniors actively excited that there'd be math beyond pre-calculus next year. It was gossiping with a bunch of girls in the cafeteria, already feeling liked and trusted. It was sitting with the other fellows on the train to New York City, and feeling at home. It was seeing a principal watch a fellow's sample lesson, eagle-eyed, then crack a smile.

By summer's end, the fellows thought that their teaching experiences, from the Madison Park lab to Chelsea's summer school, had gotten progressively easier, more structured. Another way to look at it, of course, was that they had grown more experienced, more competent. However high their aspirations about the kinds of educators they would be—loved, respected, effective, just—their self-assessments were modestly tamped-down. "We're not starting at zero," said Moran. They were nervous—"The first day of school is always terrifying," Yumul said—but excited. They would get to start fresh in a classroom. They would get to know their students for 180 days, not 15, not five. They could make some real progress. This, they said to themselves, is gonna work. ▢

Associate editor Sophia Nguyen wrote about educational technology in the March-April 2015 issue.

# Facing Harvard

A gallery of Copleys

BLAME THE SMALLPOX. The outbreak began in the depths of a worse than usual Boston winter, after a worse than usual year, during which the town had buried more souls than it baptized. On January 2, 1764, in tiny type on its last page, alongside advertisements hawking cloth and sugar and rum and tea and indigo and slaves, the *Boston Gazette* announced the first death from the familiar scourge. “No other Person in Town has that Distemper,” the printers assured readers.

They were wrong, of course. Within weeks, an epidemic took wing. By January 24, Boston was “utterly unsafe,” wrote the painter John Singleton Copley, urging a step-brother to stay clear of the “distresst Town, till its surcumstances are less mallancolly than they are at present.” The province’s legislature, known as the General Court, decamped to the sleepy village of Cambridge. To ensure their safety, and to allow the seamless workings of good governance, the lawmakers would live and work at Harvard College, which had emptied of students for the winter break.

The Court’s business was heady that season, as the legislators formulated a response to the impending Sugar Act, which threatened their crucial trade with the West Indies. New England cod fed the slaves who grew the cane that made the empire rich; New England pine made the barrels in which Caribbean sugar, molasses, and rum were shipped around the Atlantic. That commerce, the province’s governor, Sir Francis Bernard, told his London paymasters, “takes from us what no other



by Jane Kamensky

***A Prospect of the Colleges in Cambridge in New England* by William Burgis (ca. 1722-1736) shows at left the blended Medieval- and Renaissance-styled Harvard Hall, built in the 1670s, that burned in 1764.**

markets will receive.” He warned that Parliament’s experiment could come to resemble “the case of the Man whose curiosity (or expectation of extraordinary present gain) killed the Goose who laid him golden eggs.” Perhaps Bernard’s Council debated this very point when it met in the library in Harvard Hall on January 24. Their session continued into the evening, as a blizzard howled, “the severest snow storm I ever remember,” wrote the daughter of Harvard’s president, Edward Holyoke. Before they retired for the night, the councilors, or more likely their servants, banked the hearth, for the gentlemen’s comfort come morning.

The ancient ramshackle building had survived thousands of such nights, during 83 New England winters. This one was the last. Around midnight, a beam beneath the hearth began to smolder. As the blaze caught, the library—at nearly 5,000 volumes, the largest collection of books in North America—became a giant torch. By the time the alarm sounded, Harvard Hall and its priceless contents had to be given up for lost. All hands rushed to save the college’s other four buildings. President Holyoke raced from Wadsworth House in his night shirt, into snow drifts four or five feet high, and “very near lost his life,” his daughter wrote.

“ALL DESTROYED!” bellowed the article on the blaze in the *Gazette* the following week. “We are all real mourners on this occasion,” Holyoke’s daughter said. Copley and his patrons, eastward-facing New Englanders



whose fortunes and imaginations centered in London and the ancient world, would have agreed.

But as is often the case, calamity proved the mother of opportunity, not least for Copley himself. The day after the fire, the General Court “cheerfully and unanimously” voted to rebuild Harvard Hall at public expense. Governor Bernard himself designed the new structure, “a much better building” than the old, proclaimed his lieutenant, Thomas Hutchinson. The cornerstone was laid in June, and a phalanx of joiners and bricklayers got to work. A year later, as a fresh round of protests anticipated the crown’s latest effort to tax the American provinces, finish carpentry had begun.

Built of brick and stone and slate, the new Harvard Hall followed the latest principles of architecture: the Enlightenment risen from the rubble of the Elizabethan era. The building’s high-ceilinged main floor featured a grand chamber measuring 36 by 45 feet, a single room as large as most houses of its day. The College needed to line its “new-built” walls. Asked the student author of “*Harvardinum Restauraratum*,” a poem published in the *Boston Gazette*: “what are walls unfurnish’d? empty things.”

IT IS ENTIRELY unsurprising that Harvard turned to John Singleton Copley to fill those soaring empty walls. Copley had painted at the College before: a three-quarter-length portrait of an aged and stout Edward Holyoke, perched in the knobby three-legged chair that even today serves as the official seat of Harvard presidents. Just 26 years old when Harvard Hall burned, the young painter had already grown eminent in New England. His brush was busy. Refusing an invitation to take a painting tour of the newly British port of Quebec the following year, Copley explained that he had “a large Room full of Pictures unfinished, which would ingage me these twelve months, if I did not begin any others.”

On its face, Copley’s rapid rise seems like an American tale. Born poor, to immigrant parents, he had parlayed an ineffable blend of grit, hunger, and talent into a thriving trade. His father, who died when the boy called Jack was very young, left him nothing. Some years later, Jack’s stepfather, the London-born engraver Peter Pelham, started his stepson on a kind of informal apprenticeship—but then he, too, died. Jack was 13 when he inherited the care of his infirm mother, as well as a toddler half-brother, Henry (called Harry). He supported them by painting faces. Like some Horatio Alger creation with a paintbox, Copley bootstrapped his way onto the

parlor walls of Boston, Cambridge, Salem, Newport, and Halifax.

Yet his ascent was in fact a British story, more like Fielding’s *Tom Jones* than Alger’s *Ragged Dick*. Copley was a child of the empire. Like many of his neighbors, he earned his living from the spoils of its wars. The great global conflict known as the Seven Years War, which began in 1754 and ended just months before the Harvard fire, had made the fortunes of many of the men Copley painted, from imperial bureaucrats like the customs collector who invited him to Quebec, to British officers who paid the young limner to portray them resplendent in scarlet, to merchants like Boston’s Thomas Hancock, who grew rich outfitting ships for the American theater’s northern campaigns. (Hancock’s fleet, fitted with irons in the manner of slavers, deported the Acadians from Nova Scotia.)

Like most American provincials from Newfoundland to Barbados, Copley thought of London as his capital city. Every June, Bostonians celebrated George III’s birthday with fireworks and cannon blasts. Even as Copley and his neighbors remonstrated against the crown’s new taxes, they marked the anniversary of the young king’s coronation. They imported their cloth, and their tea, and their culture from the English metropolis. You could buy *The London Magazine* at Boston’s London Book Store, on King Street, near its intersection with Queen. The Town House stood there as well, topped by gilded statues of the English lion and the Scottish unicorn, facing the harbor and, somewhere across the ocean, the Thames.

London, a city of more than three-quarters of a million people, with its connoisseurs, drawing schools, and increasingly robust exhibition culture, with its palaces and print shops and even its teeming slums, shimmered at the edges of Copley’s vision. Boston felt small and cramped

by comparison: a stagnant town of about 15,000, with too many churches and too little art. Copley had begun to chafe against the confines of a place where paintings could be seen only dimly, in black and white, through “a few prints indifferently executed” and the occasional clumsy copy. He called his ailing mother and little brother his “Yowke,” his “Bondage”: ties “of a much more binding nature than the tie of Country.” He dreamed of the day he would “get disengaged from this frozen region” and “take...flight,” seizing as his birthright the British liberty that was the envy of the world.

In the summer of 1765, as the new Harvard Hall inched toward completion, Copley readied a bravura picture of his brother to send



**This portrait of Edward Holyoke, Harvard’s ninth president, painted ca. 1759-1761, was Copley’s first commission from the College.**

to London for exhibition under the auspices of the Society of Artists of Great Britain. The canvas, now known as *Boy with a Flying Squirrel*, was loaded aboard the *Boscawen* that September, shortly after Boston mobs tore apart Thomas Hutchinson's house board by board to protest the Stamp Act. When the grand commissions from Harvard came, Copley was already facing east.

THE NEW PORTRAITS would form a triptych, an altarpiece celebrating the patron saints of New England's higher learning. The Harvard Corporation commissioned two of the three portraits soon

after the fire. These presented particular challenges, for both resurrected dead men.

A likeness of Thomas Hollis III (1659-1731), the great benefactor of the College library, had burned with the old Harvard Hall. Hollis had shipped the portrait, by Joseph Highmore, from London in the early 1720s, long before Copley was born. A generation later, in 1751, Peter Pelham had scraped a mezzotint after the "curious picture." Perhaps 13-year-old Jack Copley had seen the ancient original propped in his family's modest home on Lindall Row, near the waterfront, while his stepfather translated it onto a copper plate.

Pelham promised the College he would take "all due care" of the Highmore painting. The canvas survived another 13 years, but Pelham died a scant three months after completing the print.

In 1764, while the embers cooled in the still-snowy Harvard Yard, President Holyoke sought a replacement portrait from Hollis's great-nephew, who dispatched another image of his ancestor, copied by the Florentine artist Giovanni Battista Cipriani, before the year was out. But that diminutive canvas, a bust-length, depicting Hollis's head and shoulders, proved unequal to its grand new surround. To hold the wall, it needed to be "drawn at Large," Holyoke explained. He tapped Copley, whom he described as "a Painter who takes a fine likeness," to do the job.

The commission to copy a copy would not have especially honored Copley, nor would Holyoke's compliment have delighted him. A knack for catching a resemblance was a mean talent, mere mimicry, kin to the necessary flattery that tainted portraiture as an art form. "Was it not for preserving the resemblance of perticular persons, painting would not be known in"

**To fulfill his commission for a portrait of Thomas Hollis III (left), Copley had to elaborate significantly upon the much smaller image of Hollis, by Giovanni Battista Cipriani, originally sent as a replacement from London.**





Boston, the artist lamented shortly thereafter, in his beautiful hand and the characteristically poor spelling that betrayed his lack of formal education. “The people generally regard it no more than any other usefull trade, as they sometimes term it, like that of a Carpenter tailor or shew maker, not as one of the most noble Arts in the World.” He found this state of the arts more than “a little Mortifiing.” Nonetheless, he took the job, whose visibility must have been too much to resist, even for an artist already grooming himself for the London eye.

The work proved as difficult as it was ignoble. Copley must have tacked between the Pelham engraving and the painted copy, neither of which contained even a breath of Hollis’s long-ago life. Even so, Copley found the Cipriani canvas precious enough that he was loath to part with it. He offered to lower his fee if he could keep it, telling Holyoke that Governor Bernard had encouraged him to propose the trade. The president flatly refused, fuming that the governor had overstepped. Bernard “must needs know he had no more power to Dispose of it than the smallest man in the Governmt,” Holyoke said.

If Copley “must have more for the new Picture, let it be so.” Better still, the painter might consider the difference a “Gift to the College.” Copley took payment in full.

Was Holyoke pleased with the fruits of the commission? The painting was certainly grand enough. Standing 94 inches tall, *Thomas Hollis* was the largest picture Copley had ever painted, and only his second attempt at managing a full-length likeness. But it was far from his best work to date. Both the flatness of Pelham’s mezzotint and the lurid palette of the Cipriani, with its too-red lips and its shifty gaze, linger in Copley’s inflated version. He retained the pose of Pelham’s print. But where the page-sized scale of mezzotint forced Pelham to crop his figure close, Copley had some 38 square feet of canvas to cover. The seated Hollis takes up barely half the picture’s height, and Copley struggles to fill the void, with a slate-blue drape framing nothing and a clumsy red urn nearly large enough for the great benefactor to climb into. The figure itself appears literally disjointed, with two right feet. Anatomically, Hollis looks less like a man than a wooden drawing figure. Perhaps the large “layman” that Copley kept in his painting room served as his model. The enormous painting’s most successful passage is a small one: Hollis’s lifelike right hand, which leans on a large folio atop a gleaming mahogany table. An envelope is propped against the book, its address vivid enough that Hollis could have inked it yesterday.

Copley’s patrons expressed frustration with the longueurs of sitting to him; the word “tedious” comes up often in their recollections. Yet to see the failures of Copley’s *Hollis* is to realize how much of the feeling of life in the painter’s work emerged from the comforts and perhaps especially the *discomforts* of the studio session. The sheer boredom, the awkward blend of intimacy and deference, the small talk at which Copley was manifestly terrible: these base ingredients combined, alchemically, to produce remarkable illusions of life when Copley had life before him.

The second commission to emerge, phoenix-like, from the ashes of Harvard Hall at least caught Copley a little closer to home. Thomas Hancock died in early August 1764, after the cornerstone of

the new hall was laid but before the roof went on. Agitation against the looming Sugar Act had grown heated with the sticky summer days. The issue of the *Gazette* announcing Hancock’s passing also announced the publication of a new pamphlet by James Otis, *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved*: one of the first sustained statements of American rights. At his death, Hancock was one of the wealthiest men in New England. The newspapers inventoried the “Largeness of his Heart” and the fullness of his purse. Among his many “pious and charitable Donations” was a bequest of £1,000 to Harvard to endow a professorship in “Hebrew and the other Oriental Languages.” In October, a fortnight after the “black day” on which the Sugar Act took effect, the Corporation asked Hancock’s executor and primary beneficiary, his nephew John, “for the Favour of his Picture, in order to have it plac’d in the College.”

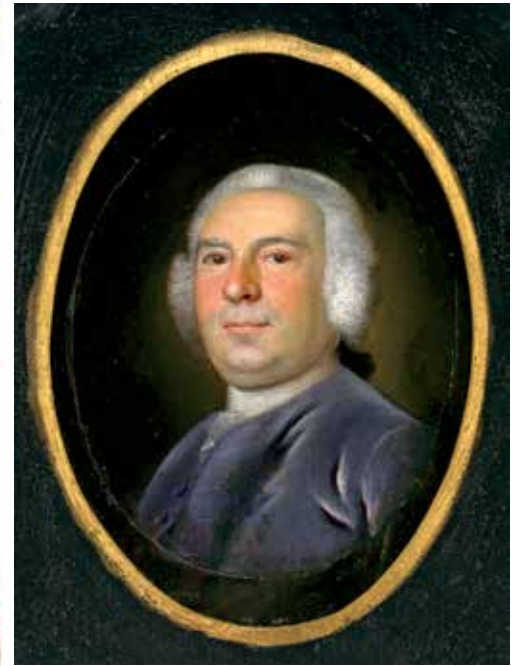
As with *Hollis*, the commission to paint Thomas Hancock required Copley to play the resurrection man. But this time Copley had his own work to draw upon. Hancock had sat to him in the 1750s, when both the middle-aged merchant and the young painter were breaking the frames of their early lives. In two intimate images meant for family display—a pastel portrait and a little copper-backed miniature just over three inches high—Copley depicted Hancock at his high-water mark, masterful and vigorous, buoyed by the fortune he gained supplying his majesty’s army during the Seven Years War. Copley knew that man. He had studied that face.

There can be no question that *Thomas Hancock* is a more successful picture than the unfortunate *Thomas Hollis*. Copley has aged Hancock’s face subtly but convincingly. The figure dominates the pictorial space. Its backdrop—a roofless classical temple—emphasizes Hancock’s refinement and his affinity with the virtues of the ancient world.

Beneath its varnished surface, however, *Hancock* betrays some of the same uncertainty that mars *Hollis*. Infrared and x-ray analysis by conservators Teri Hensick and Kate Smith at the Harvard Art Museums’ Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies discloses the depths of Copley’s indecision. He second-guessed nearly every element of the mammoth canvas, from the pose to the drapery to the bric-a-brac in the background. The finished *Thomas Hancock* stands with both feet firmly planted, his left arm hanging, glove in hand. Lingering traces of earlier versions show the figure partly turned, with legs crossed and arms spread wide, a walking stick held in his right hand. If the hidden layers could be animated, we would see the figure of Thomas Hancock oscillating, as if caught dancing a quadrille.

COPLEY OSCILLATED, TOO: between Boston and London, trade and Art, kin and calling. While *Hancock* and *Hollis* dried in his painting rooms in the spring of 1766, *Portrait of a Boy with a Flying Squirrel* hung in London, at the fifth annual exhibition of the Society of Artists. To the throngs who flocked to Spring Gardens to see the show, this was no sepia-tinted assemblage of antiquities, but a thrilling display of contemporary art, with something like the buzz of Art Basel or the Venice Biennale today. An ocean away, Copley waited on whispers caught in letters.

Copley dreamed of the day he would “get disengaged from this frozen region” and “take...flight” for the color and clamor of London.



**Copley had painted a three-inch miniature of Thomas Hancock (above) in the 1750s, enabling him to update his own work in undertaking the monumental memorial portrait commissioned by Harvard more than a decade later.**

murky black, both facing right. Only their checkerboard floors and their matching frames put the two pictures in conversation.

Between the great benefactors, in the prized place over the mantel, hung another large-scale Copley, a three-quarter-length portrait of the governor.

There was little *politesse* around the way Francis Bernard's portrait claimed that chimneystack. Harvard's president and fellows did not implore him to sit for it, as they had entreated Hollis's descendant and Hancock's legatee. Upending the elaborate protocols that governed the gift economy, Bernard simply came forward and "offer'd to give his Picture to the College." The Corporation voted unanimously to accept the donation. What choice did they have?

Copley executed Bernard's portrait first; the embodiment of the governor's importunate generosity reached Harvard Hall in late 1765, about three months after hundreds of Bostonians

had rioted violently against the Stamp Act. Bernard, never beloved, had come to be despised. "I did not apprehend that mine was so much of a military post, as to require my maintaining it 'till I was knocked on the head," he told Britain's Board of Trade the following March. "I fear that the Worst is not over," he said. "I am apprehensive that this Government will not be restored to its authority without some Convulsion."

Copley's *Francis Bernard* probably used the syntax of other images of Crown officials. Perhaps Bernard requested a seated pose, featuring the royal governor's chair, a throne-like seat that was upholstered in British red. Maybe Bernard was robed in scarlet,

How would the work of this provincial Briton hold up amid the color and clamor of the great metropolis? Copley had no idea. The drought of examples in Boston left him "at a great loss to gess the stile" fashionable in the capital, he wrote that fall. Months passed before he learned how his submission had fared among the cognoscenti, tense months while *Hollis* and *Holyoke* were fitted into ornate gilded frames capped with the subjects' respective coats of arms and installed on the east wall of the soaring new hall. By autumn, Copley's gargantuan portraits of Hollis and Hancock flanked the fireplace. They made a poorly matched pair: one sitting stiffly in a brown suit with gold braid, the other standing stockily in a coat of



too, as many of his predecessors had appeared in their state portraits. Bernard would have wanted to showcase his specific role as architect, as well as his ultimate political authority. Perhaps he held a set of floor plans.

Copley's *Bernard* can only be imagined; the painting has long been lost. Before it disappeared, it was attacked, as a stand-in for the governor himself. Bernard proved correct: the worst was not over. In 1768, following yet another wave of protests denouncing yet another group of imperial taxes, the Crown dispatched four regiments of regulars to Boston to keep the peace. Less than a week after the first deployment landed, the painting in Harvard Hall was eviscerated under cover of darkness. Since the building was not a public space, the proxy-murder was likely an inside job. Perhaps the vandals were students, or tutors. Members of the Corporation may have turned a blind eye, or even lent a hand.

The marauders carried tools: a ladder, a razor. They brought a note, a clever caption for their deed. The *Journal of the Times*, which roused the populace by printing every outrage that fall, described the performance:

From Cambridge we learn, that last evening, the picture of -----, hanging in the college-hall, had a piece cut out of the breast exactly describing a heart, and a note,-- that it was a most charitable attempt to deprive him of that part, which a retrospect upon his administration must have rendered exquisitely painful.

Harvard's own records fail to mention the attack. In late November, nearly two months after the painting was slashed, the President and Fellows voted that the picture be "put into an handsome Frame, the Expence to be defrayed out of the College Treasury." Then *Francis Bernard* and his neighbors—the whole Copley triptych—were to be "removed to the philosophy Room" upstairs, to be kept under lock and key.

But first the picture had to be repaired. Somebody contracted with Copley to do the work—either Harvard or the governor himself. (No record survives.) In March, when Bernard's restored likeness was returned to the College, the *Journal of the Times* quipped, "Our American limner, Mr. Copley, by the surprising art of his pencil, has actually restored as *good a heart* as had been taken from it; tho' upon a near and accurate inspection, it will be found to be no other than *a false one*." Bernard's heartlessness remained obvious. But where did Copley's heart lie? The *Journal's* writer implies that a truly "American" painter might not have done the work quite so well, if indeed he did it at all.

Bernard sailed east that summer, removed from his post, to his considerable relief and enduring mortification. Copley would dither about his own journey out of the provinces for another half decade, chiaroscuro years of professional prosperity, conjugal felicity, and growing political strife. As the ties between the province and the empire further frayed, Copley's world—a place where loyalties were sketched in infinite shades of gray—slowly dissolved, casualty of an

era of black and white. Relationships to earlier patrons, including John Hancock, grew tense and sour. Commissions dried up. Mobs reached his doorstep. In June 1774, days after the laws Bostonians called the Intolerable Acts closed the harbor to trade, Copley sailed for London. He would never return.

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY spent the rest of his long life working to put his Boston style behind him. In London, he climbed the ladder of Art, painting enormous modern-dress histories, moody biblical scenes, and the occasional literary allegory. He portrayed generals, aristocrats, and the occasional royal. His work hung in the Royal Academy of Arts, in the Queen's palace, and in the great houses of

the gentry across Britain. It is hard to imagine that his mind's eye often wandered back to the triptych in Harvard Hall.

Yet Copley did not want Harvard to forget him. Even before the conflict that came to be known as the American Revolution reached its shocking conclusion, the New England-born painter began send-

ing the College gifts of mezzotints after his great London triumphs. In 1780, while the American War still raged on the seas, he shipped reproductions of *Watson and the Shark* and *The Nativity* across the Atlantic to Cambridge. The Harvard Corporation voted him an official thanks, conveyed by the painter's mother, who had remained behind in war-ravaged Boston. The ensuing years brought a steady trickle of additional prints. The largest cache came posthumously, in 1818, when the painter's penniless widow, having tried without much success to peddle a box of engravings after her husband's paintings on the American market, agreed that a set be donated to Harvard. Copley's son-in-law conveyed 11 prints, with a note telling President John Thornton Kirkland that the group, when added to "those already in your possession will nearly complete a series of the works which have been published of our late celebrated countryman, and form a Copley Gallery."

For a long time after 1818, the greatest of Copley's pictures—vast vivid canvases that had filled tents and stirred the English masses—could be seen in the former British colonies only in such black-and-white reproductions: the very conditions Copley himself had once struggled against. Harvard's prints were kept, with other curiosities, among the collections of the Philosophy Chamber.\*

The engravings that comprised Harvard's "Copley Gallery" remain preternaturally vivid some 200 years after they came to the University: their blacks as rich and inky as the day they were pulled from the press. One seldom sees an eighteenth-century print so pristine as Copley's *Richard Howe*, whose wig powder appears fresh enough to dust from the admiral's shoulders. Such condition suggests that Copley's gifts were catalogued and then tucked away, acknowledged but not exhibited. And so, to the Boston eye, New England's greatest early master remained frozen in time, with some of his least successful paintings left to stand in for a brilliant cosmopolitan career. ♡

Jane Kamensky, professor of history and Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the Radcliffe Institute's Schlesinger Library, is the author of *A Revolution in Color: The World of John Singleton Copley*, just published by W.W. Norton.

\*Next spring, an exhibition at the Harvard Art Museums will bring together those hidden treasures for the first time in nearly two centuries.

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learn to do something I’d never have imagined: interviewing, reporting, and writing journalism. Little did I expect that I’d get to talk with E. O. Wilson about ants, cover an academic conference at the Radcliffe Institute, or pitch and follow through on my own ideas for stories. The generosity of the **Ledecky Fellowship** dramatically changed both my time at Harvard and my sense of what I’m capable of doing as a writer—and it also showed me the truth of a certain old but valuable piece of advice: that some of the most important experiences you have in college are the ones you never expect.” — Spencer Lenfield ’12



“Ten years from now, I will probably have forgotten many of the things I learned sitting in Harvard’s classrooms. But what I will remember, and continue to benefit from, are the skills and knowledge that I acquired through writing about the University as the **Steiner Undergraduate Editorial Fellow** at *Harvard Magazine*. Ten weeks of working alongside superb editors who respected my opinions, dispensed useful advice, and gave me the freedom to explore has fundamentally

changed how I write and how I think about writing. On a technical level, I learned to omit needless words, to make good judgments about hyphens, to edit and reedit fastidiously, to bring commas inside quotation marks, to paraphrase un compelling quotes, and to never end a paragraph with ‘he said.’ From now onwards, whenever I need to make an editorial decision, I will ask myself: What would my editors at *Harvard Magazine* do?” — Zara Zhang ’17

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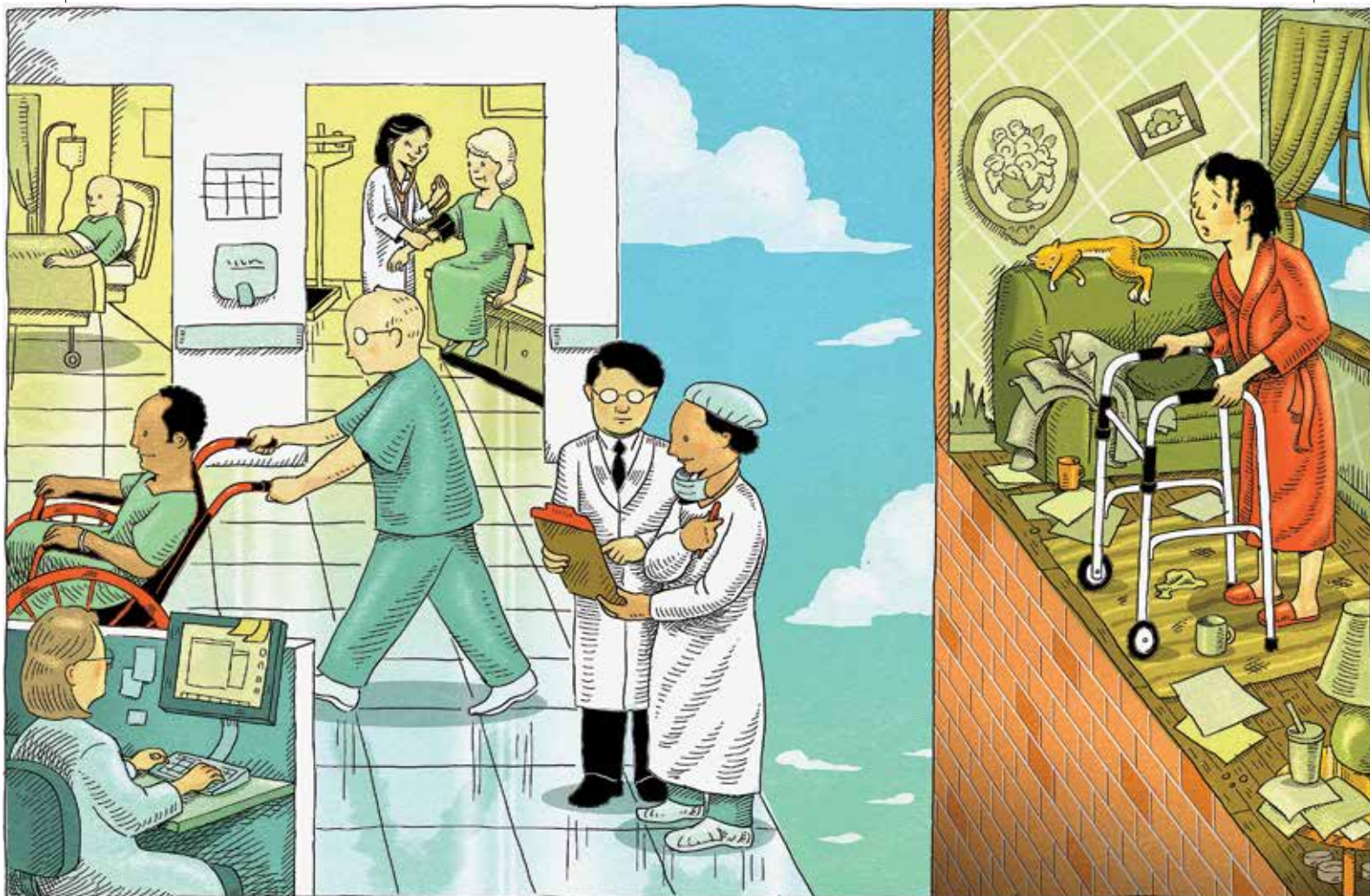
**HARVARD**  
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# Global Health at Home

Harvesting innovations from around the world to improve American medical care

by Howard Hiatt, Charles Kenney, and Mark Rosenberg



**A**T ITS BEST, American medical care is a sublime blend of science and humanity, a system where doctors routinely transplant the human heart, replace defective joints, and excise tumors from the mid-brain. Every day in the United States, families are made whole again by some of the most complex surgical, medical, and pharmaceutical therapies ever devised, interventions from gifted physicians and researchers devoting their lives to alleviating human suffering. When political leaders declare, as many often do, that the United States has “the finest healthcare system in the world,” it is this exalted aspect of American medicine to which they refer. So the notion that the United States might learn valuable lessons from care delivery in other nations—particularly poor countries—is instinctively counterintuitive to the pervasive belief that we have the finest health care on the planet.

Unfortunately, other aspects of American health care—low quality and high cost, as well as substantial health disparities—are considerably less uplifting. Such shortcomings leave the United States ranking at the bottom among the most advanced nations in comparisons of the quality and efficiency of care, even as the domestic cost of care (about \$9,000 per capita), is *double* that of peer nations.

The search is on for ways of delivering care in the United States that help improve the health and well-being of patients, effectively manage the health of populations, and are affordable. In this context, the assumption that U.S. health care is the “best” keeps us from learning valuable lessons about care delivery elsewhere. Our own experiences and research tell us that innovations in care are flowering throughout the world, and that these are ignored at great cost to Americans, many of whom are ill-served by the health system that already accounts for one-fifth of the U.S. economy. Notes

Jim Yong Kim, M.D. '91, Ph.D. '93, president of the World Bank, who has studied health systems around the globe, it is well established that "situations of scarcity lead to innovation."

## Global Health at Home

A GOOD PLACE to begin is by redefining what healthcare and public-health professionals in the United States now call "global health": improving conditions particularly in poorer parts of the world, often by exporting expertise and resources from better-off areas like the United States and Europe.

At its best, global health implies an approach characterized by values, practices, and techniques that set it apart from the U.S. status quo. Beyond the care administered to the patients who come into a physician's office (or other parts of the formal health system, like hospitals), *global health* in this sense is premised on taking responsibility for *all* people in a given location—around the world, in the United States, and at all levels of income. Philosophically, global health is guided by the words of Kolokotronis University Professor Paul Farmer, co-founder of Partners In Health: "The idea that some lives matter less is the root of all that is wrong with the world."

*Equity* is the soul of global health. In the United States, access to care—especially the very best care—is frequently correlated with ability to pay. Global health turns the focus from complex medical procedures and high-technology practice at the most advanced hospitals, per se, to the deployment of health and care resources throughout a large population of patients, recognizing that the lives of all people, whether wealthy or poor, possess equal intrinsic value.

This approach to health is *patient-centered*. For decades, the doctor-

## Global health is premised on taking responsibility for all people in a given location—around the world, in the United States, and at all levels of income.

patient relationship was at the center of the U.S. delivery system, but American health care has transitioned from patient-centered, to doctor-centered, to *payment*-centered. Global health returns to patient-centered care:

- In global health, caregivers take the time needed to understand and treat the patient and the context in which that patient lives. In that setting, a real relationship can develop between doctor and patient. In contrast, at a prestigious U.S. medical center, an ophthalmologist is rated based on whether she is able to complete 60 (!) patient visits per day, a schedule that doesn't allow the caregiver to know the patient, let alone the context.

- In global health, the patient is front and center. But U.S. caregivers too often find themselves required to spend valuable time responding to insurers' questions, time that could go to patient care.

- In global health, crucial determinants of well-being—poverty, unemployment, access to fresh food and clean water—are central to the caregiver's mission. But in U.S. medical practice, such factors typically fall outside clinicians' purview.

- In global health, local people possessing widely varying levels of skill and education—and often lacking even a rudimentary credential—play central roles in delivering care to individuals and promoting the community's health. But in U.S. medicine, credentials trump all and vast pools of potential talent go unused.

- More broadly, global-health practice shuns hierarchy in favor of inclusive teams—in sharp contrast to the determinedly hierarchical culture of U.S. hospitals and physician groups. Sprawling academic medical centers are suns around which many patients in the U.S. health system orbit. In global health, few large organizations get between caregivers and patients; care is delivered as close to the patient as possible—certainly in the community, and preferably in the home.

The double meaning of *global health at home* helps define what we mean: applying global health ideas to care procedures in the United States—and sometimes, literally providing care in the patient's home.

## Learning from Lima

In 1996, physicians from Brigham and Women's Hospital undertook to treat hundreds of patients in Lima, Peru, who had multiple-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB): highly infectious, often lethal, and difficult to treat even under far more favorable conditions. MDR-TB was, in fact, so difficult to treat that the World Health Organization had pretty much given up on being able to stop this epidemic in poor countries. Paul Farmer and Jim Yong Kim (another co-founder of Partners In Health) were able to procure large quantities of medications for these patients, but they faced a difficult challenge: How could they make sure that all of the patients would take a combination of as many as seven medications—each with its own toxic side-effects—*every day for as long as two years*?

Their answer did not—indeed, could not—involve massive and expensive tertiary-care hospitals or highly credentialed academic physicians. The key, they found, was hiring local people to go to patients' homes daily to make sure they took their pills. These com-

munity health workers had little formal education and virtually no training, but they were a low-cost, extremely effective solution: women, recruited from the

neighborhood, who knew the area and its culture well, and were able to gain the trust of patients. Through the community workers, Farmer and Kim and their clinical teammates learned about the reality inside patients' homes, enabling them to address needs for food, clean water, and transportation. In this case, an estimated 80 percent of patients were cured, a far higher rate than is typical even in the most advanced developed countries, and the cure came at a tiny fraction of the cost of treating MDR-TB cases in the United States.

"Global-health equity brings solutions to patients at *their* convenience," Farmer told us—particularly for chronic ailments. "We're not talking about home-based dialysis or interventional cardiology, but that's a small number of patients compared to people with chronic conditions. We need hospital-based care for those who are critically ill or injured, but for chronic conditions we want community-based care rather than clinic-based care."

This approach has also worked in the United States, particularly in disadvantaged settings. For example, consider how Heidi Behforouz, M.D. '94, who trained at Brigham and Women's, took on AIDS. In 1997, during her first trip to central Haiti, she found that people with AIDS received care in their homes and were able to sustain a positive level of health and quality of life. But in Boston—the epicenter of the world's finest health care on the U.S. model—some AIDS patients received no care at all, while others relied upon pe-



riodic emergency-room visits when they became really ill.

Behforouz and colleagues visited patients in several large, subsidized public-housing buildings near the hospital; there, she found many people suffering from a variety of highly treatable chronic conditions. "What struck me," she recalls, "was that people were dying in these buildings in this mecca of medical care, within walking distance of Harvard-affiliated hospitals. It didn't make any sense."

What made sense, Behforouz thought, was to recruit and train people from the neighborhood to visit the sick, assess their situations, and deliver their medications. These recruits, she says, came to serve as "a bridge between the community and institutions which have become so professionalized and siloed that it's hard to establish therapeutic relationships." Those interventions improved health for thousands of people, reduced use of the Brigham and Women's emergency department, and thus reduced Medicaid costs for these patients by an estimated 35 percent. Better health, lower cost—and a model for the millions of U.S. patients who suffer common, chronic ailments (diabetes, heart failure, hypertension, and asthma) that can also be more effectively, and less expensively, addressed.

Global health also came home to the Navajo Nation, 2,300 miles southwest of Boston: one of the reservations that in some ways, even more than the housing projects near the hospital, resemble less economically developed countries—places very far from the fortunate parts of the surrounding United States to which most of the payment-centered medical system caters.

Sonya Shin, M.D. '97, M.P.H. '05, a Brigham infectious-disease specialist, moved from Boston to New Mexico in 2009 to lead the

Community Outreach & Patient Empowerment (COPE) partnership between the Navajo Nation, the Indian Health Service (a federal agency), Partners In Health, and the hospital. Like other Partners programs, she says, COPE employs "the same kind of philosophy of elevating the voice of the community members so they are part of the decision-making." Because resources and the number of health professionals were limited, she continues, "We relied upon grassroots, community-based people. The strongest determinants of both disease and health outcomes exist in the community and have to be addressed in the community."

For example, Sarah Fatt, a 54-year-old high-school graduate with a certificate as a nursing assistant, is now a community health worker engaged with COPE. She drives her pickup to her patients' homes in the Fort Defiance area of eastern Arizona, on the New Mexico border. When she arrives to examine 84-year-old Julia M., the first part of the appointment resembles nothing so much as two old chums exchanging stories about family and friends: for the past 10 years, Sarah has helped Julia control her diabetes and hypertension. She measures Julia's blood-oxygen level and takes her temperature—movements choreographed through years of practice now a natural accompaniment to their conversation. As Sarah reaches for a finger stick, Julia extends her hand.

Sarah observes that Julia is lucky to have family support from her son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren, all of whom live nearby: "With diabetes, the family plays a huge role helping with food choices, taking walks, exercising, making sure she takes her meds." Through the years, she has educated Julia and her family about diet,



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exercise, and medication. When Julia was confused about when to take certain medicines, Sarah sketched a drawing of the sun on one bottle to indicate that Julia should take it in the morning. On another, she drew a half sun for midday, and, on a third, she drew the moon.

A year and a half ago, when Julia fell and broke a hip, the accident marked the first time since she began working with Sarah that she had been to an emergency room—and the only time she was admitted to the hospital. The contrast here is striking: Julia has managed her illness consistently and well, even as people throughout the United States with similar health problems—but whose conditions are not as well controlled—account for billions of dollars in avoidable spending on emergency visits and hospital stays.

**Julia has managed her illness consistently and well, even as other people throughout the United States whose conditions are not as well controlled account for billions of dollars in avoidable spending.**

Global to Local (G2L), a Seattle-area collaborative, demonstrates how these approaches can be applied beyond a single disease, to address community health more broadly. G2L defines its mission as bringing “strategies that have proven effective in developing countries to underserved communities in the United States,” focusing on the diverse SeaTac and Tukwila communities, home to many

immigrant families from Myanmar, Eritrea, Somalia, and nations throughout Latin America. G2L identified varied barriers to health: the unavailability of fresh fruits and vegetables, high unemployment, behavioral health challenges, and limited English-language skills. Most of the affected residents have limited formal education and find it difficult to navigate the complex healthcare delivery system.

Rather than relying on traditional clinic- or hospital-based care, G2L focuses on using community health workers to understand the health needs in peoples’ homes. It aims to link health to economic development (via public-private partnerships) and to integrate public health and primary care delivered in clinics. As an example, G2L focused on assisting diabetes patients by using smartphone-

based applications: a simple but effective intervention to help them track diet, exercise, and blood sugars. The program also connected patients with student volunteers from the University of Washington who sent them text-message reminders to

take their medications as well as notes of encouragement.

This low-cost program, requiring *no* physician or nurse time, yielded a significant improvement in enrolled patients’ health. “The patients felt accountable to someone who cared about them,” reports Adam Taylor, who directs the program. He says the students, who received some basic training, proved to be quite reliable and

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skilled in their dealings with patients. The students also helped 7,000 people in the community complete the often-confusing work necessary to sign up for insurance under the Affordable Care Act—one way to address broader public-health issues.

## Remaking Mainstream Medicine

CAN A global-health approach also make a transformative difference among the tens of millions of well-educated, upper-income Americans, who commonly have access to insurance and higher-quality care?

Encouraging news on this front comes from the Pacific Business Group on Health (PGBH), a collaborative of large employers and government agencies based in California who use their insurance-purchasing clout to improve quality and affordability. PGBH's "intensive outpatient care program" has focused on patients with multiple, complex chronic conditions who are frequent users of high-cost emergency-room visits and in-patient hospital stays. In the initial phase of the program, care coordinators visited 15,000 patients in 23 delivery systems in the western United States, seeking to establish trusting relationships with them. As this program continues, the idea is to have care coordinators visit patients in their homes and collaborate with the patients' primary-care physicians—providing medical care *and* addressing other needs (transportation, food) that have a direct bearing on health and quality of life. This integrated approach has resulted in significant improvements in both areas—and reduced emergency-room and in-patient stays.

PGBH's intensive outpatient care program has proven effective with large populations of well-educated, middle- and upper-income individuals. When tested among employees at Boeing suffering from a variety of medical conditions, hospital admissions decreased 28 percent. A similar approach with employees of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the California Public Employees' Retirement System has demonstrated that the intensive approach not only improves health and well-being but has also reduced claims costs by as much as 20 percent.

Whether in Haiti or in California, these successful approaches to improving care all build upon caregivers who establish relationships with patients, go to their homes, and factor in broad determinants of health: all the approaches are, ultimately, patient-centered. This care matrix can work in *any* setting, and can address the most pressing needs in the U.S. healthcare system: to improve the health and well-being of millions of Americans, at any income level, more effectively and efficiently. Global health improvements can work for the huge populations plagued by the kind of multiple, complex, chronic conditions that are epidemic in the United States.

What will be required to bring global health home to cure American health care? The obstacles are significant: tradition, culture, and regulations inhibit the kind of nimble innovation characteristic of the best global-health practices. Most doctors and caregivers aren't familiar with the strategies and services we describe.

But the timing is favorable for change. As generally rational economic actors, hospitals and physician groups do what they are paid to do. Under fee-for-service reimbursement, these actors have been paid for the *volume* of care they provide, rather than for its *quality* and outcome, producing well-documented overuse of clinical ser-



vices. Global health seeks *health* as the outcome, not the volume of reimbursable services. Global health-driven innovations can also help the U.S. system absorb 20 million newly insured Americans. Because the Affordable Care Act prevents insurers from turning down people with pre-existing conditions, many of those recently enrolled are struggling with a variety of ailments. The global-health ethos of doing more with less, extending the care team to include community workers, and ministering to people in their homes as a way to improve their overall health, all align with current national needs.

Donald Berwick '68, M.P.P.-M.D. '72, former administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, puts it this way: "We have to change the mentality of what excellence looks like. Excellence is not the gleaming new machine; it is someone who knows you and can help you access the resources and care you need from people you know." What he is talking about is global health; it is time to bring these improvements home to health care in the United States. ▽

*Howard Hiatt '46, M.D. '48, associate chief and co-founder of the division of global health equity, Brigham and Women's Hospital, served as dean of the Harvard School of Public Health for 12 years, and has been a member of the boards of Physicians for Human Rights, the Institute for Health Care Improvement, and Partners In Health. Charles Kenney, an executive at Northwell Health in New York, is the author of The Best Practice: How the New Quality Movement Is Transforming Medicine and Transforming Health Care. Mark Rosenberg '67, M.D. '71, M.P.P. '72, worked for the Centers for Disease Control for 20 years and established the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control there; he is president and CEO of the Task Force for Global Health.*

*The authors are working with the Institute for Health Care Improvement, Partners In Health, Global to Local, and other partners to build a sustained initiative to apply components of global health at home within the United States.*

# Alan Seeger

Brief life of a premonitory poet: 1888-1916

by DICK FRIEDMAN

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, at the height of World War I, the Battle of the Somme raged in northern France. More than 600,000 British and French troops became casualties trying to break the German lines, yet an American became arguably as celebrated as any of them, even though his nation had not yet entered the war. A few weeks before he was killed, Alan Seeger, A.B. 1910—a tall, mop-haired French Foreign Legionnaire—composed an eerie, premonitory three-stanza poem. Either despite or because of its brevity, “I Have a Rendezvous with Death” was an instant classic—the most famous American poem of a verse-filled war. It became not only a staple of high-school English-class recitations but also the favorite poem of President John F. Kennedy ’40.

Seeger’s death wish was not lifelong. His early days were spent happily on Staten Island. When he was 10, the family began two years in Mexico, where his father had business interests; that country, with its exotic flora, figured in many of his later poems.

At Harvard, he took a while to find his footing. Recalling those days a decade later, in a letter from the front to an old friend, he wrote: “My life during those years was intellectual to the exclusion of almost everything else. I shut myself off completely from the life of the University. I felt no need of comradeship.” He was more social as an up-

perclassman, earnestly composing poetry (heavy on truth and beauty) and finding a congenial group of fellow aesthetes (including classmates Walter Lippmann and John Reed) as an editor of the literary magazine *The Harvard Monthly*.

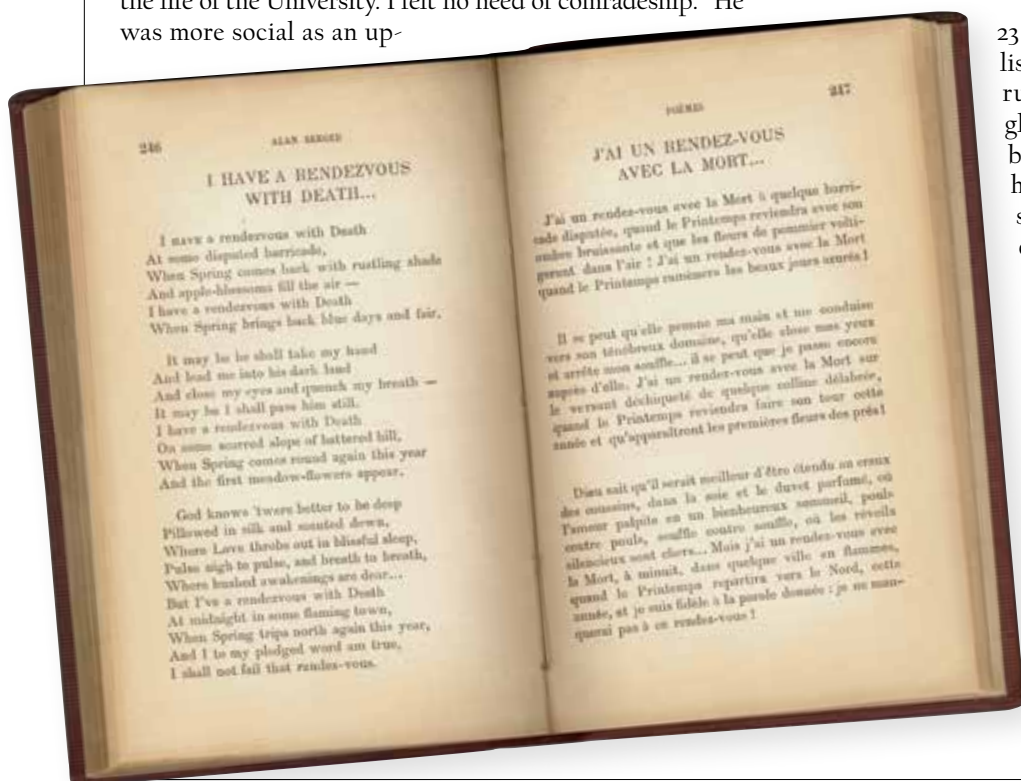
These years may have launched him, at least literarily, on his rendezvous with death. In *Memoirs of the Harvard Dead in the War Against Germany* (1920), the entry for Seeger notes: “In *The Advance of English Poetry in the Twentieth Century*, by Professor Phelps of Yale, there is quoted a letter from Professor Robinson of Harvard telling of the strong impression made upon Seeger by the Irish ‘Song of Fothad Canainne,’...a song which sings: ‘It is a blindness for one who makes a tryst to set aside the tryst with death.’”

After graduation, Seeger aimed to become a full-time man of letters—first in New York City, then in Paris. The market for aspiring poets was no better then than now, but in the City of Lights, Seeger “was happier than he had ever been before,” recalled another *Monthly* colleague, poet John Hall Wheelock, A.B. 1908. But “he was still uncertain of himself and his aims, still waiting for that destiny which he felt every day more clearly and steadfastly was somehow in preparation for him.”

The guns of August 1914 announced his path: 23 days after the outbreak of war, Seeger enlisted in the Foreign Legion. Like many who rushed to the colors, he envisioned a brief, glorious conflict he would survive. On October 17, from training camp at Aube, he wrote his mother: “Do not worry, for the chances are small of not returning and I think you can count on seeing me...next summer.”

Soldiering proved no less Seeger’s metier than sonnetry. In the next two years he was shuttled from trench to trench, in harm’s way from German artillery and bullets, one of which “just grazed my arm, tore the sleeve of my capote and raised a lump on the biceps which is still sore, but the skin was not broken and the wound was not serious enough to make me leave the ranks.” In October 1915 he was mistakenly reported killed in the Battle of Champagne.

All along, he was writing—poems, sonnets, a diary, and picturesque letters as well as dispatches to U.S. newspapers. In spring 1916, he composed the eloquent “Ode in Memory of the American Volun-



“Rendezvous,” in a 1918 French edition of Seeger’s letters and poems





teers Fallen for France"; he was bitterly disappointed when he didn't receive leave to read it in Paris on Decoration Day.

On July 4, three days after the start of the Somme offensive, Seeger's battalion was ordered to capture the village of Belloy-en-Santerre. The first wave went forward, Seeger's reserve company following. A friend and fellow legionnaire, an Egyptian named Rif Baer, chronicled his final moments. "His tall silhouette stood out on the green of the cornfield," Baer wrote. "...His head erect, and pride in his eye, I saw him running forward, with bayonet fixed. Soon he disappeared and that was the last time I saw my friend." Twelve days before, Seeger had turned 28.

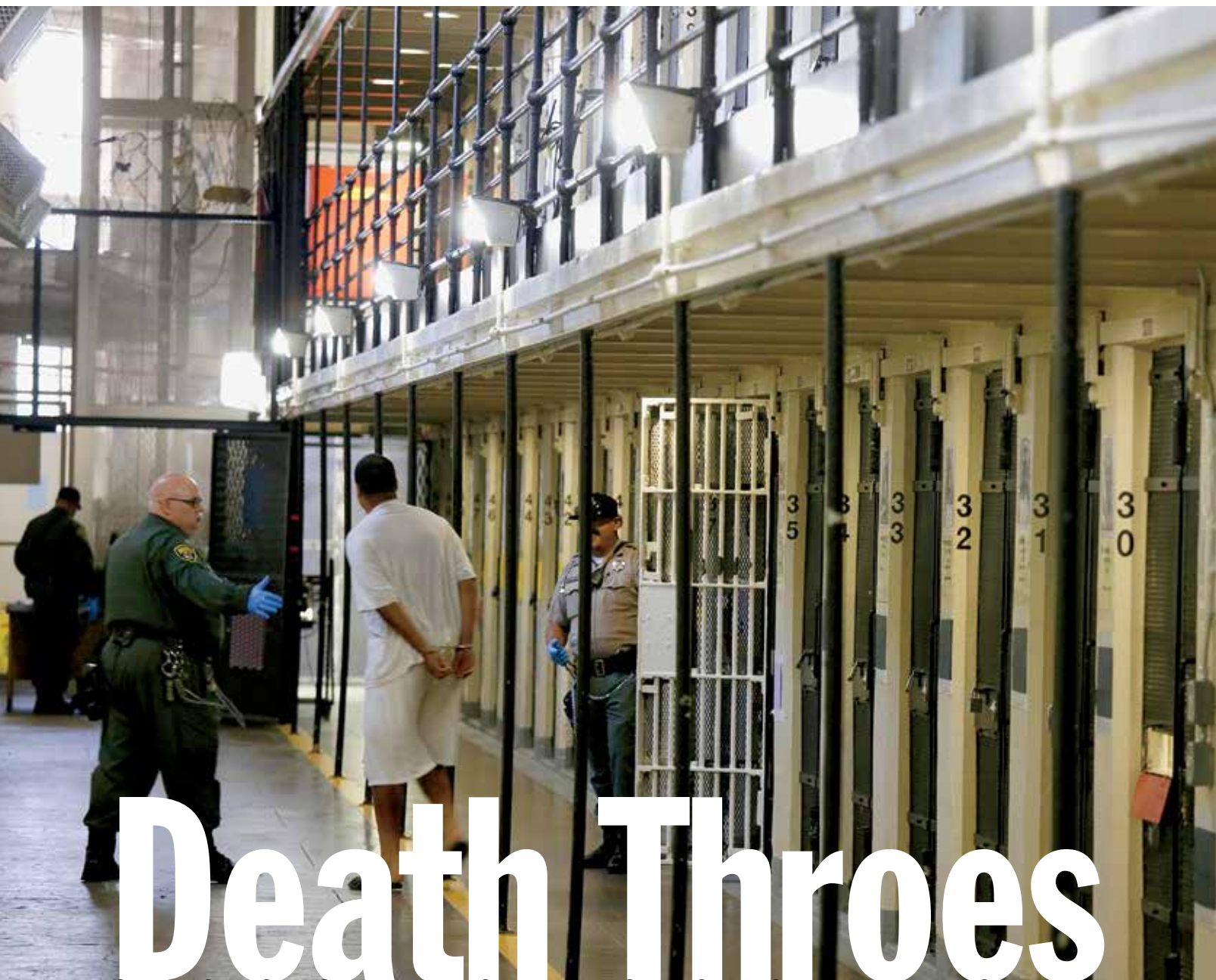
As is often true for artists, death was (to be blunt) a good career move for Seeger, especially after the United States entered the war. Scribner's published a collection of his poems, and his diary. *The New York Times Sunday Magazine* ran an admiring profile. Sportswriting icon Grantland Rice lionized him in verse in *Songs of the Stalwart*.

Later critics, including a fellow soldier, Paul Fussell, Ph.D. '52, have been more jaundiced. In his groundbreaking *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Fussell dismisses "Rendezvous," all but labeling it second-rate, especially beside contemporary British war poetry: "It is unresonant and inadequate for irony compared with works like...[Wilfred] Owen's 'Exposure,' which begins with a travesty-echo of the first line of Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale.'"

Unfortunately, Fussell does not mention Seeger's "Ode in Memory," a work of honest sentiment, historical sweep, and considerable elegance.

Seeger had asked that weeping be tempered at his death. A year before, he wrote: "The tears for those who take part in [battle and] ...do not return should be sweetened by the sense that their death was the death which beyond all others they would have chosen for themselves, that they went to it smiling and without regret." ▢

Contributing editor Dick Friedman '73, a former editor and writer at Sports Illustrated, covers football (see page 29) and other subjects for this magazine.



# Death Throes

CHANGING HOW AMERICA THINKS ABOUT CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

by LINCOLN CAPLAN

**F**IFTY YEARS AGO, American support for the death penalty was as low as it has ever been: more Americans opposed it than approved it. Violent crime in the country was low. The number of executions annually was a small fraction of the historical peak in the 1930s. These conditions set the stage for the modern era of the death penalty in the United States.

In 1972, the Supreme Court struck down the penalty as it then existed, voiding statutes in about 40 states plus the District of Columbia. Under those laws, juries had wide latitude to impose a death

sentence, with no restrictions or standards to guide them. They imposed the sentence rarely yet randomly: they sentenced people to death who were convicted of relatively minor crimes like robbery as well as those found guilty of murder. When the Court struck down those laws, Justice Potter Stewart wrote that juries were imposing the death penalty “so wantonly and so freakishly” that the punishment was cruel and unusual under the Constitution’s Eighth Amendment.

Stewart and many others thought the Court had ended the death penalty in the United States, but the ruling provoked a defiant backlash: 35 states passed new death-penalty laws. In 1976, the Court





**A death-row inmate at San Quentin; Californians vote to end or keep the death penalty this November.**

struck down new state laws that made a death sentence mandatory for anyone convicted of a capital crime. But the Court upheld laws that supposedly gave discretion to juries and judges about whether to impose a death sentence, with guidance about how to exercise their discretion.

It is common to view this reinstatement of the death penalty as the height of U.S. hypocrisy about human rights, with the nation saying yes while most of the rest of the world was saying no: 140 countries have abolished it in the decades since the United States revived it. In 2015, the nation ranked fifth among countries with the death penalty in the number of prisoners it executed, behind China, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. But the revival was something new in American law and unprecedented in any country, a distinct alternative to abolition and retention. It was an experiment in regulation by the Supreme Court.

Decades of evidence lead to the conclusion that the experiment has failed badly—and the evidence continues to mount. Many states have imposed the death penalty in ways that discriminate by race and geography, with relatively few counties responsible for a large share of American death sentences and executions. Countless juries have been confused about how to weigh critical evidence in capital cases, like whether they should regard proof of a defendant's intellectual disability as a reason *not* to impose a death sentence, or a reason to do so. Thousands of trial courts have made serious legal mistakes on their way to imposing a death sentence and have been reversed by appeals courts. Thousands of lawyers unprepared for the demanding nature of the work have given slipshod counsel to people charged with capital crimes.

Most dramatically, 156 people convicted beyond a reasonable doubt and sentenced to death have later been exonerated. One state after another has botched execution by lethal injection, leading to excruciating pain for those being executed and a growing sense that states cannot properly carry out the only form of execution that a majority of Americans have said is acceptable.

The death penalty is enormously costly. An authoritative study in California underscored the high expense of prosecuting capital cases, defending people charged with capital crimes, and housing people on death row: between 1978 and 2011, when the state executed only 13 people, the total cost of administering the death penalty there was \$4.04 billion.

Of the 8,124 people sentenced to death between 1977 and 2013, according to the Justice Department, only 17 percent were executed. Six percent died by causes other than execution and 40 percent re-

ceived other dispositions, including reversals of their convictions. The rest—37 percent—were in prison. In California in 2014, a federal judge found that, of the 748 inmates then on the state's death row, more than two out of every five had been there for 20 years or longer.

In 2009, the American Law Institute—the most prestigious organization in the country engaged in improving the law—removed the death penalty from the options it had long recognized that states could choose from to punish a convicted murderer. The institute is a nonpartisan group of about 4,000 judges, scholars, lawyers, and others. In *The New York Times*, Adam Liptak reported the group's reason for abandoning capital punishment: “the capital justice system in the United States is irretrievably broken.” In a year of notable developments about the death penalty, including its repeal in New Mexico, he wrote, “not one of them was as significant as the institute's move.”

The genesis of that change was the strong sentiment among the institute's membership to formally oppose capital punishment. Lance Liebman, then its director, turned to the sister-and-brother team of Carol S. Steiker '82, J.D. '86, RI '11, and Jordan M. Steiker, J.D. '88, for counsel. They were “the most influential legal scholars in the death penalty community,” wrote criminal-justice scholar Evan J. Mandery in his book *A Wild Justice*, about the major cases that shaped the current penalty. Liebman commissioned them to write a report addressing this question about American justice: “Is fair administration of a system of capital punishment possible?”

In a dense, erudite, airtight report, they answered no. But they also recommended that the institute not declare its opposition to the death penalty: that “could possibly undermine the authority of the Institute's voice on this issue,” they warned, because the position “might well be understood to reflect a moral or philosophical judgment” and “there is deep disagreement along these dimensions regarding the basic justice of the death penalty.”

Instead, they advised the group to issue a statement “calling for the rejection of capital punishment as a penal option under current circumstances (‘In light of the current intractable institutional and structural obstacles to ensuring a minimally adequate system for administering capital punishment, the Institute calls for the rejection of capital punishment as a penal option.’). Such a statement would reflect the view that the death penalty should not be imposed unless its administration can satisfy a reasonable threshold of fairness and reliability.”

Even a provisional rejection of the death penalty proved too contentious for the institute. At the meeting when it made this decision, the chief justice of the Utah Supreme Court pointed out that if the group rejected the penalty, it would create “a problem for those of us who must adjudicate these cases” because “this is above all a highly charged political issue.” But the group accepted the rest of the Steikers' advice. It announced that it would no longer include the death penalty among the punishments it provided guidance about for the states.

In the past seven years, the report has played a quiet yet decisive role in helping shift debate among scholars and policymakers about the death penalty. The focus has moved from whether the penalty is just, which cannot be answered empirically, to an emphasis on whether states apply it fairly and consistently, which can. The Steikers' approach shaped the policy of America's most respected legal organization. With its imprimatur, their report has influenced decisions of people who shape American law.

Since the report, six states have abolished the death penalty,

most recently Delaware in the summer of 2016, bringing to 20 the number of states that do not have it. Of the 30 that do, 14 are not carrying out executions because of a formal or an informal moratorium. Only 17 states have executed any death-row inmates in this period—including Delaware, before it abolished the punishment. Just six states have executed more than 70 percent of those inmates. One of those states, Oklahoma, now has a formal hold on executions during an investigation of its method of lethal injection. The death penalty is in flux in most of the states that still have it on the books.



Justice Stephen G. Breyer cited the Steikers' report in a widely discussed dissent he wrote in a 2015 Supreme Court case. Joined by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, he said for the first time in one of his judicial opinions that it was "highly likely that the death penalty violates the Eighth Amendment." In reaching that conclusion, Breyer emphasized "changes that have occurred during the past four decades."

In that period, executions resumed at a slow pace and then accelerated, reaching 98 in 1999. Since that apex, the annual total has dropped sharply, to 28 in 2015. The number is on track to be smaller

**A new book by Jordan Steiker and Carol Steiker reflects a generation of joint legal scholarship on capital punishment.**

in 2016. These days, the country imposes the death penalty as capriciously as it did in 1972, when the Court struck down the penalty for being as unpredictable as a lightning strike. In his dissent, Breyer wrote that "the Court should call for full briefing on the basic question" of whether capital punishment is still acceptable under the Constitution. It is due for a reckoning before the Court.

## Preamble to the Reckoning

THE STEIKERS' NEW BOOK, *Courting Death: The Supreme Court and Capital Punishment* (Harvard University Press), summoning their joint decades of work on the subject, is a preamble to that reckoning. They explain conclusively the problems of the American death-penalty system and why the Court's regulation has not fixed them. There is not much difference between the core of the conclusions in the book and in their report, yet the book has an historical breadth and an explanatory power that take it far beyond that earlier assessment.

It is a commanding account of a judicial intervention that has given many Americans false confidence in capital punishment as a fair and consistently applied criminal sanction. In reality, despite hundreds of rulings—including those that have eliminated the death penalty for youth under 18 and for the intellectually disabled, and that have said it should be used to punish only the worst of the worst murderers—the Supreme Court has not corrected the many and serious ways it works badly.

The Court has said repeatedly that the sole justifications for capital punishment are the roles it plays in deterring murder and in exacting retribution. The Steikers show how the death penalty fails to serve either purpose. The very large discrepancy between the high number of people sentenced to death and the relatively low number executed takes away the penalty's deterrent force. The generally long delays between the imposition of death sentences and the subsequent executions, and the conversion of many death sentences into life sentences (so that more than three-fourths of all death-row inmates gain a second life) takes away its retributive power.

*Courting Death* makes a devastating case. It is the most important book about the death penalty in the United States—not only within the past generation but, arguably, ever—because of its potential to change how the country thinks about capital punishment. It has the insight, vision, and authority to help resolve one of the most divisive social issues of the past half-century. It demonstrates mastery of a prodigiously intricate, often bewildering body of law, and the ugly but revealing history to which the law is linked.

The Steikers acknowledge what they call "the profound difficulty of regulating a controversial practice across the vast and diverse country in light of the independence that our federal system affords each state." Yet *Courting Death* argues firmly that, having set rules about the administration of the death penalty under the Constitution with which many states have not been able, or willing, to comply, the Supreme Court should decide that capital punishment is unconstitutional since many states have not carried it out constitutionally.

The most striking testimony the Steikers present comes from



five Supreme Court justices, appointed by Republicans as well as Democrats, who at one time voted in favor of the death penalty and, based on what they learned as justices about the miscarriages of the death-penalty system, changed their minds, either while still on the bench or after they retired.

They are Lewis F. Powell Jr., Harry A. Blackmun, and John Paul Stevens, plus Breyer and Ginsburg. Adding in William J. Brennan Jr. and Thurgood Marshall, who were well known for opposing the death penalty on moral grounds, the Steikers wrote that seven justices have “explicitly stated that they think capital punishment should be ruled categorically unconstitutional.”

When the Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, Marshall repeated in a dissent what he had written four years earlier in the case striking down capital punishment laws—that he believed “the American people know little about the death penalty, and that the opinions of an informed public would differ significantly from those of a public unaware of the consequences and effects of the death penalty.” This idea is known as the Marshall hypothesis.

After their clerkships—moral and legal apprenticeships—both Steikers made the death penalty the passionate focus of their vocation.

Social-science studies testing the hypothesis have yielded contradictory results, including one study whose results support the antithesis: researchers gave pro death penalty information to death penalty opponents and a smaller number of them remained opposed. The Steikers write: “for many people, emotional or cultural influences on death penalty attitudes outweigh purely cognitive input.” Nonetheless, a purpose of their book is to prove Marshall right.

Both Steikers clerked for Marshall, in the twenty-first (Carol) and twenty-third (Jordan) years of his 24 as a justice, before he retired in 1991. As they wrote, “Marshall was the only justice on the Court who as a lawyer had represented defendants in death penalty cases; he retained a fierce interest in the topic as a justice, which we both inherited as a result of our experiences in his chambers.”

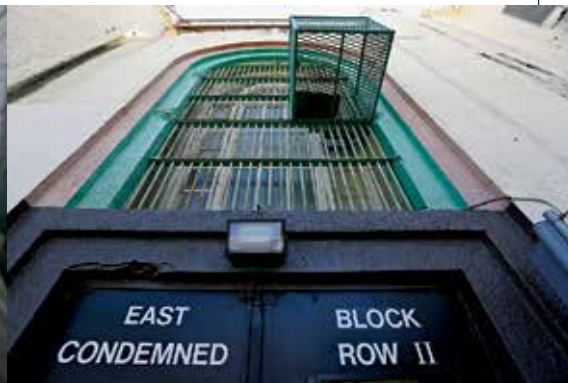
Before clerking for him, neither had thought much about the death penalty. After their clerkships—moral as well as legal apprenticeships with the justice who spoke most powerfully for the powerless, including those on death row who had good reason to think it was unfair that they were there—both made it the passionate focus of their vocation. The Steikers have become the most influential legal scholars on the death penalty by working closely together on this project for the past 24 years.

### Sibling Scholars

CAROL, now 55, is 18 months older than Jordan. She was a year ahead of him through the public schools where they grew up in Chelten-

ham Township, outside Philadelphia. She has a photo of them at ages 10 and a half and nine looking like jubilant co-conspirators. Their brother, James (18 months older than Carol), a corporate, pension, and tax attorney and financial adviser near Philadelphia, blazed the family trail into the law as a public-interest scholar at New York University Law School, to the initial dismay of their father, a pediatrician. He viewed lawyers as foes who made trouble by filing baseless medical-malpractice lawsuits. Their mother was a school psychologist who became an administrator of special-education programs in a neighboring school district. *Courting Death* is dedicated to their parents as their “first teachers.”

Carol, a French and English history and literature concentrator, graduated Phi Beta Kappa and *summa cum laude* and then spent a year on a Fulbright grant as a teaching assistant in a lycée in



**At San Quentin: a condemned inmate; the East Block entrance to death row; and guarded exercise cages**

Grenoble, France. Following James, Jordan went to Wesleyan, graduating Phi Beta Kappa and *magna cum laude* in 1984, in philosophy, with awards in debate and oratory as well, and then spent a year teaching high school in Vermont. At Harvard Law School (HLS), both Carol and Jordan made the *Law Review*—

Carol was only the second woman to lead the publication in its then 99-year history. Both graduated *magna cum laude*.

After clerking for Marshall, Carol worked for four years as a trial lawyer at the Public Defender Service in Washington, D.C., representing indigent clients at all stages of the criminal process. Jordan went straight from his clerkship into teaching at the University of Texas School of Law, in Austin, in 1990. His courses cover capital punishment and constitutional law. Though he trailed her through school, she trailed him as a professor, starting at HLS two years later. He also got tenure before she did and took delight in

ERIC RISEBERG/ASSOCIATED PRESS (3)

reminding her of that. “Hello, this is Professor Steiker calling,” he would say when he phoned. “Is this Assistant Professor Steiker?”

Soon after the assistant professor arrived back at Harvard, a student editor at *The Yale Law Journal* asked her to help the publication solve a problem. A book review had fallen through and the *Journal* needed something to fill that slot. Carol could review any book she wanted, as long as she turned in the essay in four weeks. She called Jordan to ask if this was worth doing, when she was teaching for the first time and had a year’s worth of criminal-law and criminal-procedure classes to prepare. He told her it was a stroke of luck for a rookie scholar to get an offer of guaranteed space in a major journal, and, since he was on a writing leave, suggested they write the review together. He proposed an essay about a book that both had read: *Crossed Over: A Murder, A Memoir* by the novelist and short-story writer Beverly Lowry.

A hit-and-run driver had killed Lowry’s 18-year-old son. In trying

to sort through her feelings about her son’s killer, she was drawn to the case of Karla Faye Tucker, then on death row in Texas for a double

murder she had helped commit eight years earlier as a 23-year-old. (Tucker was executed in 1998.) Lowry examined Tucker’s life and the aspects that possibly warranted life in prison with no possibility of parole, rather than the death penalty. The book is based in part on a series of conversations they had when the author visited Tucker in prison. Lowry later described her as “maybe the most loving person I have ever met.”

they were kids: they yelled at each other. It was a vacation week and they assumed no one else was around. “When we walked out after this,” Jordan recalls, “to our horror, one of her colleagues in the office next door had his door open, and we just burst into laughter at the idea that this completely out-of-control, child-like fight had been clearly witnessed by one of her colleagues, and this was her first year teaching at Harvard.”

In that first piece, the Steikers wrote: For Lowry, the relevance of Tucker’s life to her crime is a deeply unsettling issue. If the circumstances of Tucker’s life call forth forgiveness and mercy, then must Lowry forgive the unknown killer of her son Peter? But if the circumstances of Tucker’s life should not qualify our reaction to her crime, how can Lowry understand and justify her deep attachment to Tucker, and her even deeper attachment to her own troubled son? Lowry recognizes that these questions lie at the heart of her relationship with Tucker: “Forgiveness is at issue, mercy, the right of one human being to hold another accountable, and to judge.”

The review was the first of 26 substantial scholarly articles and book chapters they have written together, not counting their new book—roughly one major piece a year, in addition to pieces each has written solo. They wrote a lot of the book during the 2014–2015 academic year, when Carol was a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for

Advanced Study. That fall, Jordan was a visiting professor at HLS, teaching Carol’s capital-punishment course while she was on leave. That also made it easier for them to collaborate.

The book reflects habits that they developed writing primarily, until now, for a scholarly audience. They

sometimes lapse into professional shorthand (such as “standardless discretion,” meaning discretion not limited by any standards or principles) likely to puzzle general readers and, in some places, even readers steeped in law. (When they asked me to read a draft of their book, I encouraged them to get rid of the jargon by running their draft through a hot typewriter, as pre-computer-age editors used to say to writers. After they finished revising, Jordan emailed me, wryly and accurately, that they “ran the manuscript through a moderately warm typewriter.”)

Despite its academic tics, however, the finished book reflects their shared powers as first-rank teachers and advocates as well as scholars: it is lucid, conceptually ambitious and discerning, and full of nuanced judgments that add up to a highly original view about the history, workings, and consequences of the death penalty. *Court-ing Death* deserves to become a legal classic.

The Steikers have each produced well-regarded bodies of work aside from their death-penalty scholarship. One of hers is about criminal procedure. The other is about the roles of dignity and mercy in the criminal-justice system. Twenty years ago, for example, she explained why seemingly irreconcilable views about Supreme Court rulings on criminal procedure were both correct. Some Court-

“She is brilliant and compassionate and draws on both strengths to advance the use of the law for the most fundamental social change.”



**A pre-execution vigil, St. Louis, 2014; a protest before the U.S. Supreme Court, 2007**

murder she had helped commit eight years earlier as a 23-year-old. (Tucker was executed in 1998.) Lowry examined Tucker’s life and the aspects that possibly warranted life in prison with no possibility of parole, rather than the death penalty. The book is based in part on a series of conversations they had when the author visited Tucker in prison. Lowry later described her as “maybe the most loving person I have ever met.”

Jordan went up to Cambridge so he and Carol could work side by side. They talked about what they wanted to say, made a detailed outline, divvied up the writing, and edited each other’s drafts. One day in her office they aired out their differences as they had when

FROM TOP: JEFF ROBERSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS; JASON REED/REUTERS/LAMY



watchers were saying that, under Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, the Court had repudiated landmark rulings made under Chief Justice Earl Warren. Others insisted there was no counter-revolution.

She explained that the Court had maintained well-known rules of conduct—say, the exclusionary rule, barring evidence obtained in an illegal police search—yet had changed little-known rules of decision, like courts admitting illegally obtained evidence gathered under a “good-faith exception” (as when police think they have a valid warrant from a judge that turns out to be invalid). In that way, she judged, the Court had “profoundly changed its approach to constitutional criminal procedure since the 1960s.”

Today, in addition to being Friendly professor of law, she is a faculty co-director of HLS’s new Criminal Justice Policy Program and special adviser on public service to Martha Minow, the school’s dean. As a young professor, Minow supervised Carol’s major student research paper, “The Constitutional Status of Sexual Orientation.” Published in 1985 as a student note in the *Law Review*, it made a pioneering and widely cited argument in favor of same-sex marriage.

“What most amazes me about Carol,” Minow told me, “is the ease with which she moves across and fully integrates technical doctrinal knowledge, philosophic arguments for mercy, deep historical understanding, and savvy coalition-building. She is brilliant and compassionate and draws on both strengths to advance the use of law for the most fundamental social change.”

One part of Jordan’s independent work focuses on how Congress and the Court have severely cut back the writ of habeas corpus, the once-robust, now-weak means for prisoners to challenge their detention. That shift is a pitiless legacy of the law-and-order era, built on the often mistaken premise that the criminal-justice system operates fairly but needs to speed up the process of finding guilt and carrying out punishment.

Another part looks at the role of racial discrimination in constitutional law. He has an abiding interest in the contradictory significance of the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which outlawed segregation in public schools. It is often called the most important decision of the twentieth century, yet is criticized by legal scholars, including Jordan, because “the substantive commitments of *Brown* are notoriously elusive.” The Court’s opinion in that case was brief and sketchy, leaving to the future the hard questions about how to bring about desegregation.

Now holder of the Parker endowed chair in law, Jordan is also director of his law school’s legal clinic, the Capital Punishment Center. His Texas Law colleague, William E. Forbath, who holds the Bentsen chair in law and is associate dean for research, told me, “He’s incredibly deep at both scholarship and advocacy. He has always had a keen eye for broader themes that explain the workings of the death penalty. He has always been a leader in efforts to reform, discipline, and constrain use of the death penalty in Texas.”

Between 2004 and 2007, the clinic had six victories in Supreme Court cases. Jordan was lead counsel in two and co-counsel in three, with Robert C. Owen, now a clinical professor at Northwestern University’s Pritzker School of Law. In one of the cases, Jordan made the winning oral argument at the Supreme Court against then Texas solicitor general, now Senator, Ted Cruz. In addition to filing many petitions to the Court and amicus briefs, seeking review of Texas death-penalty cases (sometimes with Carol as co-counsel), he has helped train a generation of anti-death-penalty lawyers.

Both have done noteworthy work on their own that helps explain why together they have made abolition of the death penalty their mission. Jordan’s is an essay called “The Long Road Up from Barbarism: Thurgood Marshall and the Death Penalty,” written when he was a young professor. A common view of Marshall is that his brilliance in law was best suited to the work he did as director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, in the storied line of cases culminating with *Brown*, which he argued in the Supreme Court. As Jordan wrote, “Justice Marshall’s greatest asset was his ability to expose the distance between the noble assurances of the law as written and the uncomfortable reality of the law as applied.” Jordan went on, “he is rarely credited with his ability to translate his lawyering skills into accomplished judging.”

As a justice, however, Marshall did that in monitoring whether, while states were administering the death penalty, they were meeting the standards set by the Court. Jordan wrote, “He scrupulously examined every petition for certiorari filed by a capital defendant to assess whether the sentence had been constitutionally secured. While many Justices would vote on a petition for certiorari”—a formal request that the Court hear a case—“based on a quick reading of the questions presented and the arguments supporting review, Justice Marshall often insisted that the full record of a capital case be delivered to his chambers so that it could be scoured for misleading jury instructions, prosecutorial misconduct, or other constitutional errors.”

What Marshall did to national fanfare as a lawyer he did with little public notice as a justice. He and his law clerks built a record documenting why, in death-penalty cases, as Jordan wrote, “the Constitution cannot be construed on the basis of abstractions alone.” Marshall taught that it is vital to follow legal rules while seeking justice: traditional, even conservative, in ways that most did not see, he believed in the perfectibility of institutions through law. Most states that carried out executions a quarter of a century ago did so at night. When an execution was scheduled, the Justice had one of his law clerks remain at the Court to receive the petition for a stay of execution. Marshall always voted for the stay, yet never directed his clerk to record that vote until the petition arrived.

Carol’s most revealing work is a series of writings about philosophy of criminal law, including in the *Oxford Handbook* on that subject a chapter called “The Death Penalty and Deontology,” about the view in philosophy that we are obligated to act according to a set of principles, regardless of the consequences (*deontology* comes from the Greek word for *duty*). She wrote that “extremely brutal forms of punishment,” including the death penalty, “require the public to suppress their ‘civilized’ responses of unease and revulsion in the face of overt brutality and pain and replace them with the feelings of satisfaction and celebration that the rituals of criminal justice are designed to elicit.”

This is the most abstract of Carol’s scholarship, yet in a way the most personal. It is about what motivates her death penalty work—“some fundamental discomfort, revulsion, and moral indignation,” as she told me: “This is straight up moral philosophy, about why I thought the strongest argument against the death penalty was that having that practice in our society works against the human capacities of empathy and compassion that are important for moral judgment and are essential for moral choice. If you have to harden yourself collectively, steel yourself to take the life of other people, over time a society will wear away at these human capacities, be-

cause who we are and what we're able to do and be is shaped by the societies that we live in and our public choices."

## Mapping Executions

IN THE United States today, the Steikers explain, the difference between the 30 states that have the death penalty and the 20 that do not is less important to understand than the difference between the "symbolic states" that impose a large number of death sentences while carrying out few and the "executing states" that impose a large number and carry out a relatively high percentage. In symbolic states, the rate of imposing death sentences is sometimes higher than in executing states.

Pennsylvania is a symbolic state: it has executed only three people since 1976, and each chose to die by halting his appeals. Texas is an executing state: it has executed 537 people since then. But the rate of death-sentencing in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, is higher than in Harris County, Texas, which has had more defendants executed than any county in the country.

The symbolic states of Pennsylvania and California have executed about 1 percent of the people they have sentenced to death. The executing states of Texas and Virginia have, respectively, executed about 50 percent and about 70 percent of those they sentenced to death. "Executions require a very high level of coordination and cooperation among governmental actors," the Steikers wrote, "and such coordination is evident in only a small number of jurisdictions."

The coordination depends on motivation. Politics accounts for the difference in both, in symbolic and executing states. The for-

happen, there is little or no political cost to the prosecutor: he or she can reap the benefits from favoring capital punishment by winning a death sentence.

But this use of the death penalty for its symbolic value has "enormous and senseless material cost," the Steikers continued. The complexity of capital cases makes them expensive for the prosecution and for the defense. The informal mutation of death sentences into life sentences makes imprisoning death-row inmates especially expensive for states. For those inmates, the psychological cost can lead to "death row syndrome"—uncertainty and fear about when execution will come, reinforced by the almost intolerable conditions of solitary confinement or imprisonment in similarly debilitating conditions.

The sentence, Judge Cormac J. Carney wrote about the death penalty in California, "has been quietly transformed into one no rational jury or legislature could ever impose: *life in prison, with the remote possibility of death.*" Symbolic states have created conditions parallel to those that led the Supreme Court, in 1972, to strike down death-penalty statutes in the United States—except that, then, it was death sentences imposed rarely and randomly and, now, it is executions that are seldom carried out. The death penalty in those states is largely a pretense, with relatively minor political benefits compared to the huge and wasteful costs.

The situation is worse in executing states, however, because of the nature of the Court's regulation. To constrain states' use of the death penalty, the Court has developed four major legal doctrines: *narrowing*, requiring states to limit the kinds of murders for which the punishment is death; *proportionality*, limiting the types of criminal

offenses and offenders the death penalty applies to; *individualized sentencing*, calling for states to provide a way for jurors to consider mitigating evidence about the offense and the offender and not to impose a death sentence; and *heightened reliability*, requiring states to use extra legal safeguards

## The generally low standard of quality required of lawyers who represent defendants in capital cases is especially disturbing.

mer are almost all blue states where support for the death penalty is limited and, in places, opposition is strong, as in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania and San Francisco and parts of Los Angeles in California. The latter are almost all red, where support is widespread and sometimes intense.

The federal death penalty is also symbolic, in a nation made of blue and red states. Since Congress reinstated the federal death penalty in 1988, 75 people have been sentenced to death for federal crimes. Three have been executed. No constituency pushes for more prosecutions and executions under the federal death penalty, yet none pushes hard for its abolition. Some of the federal crimes punishable by death are crimes against patriotism: terrorism, treason, espionage, and murder of an important federal officer like the president, in addition to genocide and large-scale drug trafficking, among other offenses. If the Supreme Court abolishes capital punishment in the states, the Steikers wrote, abolition of the federal death penalty is likely to follow in stages—for most federal capital crimes and, eventually, for terrorism and treason.

The political benefits of carrying out executions are higher in red states than in blue ones. To the extent there are benefits from support for capital punishment in blue states, they are strongest at the local level. A prosecutor can quell outrage about an awful murder by bringing capital charges against the murderer and securing a capital conviction. If the execution is delayed or does not

in capital cases because the finality of execution makes the death sentence different from all other criminal sanctions.

But the Court's enforcement of this regulation has been minimal and some states' flouting of it has been maximal, leading to what the Steikers called "extensive, disruptive litigation." The Court ostensibly narrowed the kinds of murders for which death is the proper punishment by requiring that a jury find there was an aggravating factor to a murder. Yet most of the states that passed new death-penalty laws after 1972 included as a factor that "the murder was especially heinous, atrocious or cruel, manifesting exceptional depravity," a catch-all that was broad and subjective enough to cover any murder and did not narrow the kinds of murders for which death was the punishment. In Georgia, a detailed study found, 86 percent of people convicted of murder during the five years after the state's new law went into effect were eligible for the death penalty.

Despite the doctrine of heightened reliability, the Steikers showed, there are "numerous contexts in which capital defendants receive no special safeguards." One of the most disturbing is the generally low standard of quality required of lawyers who represent defendants in capital cases. A defendant who brings a claim of ineffective counsel must prove, according to the Supreme Court, that the lawyer's performance was "outside the wide range of professionally competent assistance" and that his or her errors "actually had an adverse effect on the defense." This lax (please turn to page 94)



# Montage

Art, books, diverse creations



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## Outside In

*Stop-motion makes art out of human touch.*

BY SOPHIA NGUYEN

**W**HEN HE TALKS about stop-motion animation, Timothy Reckart '09 gets onomatopoeitic. *Boingggg* conveys the “nice, natural motion blur” of a claymation monster’s party-favor tongue grabbing its lunch. *Brrrr* evokes the rippling fingerprints left by animators on puppets’ Plasticine skin. These descriptions are efficiently vivid; the process itself is laborious. Move an object by

a hair’s breadth, step away, hit the camera’s button. Repeat, frame by frame.

Though he used to try to keep characters in constant motion, Reckart has learned to structure his choreography around a few key poses, an approach that “has a lot more clarity” while saving time and effort. Animators are also resourceful in other ways, he reports: “A stop-motion studio is the type of place where people don’t throw away their

**Working on his 2012 short film, Reckart hangs a puppet upside down from the set’s ceiling. *Head Over Heels* took a 40-member crew some 15 months to make.**

water bottles, because we might be able to use them for something” (as he once hoarded empty pizza boxes for set-building material). But even as stop-motion rewards “crafty” practicality, the work is also emotional. It is, in his words, a form of “acting in slow motion,” breaking down an emotion

O P E N B O O K

# Bruegel's Art of Mass Appeal

**"My father** was a professional painter who painted everything from life," Thomas professor of history of art and architecture Joseph L. Koerner recalls. "[U]sually out of doors and featuring persons found on the spot and involved in odd activities: people in bathing suits waiting for a train

to the beach, a woman walking her pet tortoise on a leash, a midget feeding wild boar in the woods, a boy balancing a paper castle on his head.... Eventually, to have something to do, I started to paint with my father. This gave me time to wonder what bits of everyday life were the most paintable." Such bits were the very stuff of the secular "genre painting" that arose in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe—the origins of which are the subject of his *Bosch and Bruegel: From Enemy Painting to Everyday Life* (Princeton, \$65), on which he has been engaged for some 20 years. That youthful experience of painting appears to have informed Koerner's appreciation of these artists, as well as his own powers of observation and description, as in this passage from chapter one:

**To experience** Bruegel's paintings in the original, in the midst of life, is to be jostled by a crowd. Mass audiences obscure the aura of many famous masterpieces, turning them into sideshows in the carnival of cultural display. Bruegel, by contrast, makes crowds seem a cheerful extension of his art. Not only are his paintings packed with people—with revelers, with children, with entire armies of the living and the dead—these teeming masses behave like proper crowds. Some cluster in groups that act in unison, dancing, marching, feasting, fighting, building, and playing, while others stand a bit apart and observe the goings-on passively, as would an audience. And when people in Bruegel's paintings play the role of spectator—when they peer curiously through windows and pour through doorways to glimpse some street theater performed outside; when they stare, confused, at the fallen Saul at his moment of conversion to the Apostle Paul; when they, grown-ups and children alike, on horseback and on foot, hurry toward Golgotha to reserve a good spot to witness Christ's Crucifixion; and, most of all, when they turn from the diversions that have captured them in the picture to gape directly out at us gaping curiously back at them—their painted world

gathers us, ourselves people in a crowd, into their inner fold. In Vienna, as in the museums in Berlin, New York, Madrid, Antwerp, and Detroit where the other major Bruegels hang, one can spot this artist's paintings from far off simply by the large and lingering audience they inevitably draw. A supreme portraitist of crowd behavior, Bruegel cleverly reflects and stage-manages his own mass appeal. This is surprising. With his printed images—published in large editions and sold on the open market—he banked on a large viewership. But with his paintings, he addressed a select few. Only the most affluent burghers of the super-rich towns of Antwerp and Brussels could commission and behold the paintings we now admire.

into external components: clenched fingers, hunched shoulders, a well-timed blink.

"Live-action actors, I think, act from the inside out," he says. "They try to get to an emotional place and then let that emotional place dictate the details of what they do physically. It's the reverse for animation, where we have to act from the outside in." When planning an action, he explains, "I think, 'Well, how would I do it?' That's how you kind of distill it down to the gestures—you have to act it out yourself." Inevitably, the animator's personal intuitions about bodily kinetics and behavior imprint on the character.

Stop-motion performance is a collaborative art, splitting the work three ways: the artist designs the character's look; the actor gives it a voice; the animator manipulates the puppet. Ironically, though, stop-motion first appealed to Reckart as a solitary pursuit. In college, animation let him make movies in a room by himself; stop-motion let him do that despite not knowing how to draw. "I had a kind of cold-blooded calculation about it," he admits, readily. A lot of his classmates wanted to make movies, but few wanted careers in stop-motion—"which is miserable drudgery for most people"—so he pursued the path where he had "comparative advantage."

That led to film school in London, where classmates in music composition, set design, and other departments comprised a ready-made crew for Reckart's final thesis. The 10-minute *Head over Heels* concerns an old couple who have opposite perspectives: the husband walks on the floor, the wife on the ceiling. This metaphor-made-literal could have been cutesy. But stop-motion, with all its deliberate detail, makes the story feel

homely and lived-in. Mundane tasks like frying eggs or tying shoelaces become oddly poignant.

The short's Oscar nomination in 2013 offered Reckart, then struggling in New York, a ticket to Los Angeles and sunnier professional climes: "The volume of work is so much greater, it's like night and day." His first gig was *Anomalisa*, which explored loneliness using silicone puppets.

**The Fight Between Carnival and Lent (1559), by Pieter Bruegel the Elder**



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Then came more cheerful assignments: the madcap sitcom *Community* and a children's program, *Tumble Leaf*. Other projects were a crowd-funded video game and a music video for a band from his hometown, Tucson—small, handcrafted passion projects.

But Reckart always dreamed of working big. Raised on crowd-pleasers like *Jurassic Park* and *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*, he aspired to enter the studio system and make the kind of movie that opens wide. He got his chance when Sony Pictures Animations recruited him to direct a computer-animated Nativity story about a donkey. "Animals in animation will never go away," observes Reckart.

"Because animation's expensive and time-consuming, if you're going to make a movie in animation, oftentimes your question is, 'Why are you using animation to tell this?' *Because the animals talk*. That's a very clean, clear, obvious answer." They're also broadly relatable, he adds: "The nice thing about animals is that they represent this middle ground between adults and children."

*The Star* will come out in November 2017, and beyond that horizon, Reckart seems open to anything. He expresses interest in television, or working in live action. Compared to stop-motion, the latter is gratifyingly quick. His live action short (which is

premiering at the 2016 Austin Film Festival in October) took two days to shoot, he marvels: "You can spend two days on *one shot* in animation." The trade-off is control. "In animation they use this word, 'iteration,'" he explains. "You can have a character design, and get another draft, and get another draft, and keep sending notes, and perfecting it, perfecting it, until you get the perfect thing. And in live action, it's like, 'Uh, here's what



Reckart animated a surreal scene starring the stop-motion character Ice Cube Head for the final season of *Community* (above), and the fateful hallway encounter (top) in *Anomalisa*. That film's puppets (right)—including 18 versions of protagonist Michael and six of his love interest, Lisa (center)—were made with a 3-D printer.



that *Grand Opening* follows a married couple on their restaurant's lackluster first day—a fable, says Reckart, about making the best of imperfect circumstances. Or, perhaps, about labors of love.

## Lines of Friendship

Poet Jean Valentine on her career and literary companions

by LYDIALYLE GIBSON

“H AVE YOU EVER been to AWP?” Jean Valentine ’56, RI ’68, asks, almost out of the blue. “Oh, it’s wonderful!” This comes toward the end of an interview about the peaks and valleys of a literary career. Hers encompasses 13 books of poetry—the first, *Dream Barker*, won the Yale Younger Poets prize in 1965; the most recent, *Shirt in Heaven*, appeared in 2015 to delighted reviews—and numerous awards, as well as 30 years of teaching. But at the end of the hour, the 82-year-old poet hits upon the happy subject of the annu-

al conference and book fair for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs, an event that draws more than 12,000 participants. “You go there,” she says, “and you have a sense of being ‘among,’ of being in a nation of hope.”

Valentine knows the hunger for literary companions. “To have

someone, fellow writers, encouraging you, understanding you, that can be like air to breathe,” she says. As a young woman aspiring to poetry in the early 1950s, she had few models. From childhood onward, there were important teachers: Radcliffe office hours with poet and professor William Al-

fred were a turning point, and another Harvard professor, Edwin Honig, gave her “permission,” she says, to write from her dreams, which became an abiding, defining characteristic of her poetry. But when it came to women mentors, the landscape was sparse.

Radcliffe and Harvard classrooms had gone coed only a decade before she





Jean Valentine

and as they talked, he asked her if she'd ever heard of Rich, who was on her way to becoming a towering figure in American letters. Valentine hadn't, and the discovery was world-altering. "Someone I could imagine in my shoes," Valentine says. "Someone my age, and in the same place. Just, that it could be done."

Rich wasn't the only female poetic contemporary, but "there weren't very many of us," Valentine says. And some of the best and most famous in those early days of Valentine's career—Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, later Anne Sexton—offered worrisome exam-

TYLER EVYNN DORRHOIT

ples. Others whose lives didn't end in suicide were heavy drinkers or depressives. Concerned about what she feared might be poetry's "dark force," Valentine sought out a therapist in her late thirties and asked him if she should stop writing poetry. He told her

arrived, and it would be another decade and a half before women were allowed into Lamont Library, with its fifth-floor poetry collection and its archive of recorded readings. But the campus did offer Valentine a

critically important female guiding light: poet Adrienne Rich '51, Litt.D. '90. Valentine tells a story about how, when she was an 18-year-old newcomer to Cambridge, an older man said hello to her on Garden Street,

## Off the Shelf

Recent books with Harvard connections

Someone is going to be president; the winner might consult **We Wanted Workers: Unraveling the Immigration Narrative**, by George J. Borjas, Scrivner professor of economics and social policy (W.W. Norton, \$26.95), to concur with or rebut his findings that immigration depresses domestic workers' wages, is probably a fiscal wash, and introduces social challenges to the receiving society—and to devise policy responses. Turning to the planet, **Energy and Climate: Vision for the Future**, by Michael B. McElroy, Butler professor of environmental studies (Oxford, \$34.95), similarly digests complex data to lay out the climate challenge, and the steps the United States and China could take (as they have

agreed to do) toward a low-carbon energy future.

Turning to matters international, **Once within Borders**, by Charles S. Maier, Saltonstall professor of history (Harvard, \$29.95), is a sweeping overview of territorial boundaries; it reminds any new commander in chief, contemplating, say, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, and the Kurds, that "The importance of spatial governance and...contestation has not diminished." **Capital without Borders**, by Brooke Harrington, Ph.D. '99 (Harvard, \$29.95), points to governments' revenue problem as "wealth managers" help the one percent shield their capital from taxation and even basic scrutiny.

As the president faces pressing issues, expertise is at hand: **Negotiating the Impossible**, by Deepak Malhotra, Goldston professor of business administration (Berrett-Koehler, \$27.95), ranges from the Cuban missile crisis to professional football owner-player differences to explore how to "resolve ugly conflicts," which are in huge supply. **Managing in the Gray**, by Joseph L. Badaracco, Shad professor of business ethics (Harvard Business Review Press, \$35), pivots from

negotiating to "resolving your toughest problems at work"—those gray areas where judgment comes into play, and the stakes challenge not your skills but "your humanity."

**The Poem Is You**, by Stephen Burt, professor of English (Harvard, \$27.95), is a gift tutorial for those phobic about contemporary poetry. Burt selects 60 examples, from 1981 (John Ashbery '49, Litt.D. '01) to 2015 (Ross Gay, RI '16), and succinctly analyzes each. Lay readers will latch on to such lucid ideas as that Louise "Glück's style evolved by subtraction." In **Naming Thy Name** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$27), an altogether different sort of work, Elaine Scarry, Cabot professor of aesthetics and the general theory of value, mines text, criticism, and history to advance "sweet Henry Constable" as the beautiful youth beloved by Shakespeare and extolled in his sonnets.

**The Market as God**, by Harvey Cox, Hollis research professor of divinity (Harvard, \$26.95). Inspired by Pope Francis, the theological scholar probes the "self-divinizing" excesses of The Market, and the potential for a "reverse apotheosis," reducing it to the market again.

In **The Content Trap** (Random House, \$28), Bharat Anand, Byers professor of business administration and faculty direc-



**A border, defended: Francesco di Giorgio's elegant hilltop fortress of San Leo, Marche, Italy, ca. 1480**

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no—that in fact poetry perhaps kept those writers alive longer than they might otherwise have lived. He told Valentine to write every day, including Christmas. And for the most part, she has.

Before *Dream Barker*, Valentine had never published a single poem, and she'd worked for several lonely years, as a young wife and mother isolated from other writers, to produce the manuscript. When it won the Yale prize, Adrienne Rich (who herself had won the award as a Radcliffe senior) got in touch. That letter of congratulation opened a correspondence and a close friendship that lasted until Rich's death in 2012. For most of that time, the women were also neighbors, living a few blocks from each other on the Upper West Side of New York. They read each other's poems and consulted on work in progress; they saw each other through divorces and depression and child-rearing,

and into old age. "Adrienne and I have certainly lived to see each other happy," Valentine concluded in a 2006 essay in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*.

Oceanic and dreamlike, Valentine's poems offer glimpses of the personal and political, the here and now, but frequently inhabit more ambiguous, liminal territory: the unseen and fragmentary, the invisible, the unconscious, the mysterious and almost wild. The first poem in *Dream Barker*, "First Love," begins this way: "How deep we met in the sea, my love, / My double, my Siamese heart, my whiskery, / Fish-belly, glue-eyed prince, my dearest black nudge." Her poetry isn't narrative or confessional, though there is intimacy in the silences and in the ever-present "you." Reviewing *Shirt in Heaven*—an elegiac volume that addresses the ghosts of lost friends and loved ones (including Rich) and recounts her father's shattering trauma after

World War II—poet Ann van Buren wrote: "At once shadowy and pelagic, the phrases in the book move like air across water. Valentine's is an invisible natural force so powerful that it conjures the feeling of having been part of us all along." Asked how her poetry has changed over the years, Valentine says, "I think that what changes is your life, and you're writing out of a changed life."

Valentine continues to seek out the counsel and companionship of fellow poets, especially women. These days she takes part in a writers' group near her home in New York, and she relies on her friend, the poet Jane Mead, as a reader and adviser. "How do I know when a poem is finished? I know when my friend says so," Valentine explains. "Because when I'm in it, I'm just in it."



Visit [harvardmag.com](http://harvardmag.com)  
to hear Jean Valentine  
read her poems.

tor of the Business School's online HBX venture (described within), argues that digital strategy and success are decisively driven by connections, not content. The flip side, argues Tim Wu, J.D. '98, in **The Attention Merchants: The Epic Scramble to Get Inside Our Heads** (Knopf, \$27.95), is the relentless success of advertisers and marketers (increasingly so, given everything digital) in ensnaring consumers and shaping their perceptions.

**Urban Forests**, by Jill Jonnes (Viking, \$32). "A natural history of trees and people in the American cityscape" (the subtitle) not surprisingly includes much on the very significant horticultural work of the Arnold Arboretum. The author probed some of that work in "The Living Dinosaur," on wild ginkgoes (November-December 2011, page 31).

**"Keep the Damned Women Out,"** by Nancy Weiss Malkiel, Ph.D. '70 (Princeton, \$32). Lest we forget, a professor of history emerita at Princeton and past dean of its college delivers an authoritative history of the coeducation of elite institutions in the United States and the United Kingdom between 1969 and 1974. Invaluable history, beginning with Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, and enlivened with such vivid illustrations as Jim Berry's 1967 cartoon of two clubmen conferring from their wing chairs: "Confused—of course, I'm confused! I have

a son at Vassar and a daughter at Yale!"

**How Men Age**, by Richard G. Bribiescas, Ph.D. '97 (Princeton, \$24.95). The author, at Yale, applies anthropological and evolutionary biological lenses to a sweeping, succinct review of the phenomenon, and does so

with good humor: there is a chapter on "Getting a Handle on Love Handles." Aging, rather than the alternative, means males may hang around to help care for offspring. In **Do Parents Matter?** (PublicAffairs, \$25.99), Larsen professor of education and human development emeritus Robert A. LeVine and Sarah LeVine, Ph.D. '02, also range widely, beginning with kin-avoidance practices among the Hausa, in Nigeria, to offer reassurance that there are different ways to bring up youngsters—so "American families should just relax."

In **Welcome to the Universe** (Princeton, \$39.95), the Hayden Planetarium's Neil deGrasse Tyson '80 and Princeton astrophysics professors Michael A. Strauss and J. Richard Gott '69 provide a lively, accessible guide to their (and our) capacious neighborhood. "Everything you think about the universe is less exotic than it actually is," Tyson begins—and



**Legendary crew coach Harry Parker on the water, where he belonged**

reassuringly makes his first reference to Buzz Lightyear rather than to Einstein. In **The Glass Universe** (Viking, \$30), Dava Sobel, bestselling author of *Longitude*, tells the story of the "calculators"—the women who interpreted astronomical observations and glass photographic plates made by the Harvard College Observatory, transforming comprehension of stars and the universe.

Harvardiana. **The Sphinx of the Charles**, by Toby Ayer (Lyons, \$22.95), chronicles legendary coach Harry Parker and the Crimson crew during 2008-2009. **The Best of The Harvard Lampoon: 140 Years of American Humor** (Touchstone, \$26), goes back to early Gluyas Williams, A.B. '11, Fred H. Gwynne '51, and other golden-age figures, and some of their very funny successors.



# Fusion Fantasy

Ken Liu's sprawling hybrid fiction

by SOPHIA NGUYEN

THERE'S A kind of novel that comes with a full-color map and list of *dramatis personae*. Like the overture to an opera, this tells the audience what they're in for; it prepares them to be transported. Ken Liu's sprawler of a series-in-progress, *The Dandelion Dynasty*, is exactly that kind of fantasy, and it has something for every kind of nerd: references to Penelope's plight in *The Odyssey*, play-by-plays of military maneuvers, specs for vehicles made of silk, wood, and sinew—even tax codes and trade regulations.

This smorgasbord represents the author's varied enthusiasms. After concentrating in English and computer science, Liu '98, J.D. '04, worked as a software engineer and lawyer; he's now a consultant on technology litigation. He cracks up while admitting to the origin of one plot device: a three-day civil-service test described as "a trial of endurance and steadfastness of will and purpose" and "not merely an exercise in reasoning and persuasion, but also a practical problem in three-dimensional geometry"—based on (what else?) the bar exam. Students, collapsing from exhaustion, are borne away on stretchers. Says Liu: "I wrote it like a battle scene."

The series also takes in disparate literary traditions. Liu studied Western classics in college, and an Anglophone reader of the

series' first novel might trace its warlord figures back to swift-footed Achilles and wily Odysseus. Even the legion of side-characters in *The Grace of Kings*—a riot of princelings, bandits, and orphan boys—are reminiscent of *The Iliad*'s lesser fighters: countless yet individuated, each with his name and fate. Yet Liu, who is a longtime fan of the *wuxia* genre's tales of martial-arts heroism, also planned for the plot to reimagine a Chinese "foundational narrative": the Chu-Han Contention, the interregnum between the Qin and Han dynasties when two once-allied kings turned on each other. "It was a period and a set of events," he explains, "that defined what it means to be Chinese as a cultural concept." Fusion, especially in food, can get a bad rap—somehow managing to connote both blandness and exoticism. But Liu's is a truly hybrid epic. Its influences aren't decorative, but the bricks and mortar of a richly invented world. "In a way," he says, "this story is very American."

*The Wall of Storms*, just published, stages new

In 2012, Ken Liu's short story "The Paper Menagerie" swept science fiction's highest honors: the Hugo, Nebula, and World Fantasy Awards. He has won the Hugo as well for his translations of Cixin Liu's *The Three-Body Problem* (the first translated novel to win), and Hao Jingfang's short story "Folding Beijing."

contests. Liu describes it as "a much more modern novel," drawing less on the archetypes of oral tradition. With the new emperor entering middle age, his task shifts from conquest to nation-building. The next generation—which includes shrewd princesses and woman scholars—must grapple with their elders' political mythmaking. The story's scope broadens even further with the arrival of an existential threat: an invading nomadic force (somehow suggesting both Vikings and Mongols), with steeds that breathe fire. Still, this is not a Manichaean, racialized clash à la Tolkien: "What I want to do is explore the complications of that kind of cross-cultural conquest," he says, "and what happens to a culture, and what happens to a people who have to survive and make the best of a very terrible situation."

A fascination with how identity can shift due to mass movement—across oceans, or galaxies—also threads through Liu's short fiction. The title story in *The Paper Menagerie* is about a bullied American boy who thinks his immigrant mother "might as well be from the moon." Another tale, "The Waves," follows a family of species-shifting, interplanetary travelers who say, "Earth is just a very big ship." But perhaps more fundamental is Liu's concern with the fraught inheritance of history, and the obligations between parents and children. He traces these interests to his children's births, and, more recently, his grandparents' deaths: "As links in this living chain, what is our responsibility to the generation before and to the generation after? What are our duties toward culture and family?"

This investment in cultural transmission also aligns with his work as a translator. Recent projects include *Death's End*, the final volume of Chinese science-fiction writer Cixin Liu's celebrated trilogy, *Remembrance of Earth's Past*, published in September, and a forthcoming short story anthology,

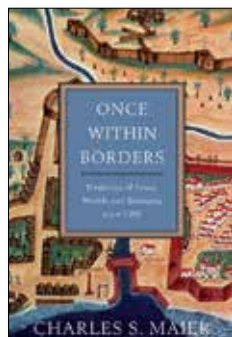


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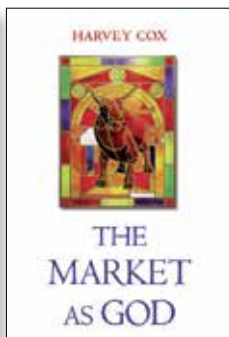
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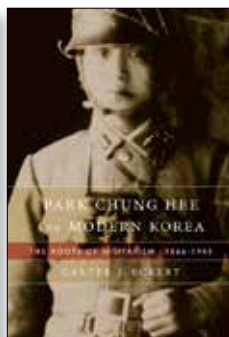


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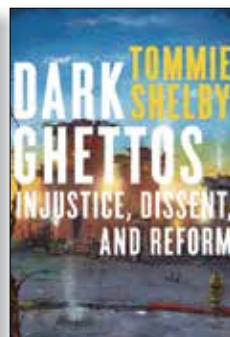
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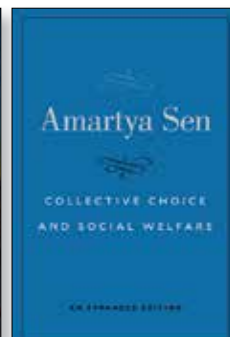
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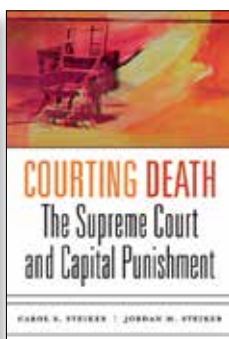
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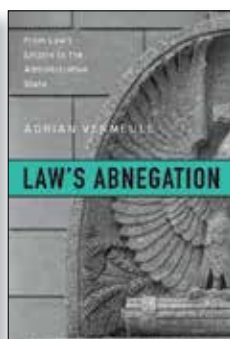
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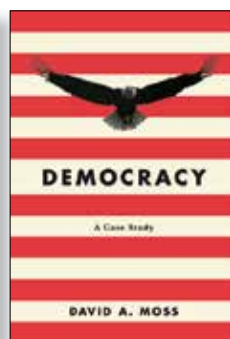
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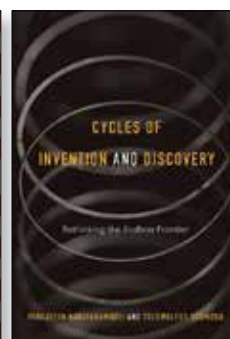
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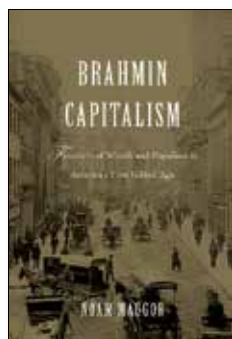
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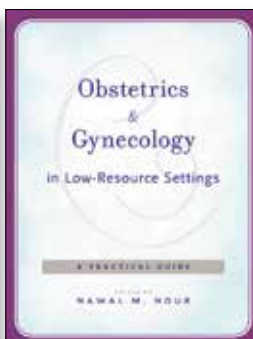
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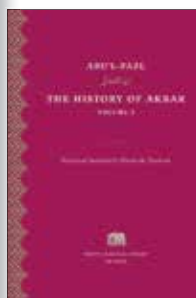


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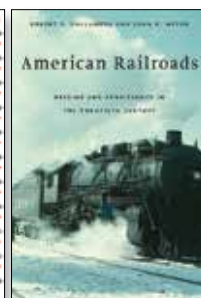
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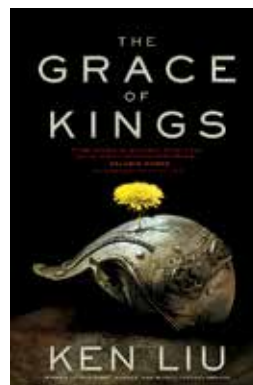
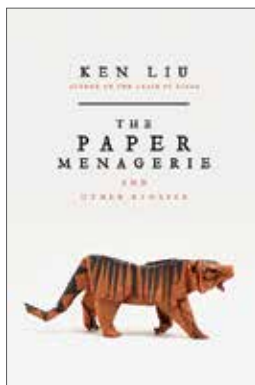


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*Invisible Planets*. It's a commonplace that the art of translation requires negotiating cultural gaps, but sometimes a turn of phrase also poses political difficulties. In *Death's End*, a character wears a tunic style known in China as a Zhongshan suit (after Sun Zhongshan, the Republic of China's first president) and in the West as a "Mao suit." But that usage, Liu says, "would give a very wrong interpretation"—Western readers would link the character too strongly with Chinese communism—so he opted to use the Chinese term, adding an explanatory footnote.

Liu tackles a version of this challenge even with his own English-language novels, where he's careful to avoid shorthand that

can trigger latent stereotypes. "If you start the story with a lot of Chinese people in Chinese clothes, speaking Chinese, using chopsticks, then people will immediately say, 'Oh, I know what sort of story this is.' You can't do that." He accessories his fantasy with utensils that aren't chopsticks, and dots its skies with fire-breathing "garinafins" that



aren't dragons, giving it "a much more estranged look." In a way, this is the trick of all his fiction: it de-familiarizes readers, and welcomes them to strange worlds. By the stories' end—

with the trickster taking the throne, or the case closed by the cyborg detective—distant places feel not so foreign, not so unlike home.

# Toward Democracy in America

*A masterwork on the past, and future, of democracy*

by ALAN WOLFE

**I**N THE AGE OF TWITTER, when stabs at wisdom can appear in 140 characters or fewer, it is refreshing to review a comprehensive book dedicated to a vitally important concept. Let there be no doubt: *Toward Democracy* makes a major contribution to both scholarship and citizenship in America. At a

time when our political system is threatened by polarization and extremism, we need a reminder of why we value it in the first place. That is precisely what Warren professor of history James T. Kloppenberg offers.

Democracy is a most improbable idea. Throughout much of human history, down

to the present in much of the world, the notion that ordinary people should have a say in choosing the government that rules them was as laughable as it was improbable. Rule was the province of tyrants, sometimes chosen by heredity privilege, other times determined by violent military conflict. Religious authorities conveyed the sense that people were hopelessly sinful and thus in need of firm guidance. Life was too short, too crowded with poverty, and too marked by widespread illiteracy to worry about what was taking place in distant capitals. Getting by was difficult enough. Self-understanding, let alone self-rule, was simply too far a stretch.

Kloppenberg hints at democracy's improbability through his choice of title: the word "toward" implies that the goal of democracy has not yet been reached. If so, then his book should be viewed as a pre-history of democracy, an account of the many revolutions in thought and practice that made it possible merely to imagine a world in

**James Kloppenberg conveys the evolution of democracy from early theorists through Tocqueville's celebration, written some years before this beatific electoral scene, *The Verdict of the People* (1854-55), by George Caleb Bingham.**





which fundamental political equality could be taken for granted. Democracy, to cite a word this time from Kloppenberg's sub-title, remains a "struggle." In the United States, for example, if we take even a minimal definition of democracy—one person, one vote—that condition remained unmet until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, only to be scuttled 48 years later by a 5-4 vote of the U.S. Supreme Court that struck down a key provision of that act.

Kloppenberg's pre-history begins in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when two intellectual movements began to challenge a once-dominant political landscape. One emerged from the field now called political theory: thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, even if in radically different ways, began asking questions about authority; so long as they did, and so long as they were read and understood, those in power had to find means of justifying themselves. (Kloppenberg is especially good in his treatments of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and David Hume, both of whom tend to be neglected by American historians.) Ultimately the questions that Locke in particular asked led directly to the Enlightenment, whose thinkers framed the questions the founders of the United States

asked as they contemplated the idea of a society with neither hereditary rulers nor an established faith.

Unlike many contemporary historians, Kloppenberg also examines

the role of religion as the second factor in this profound transformation. In Europe, the Catholic Church had all too often allied itself with authoritarian monarchs and held fast to the practice of allowing only priests to read and interpret the Bible. That all changed with the Protestant Reformation and especially with Martin Luther's attacks on Catholic privilege. Though Luther himself possessed an authoritarian personality, and continually modified his once-radical ideas, his concept of a "priesthood of all believers" prepared the groundwork for the individualism democracy required.

It is, however, too simple a story to view Catholics as the bad guys and Protestants as the good ones. Kloppenberg is especially sensitive to anti-Catholicism, which, he writes, "waxed and waned but never clearly disappeared" in the early history of New

England. Still, the great accomplishment of America's thinkers and doers was to avoid the political and religious dogmatism so evident in Europe. "Rather than trying to freeze their institutions and laws in a particular form, a temptation given their serious commitments to the apparently fixed truths of Christianity and natural law," he writes, "the creators of the new American state governments provided for open-ended experimentation." Their efforts were unprecedented. "By the 1790s, almost no one doubted that the United States of America was the world's first democratic nation."

This idea of the first democratic nation is true in one sense: the absence of a king. But, as Kloppenberg also points out, it is radically false in another: American democracy was limited to white men, and by no means all of them. So many historians of Kloppenberg's generation have written on the role of women before they had the suffrage, or pondered the question of how America could be a democracy while sanctioning slavery, that Kloppenberg has little original material to add to these discussions. Still, his treatment of Thomas Jefferson's inability to reconcile his faith in equality with the life of luxury that slavery afforded him is especially poignant. Slavery, Kloppenberg correctly writes, was "the deepest tragedy of American history."

It was a mixed brew that the founders of American democracy drank; an immigrant nation naturally consumed a bewildering variety of ideas. "Shaped by a blend

no information to offer themselves, hope our readers can do better.

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of Protestant Christianity, Enlightenment principles, and Scottish common-sense philosophy, the sensibilities of Madison, [James] Wilson, Adams, Jefferson, and other members of their generation combined confidence in the human capacities of reason and benevolence with a sober assessment of the dangers of passion and self-interest." American democracy would become a test case for a particular version of moral philosophy: unlike strict versions of Calvinism, individuals would

*Toward Democracy: The Struggle for Self-Rule in European and American Thought*, by James T. Kloppenberg (Oxford, \$34.95).

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be allowed freedom of choice, but the dangers of anarchy would be staved off by a republican insistence on virtue and a religious insistence on restraint.

Because the American Revolution did not produce the violent anarchy of the French, the new nation was off to a surprisingly successful start. French republicans such as Maximilien Robespierre, ironically influenced by the monarchy he detested, envisioned the good society as a unified one, a position that, given the reality of human disagreement, ultimately led to terror. In Kloppenberg's treatment, Robespierre's antithesis was James Madison, the true genius of the American way of politics, who sought to manage conflict rather than eliminate it. Here Kloppenberg overplays the differences between Europe and the United States. That continent had produced its own Madison, Benjamin Constant; though Kloppenberg gives this Swiss-born theorist of liberal pluralism some attention, he does not give him his full due.

After the French revolution of 1830, the aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville commented that "the liberal but not revolutionary party, which alone suits me, does not exist, and certainly it is not up to me to create it." Tocqueville never did create such a political system in France, but he became famous for describing the one across the Atlantic. Given his subject matter, the reader knows in advance that Kloppenberg will eventually encounter the author of the most famous book on American democracy ever written. And so he does, relying on Tocqueville to develop an argument closely resembling twentieth-century efforts to claim "American exceptionalism." "In the United States," Kloppenberg writes, "ethnic, racial, and religious differences, visible geographic and economic mobility, and, perhaps even more important, the widespread belief in such mobility, all combined with white male suffrage to discourage the emergence of a revolutionary working class." He may be correct, but this comment raises a potential qualification to his overall effort: if multiplicity and mobility contribute to the creation of a successful democratic model, then why pay such elaborate attention to ideas? Tocqueville, for one, did not, at least relatively speaking.

In any case, as Kloppenberg approaches the middle of the nineteenth century, he hastily brings his book to a conclusion with the Lincoln-Douglas debates, the anti-slavery writings of Frederick Douglass, and the emergence of the Civil War. All this is understandable: *Toward Democracy* required

years of reading, thinking, and writing to produce; had Kloppenberg continued with his detailed analysis of thinkers, this project would have emerged in multi-volume form. Perhaps it nonetheless would have been worth it. The American South, after all, was the home of the only meaningful anti-democratic sentiment in America. Kloppenberg devotes just one paragraph to John C. Calhoun, the most thoughtful anti-democrat America ever produced.

Quibbles aside, one can only hope that Kloppenberg's book helps enrich the conversations about democracy taking place in the United States at the moment: Are we

truly exceptional? Should we be? Is democracy tied to the nation-state, or does it now take global form? Does war promote or retard democratic institutions? If we believe democracy to be a good thing, should we aim to spread it where it does not currently exist? Do democratic citizens live longer than those who live in authoritarian societies? Do they live better? We have, indeed, not quite arrived at democracy. As long as we are still moving toward it, Kloppenberg's masterwork should prove one of our most valuable guides. ▢

Alan Wolfe recently retired as professor of political science at Boston College.

## ALUMNI

# World Music 2.0

*Jace Clayton reflects on musical technological trends across the globe.*

by LARA PELLEGRINELLI

WHILE HUNTING through CDs at music shops in his former Sunset Park, Brooklyn neighborhood, Jace Clayton '97 (a.k.a. DJ /rupture) came upon live recordings of *cumbia sonidera*, a Mexican offshoot of a Colombian dance genre. The style is the mainspring for parties at Latin nightclubs and *quinceañeras* (coming-of-age celebrations for girls) across New York City's outer boroughs. The ballads feature square, steady rhythms and melodies voiced by accordion, trumpets, and their synthesized counterparts, but the DJ.s for these events are always the most ear-catching element: they constantly talk over the music.

"I thought it was nuts," says Clayton, who also speaks Spanish fluently. "They're relaying shout-outs from the audience that they receive via text message, Facebook, and scrawled notes. Sometimes those messages are to people in the room, but often they're to friends and family back home across the border in Mexico or in Los Angeles"—loved ones who will generally be gifted with a CD of the event. "It's a highly mediated way of telling someone, 'Hey, I'm thinking of you. You're not here, but you're present in the music,'" he explains. And, as he also points out, it's a medium that allows Mexican immigrants in the

United States to get visibility on their own terms, whether they're documented or not.

*Cumbia sonidera* is just the sort of underground musical phenomenon—organically influenced by social networks and their access to technology—that attracts Clayton, a DJ., poet, journalist, and experimental composer, and that features prominently in his debut book, *Uproot: Travels in 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Music and Digital Culture* (FSG Originals, 2016); a selection of audio and video clips discussed are listed at <http://uprootbook.com/listening-guide>. Equal parts reportage, travelogue, and ethnography, *Uproot* was fed by Clayton's global travels as a DJ., and his vast knowledge of styles and repertoire. Dubbed "the jet-lag king" by his wife, the East Harlem-based Clayton has plied his trade in settings as disparate as an abandoned hotel in North Cyprus, a Barcelona squat, an art gallery in Osaka, and the occasional corporate party. His art accommodates a cross-section of humanity, and allows his perspectives, and therefore his book, to leapfrog among the music of varying social strata, whether created by the Congolese street musicians Orchestre Tout Puissant Likembe Konono N°1 or international dance superstar Moby.

*Uproot* explores some of the massive musical shifts prompted by new technology



of the last 15 years. Underpinning his discussions is the transition from music contained within tangible media (such as vinyl records, cassettes, and compact discs) to dematerialized MP3s. That format, widely popularized in the late 1990s, is rendered slippery and fast by lossy file compression (a technology that eliminates some data in order to shrink files) and is delivered via online stores, streaming services, and YouTube, along with illegal file-sharing platforms.

Musical pundits who debate this transition are typically preoccupied with the death of the music industry (and the income of its stakeholders), but there's no love lost there for Clayton. "I don't want to haggle over how many micro-cents I get paid per stream, or other token gestures toward compensation," he writes. "I want the giants to fall even faster so we can see what weird flowers start blooming in the spaces left vacant." In order to identify the most intriguing seedlings on that newly tilled digital soil, Clayton trains his eye on what is invisible to most Americans: that which is close to the ground, informal, and outside the standard channels of distribution.

For example, around 2000, when Clayton began encountering recordings of Amazigh (Berber) wedding and pop singers that were played at Muslim bars in France and Belgium, he noticed an interesting twist on the musical tradition he already knew: the women's florid vocal lines had been altered in the studio with Auto-Tune. Singled out by Clayton as the "most important piece of musical equipment in the last 20 years," the digital audio processor was invented in 1997 to correct pitch inaccuracies. It suddenly became widespread as an expressive device following Cher's hit "Believe" in 1998, where it was applied liberally to highlight certain phrases of the verse. As Clayton describes it, creative misuses of Auto-Tune sound "as if a dial-up modem and a river have fallen in love and have begun writing violin concerti for each other."

Clearly, the properties of digital software



**Turntables, headphones, a mixer, and his eclectic music collection prevail in Jace Clayton's home "office."**

have enabled anyone across the globe to experiment with Auto-Tune, but why would culturally conservative Amazigh musicians in rural Morocco find this effect desirable? Clayton tracked down and interviewed a handful of singers and ultimately concluded that Auto-Tune intensifies the gloriously strident voices of the Amazigh women, amplifying feminine ideals. At the same time, it preserves the modesty of these professional female performers with a sonic veil, eliminating any question of vocal propriety.

Clayton is uniquely positioned to make such observations. Even though he has increasingly become a recipient of commissions as a composer, including awards from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage and Creative Capital, deejaying remains at his intellectual and aesthetic core, and has honed his ears to readily synthesize diverse sounds. Though the job primarily entails getting people out on the

dance floor, Clayton describes the role as one of creator rather than jukebox; he "performs" recordings from a collection of 2,000 tracks on his laptop using techniques pioneered by hip-hop artists: sampling recordings, scratching, and matching beats, skills that allow multiple tracks to be improvised, or "mixed," into a single live one.

"A fan who's been watching comes over and says, 'I really like that song. What is it?'" Clayton explains in *Uproot*. "I can only ask, 'Which one?' The DJ's job is to make disparate records sound like a whole, and the more successful you are at it, the less likely the novice onlooker is to know it....One of the paradoxes central to the DJ's art is that some of the most demanding, virtuoso work is the hardest to recognize. And some of the highest-paid, most in-your-face D.J.s do the least amount of actual on-stage work."

Clayton made his mark in 2001 with *Gold Teeth Thief*, a masterly, three-turntable mix that draws on 44 individual tracks, ranging from hip-hop artist Missy Eliot to Italian composer Luciano Berio to electronica artist Muslingauze. He put it online for friends, but, un-

beknownst to him, *Thief* began receiving glowing reviews and eventually went viral with hundreds of thousands of downloads, cementing his reputation as an artist who could blend global styles.

CLAYTON HAS ALWAYS been attracted to the sounds at the margins. A self-described "book kid," he admits he was never interested in music until he heard "the weird stuff." The most intriguing sounds of his teen years in North Andover, Massachusetts, came from college radio stations, like Boston College's WZBC. He stayed up late to hear his favorite show *No Commercial Potential*, or taped it on his dual cassette deck in case he fell asleep. His epiphany came with a compilation of Japanese noise titled *Eat Shit Noise Music*. "Simultaneously atrocious and amazing, the sounds defied me not to like them," he writes in *Uproot*, "yet somehow

I did, turned on by flashes of anarchic joy amid the audio fallout. I think I may have blushed.” The cassette energized Clayton to seek out the underground and its fringe, hunting in the backs of ‘zines and record-store crates in and around Boston for music well off the beaten path.

At Harvard, he studied English while his burgeoning musical interests were strictly extracurricular. He made weekly trips to seek out new records throughout Greater Boston, taking three buses to stores along Dorchester’s Blue Hill Avenue to shop for reggae and dancehall music. On Friday nights, he could often be found dancing at the Boston Loft, the city’s only after-hours club, where the complexities of the jungle music “exploded my brain”; he bought his first set of turntables from the venue’s own DJ Bruno. Frustrated by the limited format options at WHRB, he was granted his own show on MIT’s WMBR. His social circles around radio eventually coalesced into a crew called Toneburst. They threw parties in alternative spaces to combat what they saw as the “segregationist logic” of Boston’s dance scene, with its strict separation of different types of music and their audiences.

Clayton spent his postgraduate years in New York City before moving in 2000 to Ma-

## Electing Overseers

**An apparent** confluence of events—continuing study about how better to engage alumni, the challenge posed by a petition slate of candidates for election to the Board of Overseers last spring (see [harvardmagazine.com/overseerelection](http://harvardmagazine.com/overseerelection))—prompted the September 1 announcement that petitioning and voting procedures will be overhauled and brought into the digital era.

Significantly, petitioners will now have to gather signatures from 1 percent of eligible voters to qualify for the Overseers’ ballot: about 2,650 names, up from the prior requirement of about 200. Gathering such support will be made less physically taxing, however: in place of watermarked, paper forms, an online utility will let alumni download a form, sign it, and submit it as a scan electronically, or mail it back. That procedure goes some way toward enfranchising overseas voters, especially.

Even more important, perhaps, will be the adoption of secure online balloting, effective as soon as practicable but no later than the 2018-2019 election year—an overdue move to bid mailed, paper ballots adieu. Finally, eligibility for Overseer service is now restricted to holders of Harvard degrees: a measure that disqualifies people who have no University affiliation as well as students who have not yet earned a degree.

Full details are available at [harvardmag.com/overseer-reform-16](http://harvardmag.com/overseer-reform-16).

—JOHN S. ROSENBERG

drid, the hometown of his wife, fashion designer Rocio Salceda; they subsequently lived in Barcelona before returning to New York City in 2006. That European base proved advantageous following *Gold Teeth Thief*: Clayton benefited from more opportunities to D.J. and says his skills had greater cultural

value than they would have had back home. He also freelanced for *The Washington Post* and *Africana.com* (including reviewing poetry collections), and eventually saw writing as a way to create the kind of space for dialogue that he observed within his favorite musical traditions—and on the Internet, through

## Hiram S. Hunn Awards for Alumni

**On September 16**, seven alumni received this year’s Hiram S. Hunn Memorial Schools and Scholarships Awards from the College’s Office of Admissions and Financial Aid for their volunteer work: recruiting and interviewing prospective undergraduates.

**John G.D. Carden** ’57, M.B.A. ’59, of Point Clear, Alabama, has interviewed more than 300 candidates from Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi since 1996.

**Dean W. Chandler** ’65 of Temple, Texas, who has chaired the Harvard Club of Austin’s schools and scholarships committee for a decade, counts among his interviewers alumni who were themselves interviewed for admission during his tenure.

**Rebecca L. High** ’75, of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, began interviewing applicants in 2001, and is a former chair of the schools and scholarships committee of the Harvard Club of the Research Triangle.

**S. Martin Lieberman** ’57, M.B.A. ’62, of Hillsdale, New Jersey, has worked with the Harvard Club of New Jersey’s schools and scholarships committee for more than 40 years, and is a former club president.



**John G.D. Carden**



**Dean W. Chandler**



**Rebecca L. High**



**S. Martin Lieberman**



**Stacey Mandelbaum**



**Linda Shirer Rae**



**Frederic N. Ris**

**Stacey Mandelbaum** ’82, of Queensbury, New York, has been interviewing candidates since 1988, and has served as chair of the Harvard Club of Eastern New York’s schools and scholarships committee since 2003.

**Linda Shirer Rae** ’63, of Cross River, New York, has interviewed prospective students for 37 years, and is a longtime member of the Harvard-Radcliffe Club of Westchester: she twice served as its president.

**Frederic N. Ris** ’68, of Denver, is past president of the Rocky Mountain Harvard University Club. Since he began interviewing students in 1988, he has traveled to many corners of Colorado where interviewers are scarce to meet with candidates—one of whom is now a co-chair of the club’s schools and scholarships committee.



media outlets like his blog *Mudd Up!*

The ideas behind *Uproot* began with his posts and the lively exchanges with online peers that followed. The book also draws on his past decade of reporting and essays for various outlets, including *The Fader*, *n + 1*, and *Frieze*. “I was trying to write a book that wouldn’t concretize this history, but instead open it up and ask really wonderful, broad questions,” he explains. “This is cultural heritage: Who’s formatting access to it? How is it searchable? Who can annotate it? Who can take it down? Who should control it?”

In *Uproot*, Clayton marvels at the rapid-fire transformations of musical content that now begin rather than end with a D.J.’s collage—and then morph and gain momentum in the hands of others with full remixes and the smaller tweaks of refixes, peaking with waves of homemade, cellphone-captured dance videos. He considers how the software for do-it-yourself music-making, developed by a handful of companies in Europe and the United States, reshapes—and in many cases thwarts—wildly different creative impulses across the planet. He ponders the future of music repositories found on spent cell-phone memory cards that one might nostalgically think of as music libraries, and questions the patronage of the arts by corporate sponsors such as Red Bull, Converse, and Sour Patch Kids, which co-opt hipness via their spending in service of lifestyle branding.

By placing stars like Paul Simon, MIA, or Whitney Houston side-by-side, in his own work, with comparatively obscure Egyptian *mahraganat* musicians, Mexican teens at a *tribal guarachero* rave, or Syrian *dabke* singer Omar Souleyman, Clayton ensures a far more thought-provoking and egalitarian version of world music than, for example, the one prompted by Paul Simon’s *Graceland* in the late 1980s and 1990s: a process by which relevant regional talents were re-packaged and sold to a Western audience.

“It’s made by people all over the globe,” says Clayton of this new world music—people “who now have access to inexpensive computers, cheap or cracked versions of software, and YouTube on the one hand, and what their parents listened to or what is common to where they live on the other. When they’re making it in response to all of those situations, integrating the Internet’s incredible sprawl, that’s World Music 2.0.” ♡

Arts journalist and scholar Lara Pellegrinelli received a Harvard doctorate in ethnomusicology in 2005.

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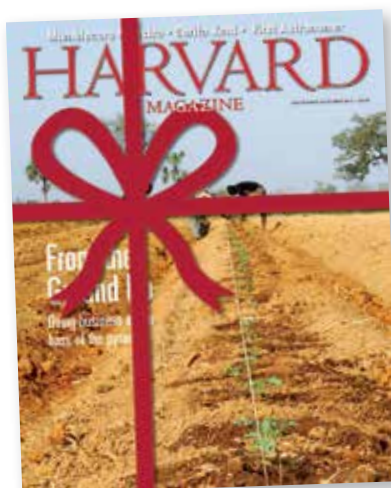
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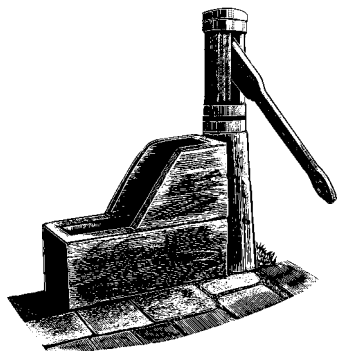
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# Divisions, and Dylan



"Your wooden arm you hold outstretched  
to shake with passers-by."

**A**MID this year's presidential political perturbations, Primus recalls that 50 years ago this November, U.S. defense secretary Robert McNamara, M.B.A. '39, returned to campus for a seminar. As former *Harvard Magazine* editor John Bethell recounts in *Harvard Observed*, the visit coincided with a turn toward "militant action" by Students for a Democratic Society, which had demanded that McNamara participate in a debate. He declined.

"Some 300 demonstrators were there to confront McNamara as he left Quincy House," Bethell narrates. "Discovering that he was being shown out the back way, some of the demonstrators lay down in front of a waiting police car. Others started to rock it. By then a crowd of almost a thousand had

assembled. McNamara climbed onto the roof of a parked car and tried to take questions, but he was drowned out by shouting. "I spent four of the happiest years of my life on the Berkeley campus doing some of the things you're doing here,"



McNamara shouted back. "I was tougher then, and I'm tougher now!" Jumping down, he was escorted by Harvard police into nearby Leverett House, and then through University steam tunnels to the safe haven of Harvard Law School."

Some 2,700 students signed a resolution apologizing for the "unruly behavior," and College dean John U. Monro decried "mob rule." But he declined to make "any kind of political activity or demonstration a matter of disciplinary action" and the full faculty imposed no punishments—but warned against further "obstruction of free movement."

Given all that followed, the disruption would come to seem almost insignificant.



MICHAEL SHINAGEL, former dean of continuing education (1975-2013) and master of Quincy House (1985-2001), has self-published a memoir, *Holocaust Survivor to Harvard Dean*. A literary scholar long embedded in the community, he is an ideal critic of local norms. Thus:

"The president of Harvard, Derek Bok, had a telling phrase for the arrogance that one encountered from time to time....He referred to 'the Cambridge conceit' as a shorthand for attitudes of superiority...I remember [lunching] at the Harvard Faculty Club with the dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences,...J. Peterson Elder. As...a Phi Beta Kappa graduate..., I asked [him], out of curiosity, what percentage of his students...were Phi Beta Kappa. He looked at me quizzically and responded, 'Why, I assume they *all* are.'..."

"In fact, the Cambridge conceit manifested itself early. When my son Mark was enrolled in a preschool program at the Buckingham Browne and Nichols School... I would walk him to school in the morning....

One day, as we entered the schoolyard, two little boys were engaged in a shouting match that was intensifying until finally one of the boys delivered his *coup de grâce*: 'My father has tenure at Harvard and yours doesn't!'"



PUMPIANA. Peter Crane '68 writes: "In the fall of 1964, those of us...in Hollis Hall... would sometimes hear the loud 'Gunk, gunk, gunk' of passersby satisfying themselves that the pump in front of the building could still draw water. If memory serves, it was often out of action owing to thievery [of the handle; see the lead illustration]."

"The year before, Bob Dylan had played Club 47 on Palmer Street, perhaps 500 feet away, across the Square. In January 1965, he recorded 'Subterranean Homesick Blues,' which ended with the baffling line, 'The pump don't work /Cause the vandals took the handles.' Maybe it isn't so baffling after all. Does anyone know for sure?"

Primus consulted Lane professor of the classics Richard F. Thomas, a Virgil scholar who co-edited *The Performance Artistry of Bob Dylan*, about whom he teaches a freshman seminar. He observes: "That song's lyrics mostly come out of the fertile and surreal mind of Dylan. He certainly was around Harvard in the early 1960s, even in Harvard Yard, if we believe what he says on an outtake of 'Baby, Let Me Follow You Down' (1961; the outtake version is on *Biograph*, disc 1, 1985): 'first heard this from Rick (Eric) Von Schmidt. He lives in Cambridge. I met him one day in the green pastures of Harvard University.' I wouldn't stake too much on it myself but why not? We'll never know since Dylan doesn't talk about his lyrics."

Anyone else?

~PRIMUS VI



standard long undermined defenses in capital cases. Beginning in 2000, the Court made three decisions that reversed convictions in capital cases, based on inadequate counsel. "These decisions are important," the Steikers wrote, "but they illustrate the Court fol-

extremely modest goals while maximizing political and legal discomfort."

The minimal regulation has led to extremes represented by the death-penalty systems in California and Texas. California, with only 13 executions since 1976, had 747 people on death row as of September 2016, the largest such population in the country. Texas, with 244 people on death row as of July, has executed almost two out of every five of the 1,437 people executed in the United States since the death penalty was reinstated, almost five times as many people as Oklahoma, with the second highest number of executions.

"The most significant variable affecting execution rates," the Steikers wrote, "is the speed at which cases move through state and federal systems of review." The main gates through which a case must move are the defendant's appeal of his conviction and sentence; any claims he makes in state court based on new facts in the case; his challenge to the state proceedings in federal court; and the setting of a date for the execution.

**"It is impossible to understand where, why, and how the death penalty persists in the U.S.**

**without looking at racial politics and culture."**

Texas, more than any other state, has "embraced procedures and practices which tend to clear the path to execution and move cases expeditiously." California, at the other end of the spectrum, has insisted on treating each step in the legal process as a means to ensure that the conviction was accurate and the sentence fair.

A part standing for the whole in this diver-

soon after being sentenced to death, but there is generally a "lower standard of practice," in the Steikers' words. Reflecting that low standard and low expectations, despite the life-or-death consequences, "lawyers representing death-sentenced inmates often decline to travel to Austin," where the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals sits, to make an oral argument about the appeal, "in their sole opportunity to assert many claims."

In California, lawyers must meet rigorous requirements to qualify as counsel in death-penalty appeals and demand for them is much greater than the supply. As a result, appeals "languish for years in the state system," the Steikers wrote. Once counsel is engaged, "capital appellate attorneys would never consider waiving their oral argument in such circumstances (and the California Supreme Court would likely not permit them to do so)." Even California's page limit for briefs in capital cases indicates higher expectations: it "is more than twice the limit in Texas." In Texas capital cases, counsel is ap-

pointed, the case is briefed, and the appeal is resolved "within a few years of a death sentence. In California, those events routinely require well over a decade."

While the legal process varies among states that have the death penalty, the Steikers concluded that "a fairly consistent big picture emerges: symbolic states are far more likely to have

what could be termed 'due process' legal cultures." They "necessarily" delay and often "ultimately" defeat those states' efforts to carry out executions: "it is nearly impossible for any state to provide sufficient resources to allow its capital processes to maintain both a high rate of death sentencing and a high rate of execution while simultaneously conforming to a due process model of adjudication."

In Texas and other executing states, the opposite of the due process model is the "legacy of a much older and broader phenomenon," the Steikers wrote. It is "the result of southern resistance" to the effort of the Supreme Court "to impose national values of racial justice."

### **Racialized Justice**

WHEN THE COURT struck down state death-penalty statutes in 1972, the lead counsel in the case and the lawyers most



**Death-row guard tower, Livingston, Texas; an inmate after exercising, San Quentin**

lowing rather than leading the transition to acceptable capital lawyering."

The Steikers concluded that the Court's regulation "has left us with the worst of all possible regulatory worlds. The resulting complexity conveys the impression that the current system errs, if at all, on the side of heightened responsibility and fairness." But "the last four decades have produced a complicated regulatory apparatus that achieves

responsible for convincing the five justices in the majority worked for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the law firm of the civil-rights movement. In one of its Court filings, the Fund explained, “The long experience of LDF attorneys in the handling of death cases has convinced us that capital punishment in the United States is administered in a fashion that consistently makes racial minorities, the deprived and the downtrodden, the peculiar objects of capital charges, capital convictions, and sentences of death.” Almost half a century ago, the death penalty was an urgent civil-rights issue. The penalty was almost abolished in 1972 because of grave concerns about racial discrimination.

Today, that fact seems to come out of nowhere. It contrasts baldly with the jurisprudence about the death penalty. That law is largely about legal procedure (dividing a capital trial into a stage for considering guilt and, if the defendant is convicted, a second stage for deciding punishment) and takes little account of racial discrimination in the administration of capital punishment. The Supreme Court was so eager to avoid confronting the discrimination in this area of law that, in 1977, when it decided a case about the death penalty for a man convicted of rape, it chose to outlaw the penalty as excessive for the crime and mentioned neither race nor racial discrimination. That belied the record in the case, which included that, of the 455 men executed in the United States for rape between 1930 and 1967, 405, or almost nine out of 10, were black—almost all convicted of raping white women.

The Steikers approach this immense inconsistency as a puzzle that must be solved to fully understand capital punishment in America. William Forbath said, “This book shows Jordan and Carol as scholars at the top of their form, and that’s about as high as it gets.” They see the Court’s logic: a generation after *Brown*, the justices were still contending with the backlash to integration of public schools in contentious cases about school busing, for example, and with other controversial racial issues, like affirmative action. The death penalty was explosive enough without adding race to the mix. Yet race has shaped capital punishment in the United States.

As Jordan put it, “It is simply impossible to understand where, why, and how the death penalty persists in the U.S. without looking at racial politics and culture. Despite the Constitution’s guarantees of equal

protection of the laws, due process of law, and freedom from cruel and unusual punishments, the Court’s constitutional regulation of capital punishment was unable to cure the long-standing racial pathologies of the American death penalty.”

The story began with slavery and the use that slave owners and other whites made of brutal public executions as object lessons, to maintain control over other slaves. “Slaves convicted of murdering their owners or of plotting revolt,” the Steikers wrote, were often subjected to “terrifying and gruesome forms of execution such as burning at the stake or breaking on the wheel,” where the slave was lashed to a large wagon wheel and his limbs were beaten with a club, with the wheel’s gaps allowing the limbs to snap.

The story carried on with lynchings of blacks in the Jim Crow South. They wrote, “The lynching ritual (sometimes called ‘lynchcraft’) often involved long-abandoned punishments such as branding, eye gouging, and the cutting off of ears.” In the early twentieth century, southern advocates of the death penalty contended that it was essential to keep execution as a legal punishment to reduce the number of lawless lynchings. (“As one Tennessee politician argued in opposition to abolition,” the Steikers wrote, “if this bill should become law it would be almost impossible to suppress mobs in their efforts to punish colored criminals.”)

The story persists with racial discrimination today, at every step of the legal process involved in the death penalty: in bringing capital charges, selecting jurors in capital cases, and sentencing convicted offenders to death, with the people sentenced to death and executed disproportionately poor, black, and male. The race of the victim is especially significant: those who murder whites, especially black offenders, are much more likely to be sentenced to death than those who murder blacks; and although young black men are much more likely to be murdered than people in any other racial or gender group, their killers rarely face the death penalty.

The Steikers are not the first to tell parts of this story. They are quick to credit the scholars whose work they build on. But they recount with singular effectiveness the haunting role that race continues to play in death-penalty cases, almost always without acknowledgment by the Supreme Court. Capital punishment in the South, where four out of every five executions

have taken place since the Court reinstated it in 1976, was a way for whites to terrorize blacks legally in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Vestiges of that vigilante justice still mark death-penalty systems in the South. This strand of the Steikers’ writing should change forever how general readers understand the history and role of capital punishment in the United States.

Elsewhere in the world, country after country has abolished the death penalty out of respect for human dignity. Here, if the Court finally abolishes it, Americans may mistakenly think that the justices did so for the same reason. But in choosing not to reckon with the role of race and racial discrimination in the American use of the death penalty, the Supreme Court has chosen not to take account of that ferocious form of racism. That is a fundamental injustice. If and when the Court buries the death penalty, the Steikers surmise, it is likely to omit acknowledgment of this “original sin,” which has stained capital punishment since the era of slavery.

For that reason, *Courting Death* is a feat of remembrance as well as a guide to resolution. The Steikers explain why, for the most pragmatic of reasons, the Court should end capital punishment in the United States. But an integral part of the book is their account of what the country should never forget about the racial pathologies of the death penalty. Those pathologies provide an indelible moral basis for abolishing it, as well. ▢

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Lincoln Caplan ’72, J.D. ’76, is a visiting lecturer in law at Yale Law School and writes about the death penalty for the website of *The New Yorker*. He is the author of six books, including the recently published *American Justice 2016: The Political Supreme Court* (Penn Press). He has profiled both Richard Posner, in “Rhetoric and Law,” published in the magazine’s January–February 2016 issue, and Cass Sunstein, in “The Legal Olympian,” published in the magazine’s January–February 2015 issue.

In addition to Carol Steiker and Jordan Steiker, the alumni referred to in this article include the past Supreme Court chief justice William H. Rehnquist, A.M. ’50, and past and present associate justices Harry A. Blackmun ’29, LL.B. ’32, LL.D. ’94; William J. Brennan Jr., LL.B. ’31, LL.D. ’68; Stephen G. Breyer, LL.B. ’64; Ruth Bader Ginsburg, L. ’59, LL.D. ’11; and Lewis F. Powell Jr., LL.M. ’32. Also mentioned are Cormac J. Carney, J.D. ’87; R. Ted Cruz, J.D. ’95; William E. Forbath ’74; Lance Liebman, LL.B. ’67; Evan J. Mandery ’89, J.D. ’92; and Robert C. Owen, J.D. ’89.





# Pins for Women

*A century of mini political mileposts*



didn't get a scholarship, and I was told, 'Oh, we don't give it to females, and you're married besides.' The belief was that women get married and therefore don't need the scholarship. That was legal—before Title IX made it illegal.”

Political pins have been in use for at least 200 years, explains Kathryn Jacob, curator of the pin collection at the Radcliffe Institute's Schlesinger Library; the oldest pins housed there date back to the movement for women's suffrage, which will celebrate its centennial in 2020. The pins provide evidence of hard-won fights for political rights now often taken for granted; others recall battles that appear to have gone nowhere in 50, 60, 70 years. Says Jacob, “You look at some of these buttons and think, ‘Oh yeah, we’re fighting that fight all over again.’”

The largest set of pins—more than a thousand, from the 1960s and later—was donated by Bernice Sandler, one of the architects of Title IX, the federal law banning gender discrimination in education. As a graduate student in the 1960s, Sandler says, she was denied funding from her department because she was a woman. “I asked why I

That was when Sandler decided to devote her life to the advancement of women's legal rights. “At the time,” Sandler, now 88, remembers, “buttons were popular for all kinds of causes. Women who were working on women's issues were all printing buttons.” She printed pins declaring “Uppity Women Unite” and “God Bless Title IX” and handed them out at all her talks: “I must have given out 7,000 of them,” she says. “The pins were an easy way to talk about women's rights because they were *funny*. They made it easy for men to care about women's issues without being viewed as dour or threatening.”

She scattered them over all the surfaces of the Cosmos Club, an elite Washington social club that didn't allow women to enter through the front door (a policy it would end, begrudgingly, in 1988, after the city found it in violation of anti-discrimination law). Once, she recalls with delight, a server at the club asked her for a handful of pins, which, she learned later, he planted on the urinals of the men's bathrooms.

—MARINA BOLOTNIKOVA

**T**INY PINS with their delicate metal fasteners still intact, some more than 100 years old, read “Votes for Women” and “I March for Full Suffrage” in faded letters. Some sit in miniature carrying cases, signifying, perhaps, that they once meant a great deal to someone. Newer pins use vivid hues and bolder fonts to match their more ambitious aspirations: “A woman's place is in the House and Senate.” “Ann Richards for Governor—Texas.” “E.R.A.—YES.” A pin featuring Hillary Clinton, then campaigning for her husband, foreshadows this election year, in which a woman will appear as a serious contender on the presidential ballot—likely a distant dream to the suffragists of a century ago.



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