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An Autumn Update

With a new academic year beginning at the Graduate School, I have several points of interest to convey to you.

The most substantive has to do with a reorganization of graduate programs in the life sciences. The intellectual landscape in this wide-ranging field is one of the most dynamic of any contemporary area of science or scholarship. Tremendously exciting work is occurring on many different frontiers; frontiers that are shared with other sciences and attract some of the most creative scientists from other disciplines. Graduate education in the life sciences is in a similar ferment as students seek to position themselves as the scientific pioneers of the next generation.

Recognizing that groundbreaking research and discovery in the life sciences is more interdisciplinary than ever in the 21st century, Harvard President Lawrence Summers mandated the creation of the Harvard Integrated Life Sciences (HILS) Graduate Program, which oversees all PhD education in the life sciences.

HILS is an outgrowth of a year’s worth of conversations among faculty in the Medical School and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences who recognized the necessity to come together as colleagues and to stop duplicating efforts.

As many of you who work in the life sciences know, collaboration across disciplines is at the heart of current research, and subject areas no longer are confined by disciplinary boundaries. Students studying within the life sciences today can expect to work with a wider range of scientists and scholars than their predecessors could ever have imagined.

HILS integrates nine graduate programs across four Harvard faculties: the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the School of Dental Medicine, the Medical School, and the School of Public Health. This new structure will allow the examination of emerging trends in the life sciences, including the need for new degree programs. Even as our existing programs in the life sciences continue to reflect the latest technology and knowledge, new interdisciplinary PhD programs are in the works.

On the admissions front, this year we received the second highest number of applications in GSAS history: 9,500. We had approximately 700 accepts, and nearly 25 percent of those were to our 14 interfaculty programs. Thirty percent of the incoming class is international; of that figure, 20 percent are students from China.

GSAS's outreach to international students has never been stronger, which is so important in these times in which visa challenges are still a factor. This past summer, our English Language Program, which accommodates incoming international GSAS students to the American classroom, had 39 students from 10 different countries, including China, Korea, Japan, Romania, Russia, Israel, and Peru. Our Host Student Program kicked off in September with a catered dinner for 288 students. This long-standing GSAS program matches continuing students with incoming international students to help facilitate their transition to life at Harvard.

We have also welcomed seven new members to our Alumni Association Council (see page 10 for more complete introductions). These alumni reflect the increasingly international character and more diverse professional backgrounds of the GSAS community. Gyuri Karady (PhD ’80, applied sciences) is in finance in London; David M. Staines (PhD ’73, English and American literature and language) is a professor of English at the University of Ottawa, Canada; and John Alan Stuckey (PhD ’81, business economics) is a management consultant in Australia. Other new members residing a bit closer to Cambridge are in academia, business, and marketing. We look forward to working with them and are excited to have their input.

Finally, I wanted to note that in the summer 2004 “From the Dean” column on a report on employment among recent GSAS alumni, certain dates and figures were misstated due to a reporting error.

All of the figures noted in the column were for the combined PhD cohorts 1996–99. For example, academic employment for the humanities respondents in the combined cohorts (1996–99) is highest, showing a climb from 61 percent at exit to 76 percent at three-years out. Also, the figures seem to be holding steady over a large number of PhD cohorts, going back as far as the results in the previous three-years-out report (1993–96). We regret any confusion this may have caused.

Peter T. Ellison, PhD ’83, anthropology dean, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
HE GREW UP IN AMERICA’S so-called breadbasket, so it is little wonder that Harvard’s James L. Watson would devote his anthropological career to what can broadly be termed food studies.

But Watson, the Fairbank Professor of Chinese Society and a Harvard College Professor, has always extended his scholarship well past the farmlands of his native Iowa.

Watson began his anthropological career over 30 years ago conducting fieldwork in the villages of south China. His works include books on Chinese lineage patterns, slavery in Asia and Africa, class in post-revolution China, and kinship organization in late imperial China. The study of food came quite naturally in a region of people he described as “possessed and preoccupied” with its production and consumption.

In fact, he credits his two Chinese godchildren with inspiring his study of McDonald’s in East Asia, the scholarship for which he is probably best known. One day in the early 1990s, Watson dutifully escorted the kids to the then-hot spot for burgers and fries. Once there, he quickly recognized the anthropological resonance of the place. That eventually led to his 1997 book *Golden Arches East*, which showed how McDonald’s has changed—and been changed by—East Asian culture. This fall, a second edition of *Golden Arches East* will be published and will feature a new concluding chapter by Watson on McDonald’s as a 21st-century political target.

“McDonald’s was an icon for the optimism of globalization in the ’90s before the dot-com crash,” he said. “Now in the aftermath, with the Enron debacle and the collapse of East Asian economies in 1997, McDonald’s has become again an icon—but this time of everything that’s bad about globalization. McDonald’s carries the baggage of this time of everything that’s bad about globalization. McDonald’s has become again an icon—but collapse of East Asian economies in 1997, aftermath, with the Enron debacle and the dot-com crash,” he said. “Now in the optimism of globalization in the ’90s before concluding chapter by Watson on McDonald’s will be published and will feature a new

Watson attributes that change to the ever-increasing speed of life in contemporary society but also to the reality that groups create their own culture and traditions. “All you have to do is look at American ethnic groups and how they reconstruct their cultural identities,” he said.

The debate then is between those who believe culture is something that’s inherent to, say, an ethnic group or a nation or a community, and those who believe that every generation refabricates it. Watson occupies a middle ground.

“Since I’ve worked in Chinese villages, I can see that there are certain aspects of culture that in fact are much more difficult to change than others,” he said. “Those people who tend to work in post-modern societies see culture as something you can just create today or tomorrow. But since I’ve worked in a very grounded set of two or three Chinese communities, I see it as something that’s much more difficult to fabricate.”

The culture debate regarding McDonald’s in East Asia is, Watson said, a projection of our Western thought.

“People seem to assume that organizations like McDonald’s and Coca-Cola are corrosive because they destroy local cultures,” he said. “Well that assumes there’s some hermetically sealed box that’s all wonderful and should be protected, and it’s a very naive view of cultural systems. It’s also one that neglects to note that East Asian societies have changed dramatically over the past hundred years—far more rapidly than American society has in many respects.”

Watson suggests that if East Asian cultural change is a train, then McDonald’s is the caboose—not the locomotive. “People who believe that somehow McDonald’s is going to go in there and change things are completely, bizarrely naïve to think that a food chain is going to change a society like China,” he said. “It gives these institutions far more weight than they can possibly be credited with.”

Globalization skeptics will find a willing ear with Watson, however: “A lot of young people in particular are very worried about the direction of globalization for obvious reasons. There are some really serious things that have happened, like outsourcing, off-shoring of American jobs, and the sorts of things that are happening in the Middle East and elsewhere,” he said. “The anti-globalization movement is extremely successful in projecting these diffuse fears onto globalization.”

Watson says McDonald’s is undeserving of its reputation as evil-doer. “Why should McDonald’s be the political target out of the hundreds of American corporations [operating in East Asia]?” he said. “There are many financial firms and construction firms that are much
BURGERS, SOYBEANS, AND CULTURAL POLITICS

more influential in terms of jobs and changes. But you don’t think of companies that deal with the construction of roads and dams as somehow affecting culture when they’re much more influential in that respect.”

Anti-McDonald’s fervor is more intense in Europe, India, and the Middle East, but McDonald’s has become a political target in China and is becoming one in Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Watson has already witnessed an ebb and flow in terms of McDonald’s cultural impact in the place he’s done his fieldwork in the 1990s: McDonald’s has gone from being a place where the well-to-do wished to be seen escorting their children, to just another fast-food restaurant.

But if East Asia’s McDonald’s has evolved into a political target, Watson’s McDonald’s project has always been an academic one. During a recent appearance on a Boston public radio program, a woman called in to complain that were Margaret Mead alive to communicate with executives at the Oak Brook, Ill., headquarters.

They know about my work, of course, because they monitor all work on McDonald’s,” he said. “I have a feeling that they’re ambivalent about it [because] it’s critical in many respects. As an anthropologist I’ve always made certain to keep myself removed from management and even if I were to meet them or know them I’d have to be careful about that. I’ve taken no research funds from any corporation or anything like that. My funding comes from the usual pitifully funded academic sources!”

McDonald’s may be pleased to know at least that Watson does eat their food. “I love the fries,” he said. “And I like Big Macs, but I don’t eat them very often.”

Mad Cow and Food Futurism

Watson’s work on McDonald’s has led him into areas related to globalization and culture. In an article in Salon.com, Watson was quoted as saying that in the future, eating a hamburger will be comparable in risk to eating a pufferfish. Its meat is considered a delicacy in Japan, though its internal organs are highly toxic.

“I think that red meat … will be considered far too dangerous for the possible nutritional value it provides,” Watson said. “Especially in the US, Europe, and the more advanced capitalist system of most East Asian major cities. All it’s going to take is some more outbreaks of mad cow—which is inevitable—or other [diseases].”

The problem is that the industrialization of meat production has ransacked biodiversity, making livestock far more susceptible to disease and various other kinds of problems than ever.

Watson is focusing on hog production. “Every farmer I ever knew, including all my relatives, until about 30 years ago would raise their own hogs and take them to market. The diversity was wildly expansive,” he said. “The breeding could not really be controlled and there was every conceivable variety of hog. The idea that you could have one strain that could be wiped out would be impossible under those kinds of conditions. Now you have factories essentially for the production of pork flesh. Companies provide everything from the semen to the final slaughtering. … It is as close to cloning as is possible to find anywhere in the world.

“Increasingly [hog production] is being done inside … aircraft-hangar-like huge production centers out in the middle of cornfields. The pigs never touch the ground and it seems like something out of 1984,” he said. “The result is [the pigs] are amazingly susceptible to disease. People who work there have to go around almost in moon suits to protect themselves because the air is bad but more importantly to protect the pigs [from] human flu or colds.”

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“Health is priceless,” the old saying goes. “If you don’t have your health, what do you have?” We are willing to do a lot for better health. We spend money on doctors, give up our favorite foods, devote hours to the gym, and seek out the latest medical advances, all in the name of better health.

The importance of health is uncontroversial. But resources are limited, and so we need a way to prioritize. Suppose that doctors invent a wonderful new surgery that will save the lives of some heart attack victims and improve quality of life for others—but the operation costs $10,000. Should we as a society pay for it, for example, by adding it to services paid for by Medicare or private insurance policies? Improving the health of cardiovascular disease sufferers is valuable, but money spent on heart attacks cannot be spent caring for low-birth-weight infants, buying additional textbooks, or cleaning up the environment. How are we to know if heart attack care is worth more than those other uses?

Currently, we do not make these decisions in any systematic way. All medical treatments that improve health are approved for use, generally at the doctor’s discretion. As a result, we worry that we spend too much on medical care. In the United Kingdom and Canada, by contrast, limits are placed on what can be done. The government determines how many surgical facilities are available, and doctors can only operate on so many patients. Those judged the highest priority receive operations. Is this type of system better? Valuing health is an integral part of assessing this answer.

Valuing health is among the most difficult of all topics to discuss in polite company. It involves ethical, legal, religious, political, and economic values. There is no way to do it that does not give us at least some discomfort. But we must confront it if we are to make these basic decisions.

Start with the central question: Whose value of health are we considering? Usually, we think about “what would I want if I got sick.” Differences by income are immediately apparent. Rich people are willing and able to pay more for a life-saving medical treatment than the poor. Should we use the value for the rich or the value for the poor (or perhaps a higher value for the rich than the poor)? But this personalized fashion is not right. The health advances we are valuing are not treatments for imminent injury, but rather treatments for potential injuries. How much is it worth now to get to live longer if one has a heart attack? How much is it worth to save a low-birth-weight baby, should one be born in the family? We don’t know exactly what we will need; we only know that some will need it.

The girl who came to be known as Phillis Wheatley came to town on July 11, 1761, on board a schooner, the Phillis, owned by Timothy Finch and captained by Peter Gwinn. The ship had recently returned from gathering slaves in Senegal, Sierra Leone, and the Isles de Los, off the coast of Guinea. Among its cargo was “a slender, frail female child,” a Wheatley relative would write, “supposed to have been about seven years old, at this time, from the circumstances of shedding her front teeth.” It’s a fair guess that she would have been a native Wolof speaker from the Senegambian coast. Mrs. Susanna Wheatley, wife of the prosperous tailor and merchant, John Wheatley, in response to advertisements in the Boston Evening Post and the Boston Gazette and Country Journal in July and
For reasons never explained, Mary, appa-
teenaged twins, Nathaniel and Mary, who
schools and the three vocational writing
enrolled in the city's two grammar or Latin
Robinson continues, “could be counted
death in 1784, “no black children,”
1,000 of whom were black. Of this black
Schooner that had brought her from
ironically enough, after the name of the
Wheatley named the child “Phillis,”
price as less than ten pounds. Susanna
William Robinson, estimates her purchase
front door. Wheatley’s loving biographer,
1770 took place down the street from her
market located on the corner of King
Rumors Act of 1765 and the Boston Massacre
took place down the street from her
front door. Wheatley’s loving biographer,
William Robinson, estimates her purchase
price as less than ten pounds. Susanna
Wheatley named the child “Phillis,”
ironically enough, after the name of the
schooner that had brought her from
August, went to the schooner to purchase a
house servant. Mrs. Wheatley acquired the
child at the wharf on Beach Street “for a
trifle,” one of her descendants tells us, “as
the captain had fears of her dropping off
his hands, without emolument, by death.”
The child was “naked,” covered only by “a
quantity of dirty carpet about her like a
fillibeg.”
The two boarded “the chaise of her
mistress” and returned to the Wheatley
mansion located on the corner of King
Street and Mackerel Lane (today’s State
and Kilby Streets), just a few blocks from
the Old State House. Both the Stamp Act
riots of 1765 and the Boston Massacre of
1770 took place down the street from her
front door. Wheatley’s loving biographer,
William Robinson, estimates her purchase
price as less than ten pounds. Susanna
Wheatley named the child “Phillis,”
ironically enough, after the name of the
schooner that had brought her from Africa.
According to Robinson, Phillis’s
Boston consisted of 15,520 people in 1765,
1,000 of whom were black. Of this black
population only 18, as of 1762, were free.
Between Phillis’s arrival in 1761 and her
death in 1784, “no black children,”
Robinson continues, “could be counted
among the more than 800 young scholars
enrolled in the city’s two grammar or Latin
schools and the three vocational writing
schools.”
John and Susanna Wheatley had
teenaged twins, Nathaniel and Mary, who
were living at home when Phillis arrived.
For reasons never explained, Mary, ap-
least ten times in Boston newspapers alone.”
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This engraving of Phillis Wheatley appeared in the frontispiece to her 1773
collection, Poems on Various Subjects.
THE BRAVE NEW WORLD

PROTECTING YOURSELF

ON THE NEW FRONTIER OF CYBER-CRIME

BY CHARLES COE

It’s a quiet Sunday evening, and you’re sitting at the kitchen table with a cup of tea, indulging in one of your favorite pastimes: paying the monthly bills. But when you open one envelope in particular, you get a nasty jolt; the balance due looks outrageous. So you take a look at the list of charges. An $800 car stereo? You never bought that. And three nights at the Phoenix Hilton? You’ve never even been to Phoenix. Your initial confusion is quickly replaced by a sense of horror as you realize that something is very, very wrong.

You’ve just become a victim of identity theft. Unfortunately, it’s not an exclusive club. The Federal Trade Commission estimates that in the last year, 10 million Americans have had personal information, such as social security, bank account or credit card numbers stolen. But you can fight back. In *The Identity Theft Protection Guide* (St. Martin’s Press), information technology specialist Amanda Welsh (PhD ’91, linguistics) provides an overview of the problem and offers a host of concrete steps that consumers can take to protect themselves.

Welsh recently discussed some of the issues she raises in her new book.

What’s the difference between identity theft and someone just nabbing your credit card number and ringing up a bunch of charges?

AW: Actually, those are both defined as identity theft; it’s just a matter of degree. In both cases you’ve been victimized by a crook.

Identity theft is such a personal crime, almost like somebody breaking into your home and stealing your stereo.

AW: It’s very much like that. And in a way, it’s even worse. When someone steals your stereo, your stereo’s gone and that’s pretty much the end of it. When somebody steals your identity, you don’t know how bad it can get or how far it will spread. And the fact that someone has taken, and is using, very personal and private information about you can make you feel terribly violated.

What’s one of the more serious cases you can recall?

AW: There was a retired Army captain whose identity was used to pile up over a quarter-million dollars in debt. The thief bought two trucks, a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, a time-share in Hilton Head, and repeatedly got cash advances. The captain was still trying to straighten out the mess more than two years after the theft, which occurred over a period of four months.

Can you give a profile of the typical identity thief?

AW: There’s no such thing, really; it’s all over the map. In almost half the cases, the victim never finds out who committed the crime or how their information was compromised. But in a fair number of instances—almost 15 percent—the culprit turned out to be a family member or relative. One study coming out soon suggests that 70 percent of identity theft is committed by in-house employees who have handy access to information about clients or customers.

You mention in your book that Internet scams wind up costing consumers a tremendous amount of money.

AW: Absolutely. And scammers’ strategies are changing very quickly. For example, “phishing” was barely on the radar a year ago but now it’s reached epidemic proportions.

Could you explain that term?

AW: Someone who’s phishing sends you—along with countless other potential victims—an e-mail from a supposedly legitimate company claiming that there’s a problem with your account. You’re instructed to click on the enclosed link and verify your identity so you can avoid an interruption of service. That link takes you to a fake Website where they then steal the personal information they ask you to input, such as your bank account information and site password.

That’s pretty diabolical. How can consumers protect themselves from that kind of fraud?

AW: Don’t ever click on a link you get in an e-mail. For example, if eBay sends you something and you’re concerned about whether it’s legitimate, close your mail, open your Internet browser, and go directly to the eBay site either by using a bookmark or typing in the URL. Then log on to check your account status.

Besides practicing good Internet hygiene, how can consumers protect themselves from identity theft?

AW: Always read your bills and financial statements. I’m constantly amazed by people who tell me that they don’t find time
to get around to that. You’re protected by law against unauthorized charges and electronic fund transfers made in your name, but only if you notify the bank or creditor in a timely fashion. If you wait months and months before you discover a problem, then it’s your problem. You should also check your credit report at least once a year; twice is better. The credit report’s a centralized summary of the bulk of the information collected on you as a consumer that you need to stay on top of.

You write that there are sometimes errors and inconsistencies in credit reports. AW: Absolutely. I can almost guarantee that you have a mistake in one of your credit reports.

That’s not terribly comforting. AW: No, it’s not. But a credit report’s still an extremely useful consumer tool. If there’s been some kind of fraudulent use of your personal information, that’s usually the first place it’ll show up.

Another good strategy is to compile an “emergency identity kit” with a photocopy of what’s in your wallet, including both sides of your credit and charge cards, copies of old bills, passports, and anything else that identifies you. Keep it all in a central location so that if [one of the originals] goes missing, you’ll know exactly whom to call to head off any problems.

Those are all things people can do pretty quickly and easily. AW: Yes. And the key word is quickly. If a problem’s discovered in a timely fashion there’s a very good chance you can resolve it without losing much time or money.

Do you think the companies that use these information technologies are taking appropriate steps to protect consumers? AW: There’s been quite a bit of progress on that front. The business community is getting much better about screening and educating their employees. They’re also establishing controls that restrict the ways information is collected, and limit the number of people who have access to that information. By and large, businesses want to be responsive to consumers. And they’re anxious to solve some of these problems because they bear a lot of the cost when fraud occurs.

Can you talk about your personal motivation for writing the book? AW: I worked in market research and spent a lot of time collecting and using information about why consumers acted in particular ways. I didn’t work in profiling as such, but I was certainly familiar with the technology. And more and more, I started to wonder about what kind of information was out there about me.

So I went on a two-year hunt to dig up every electronic file on me that I could find. I was totally astonished—and frightened—by how much personal, detailed information about me was available to anyone who had access to certain tools and knew how to use them. I decided that if this much data was being collected on individuals, that was something the public needed to be aware of.

A lot of people have very mixed feelings about the explosion of information technology. All the access and convenience it provides also makes us extremely vulnerable in some ways. Do you think the benefits ultimately outweigh the disadvantages?

AW: That’s for each individual to decide. continued on page 8
And we can make wise decisions only when we’ve educated ourselves on the issues—just as we should read the small print in a contract before signing. We all have a responsibility to understand exactly what’s involved before we take advantage of services based on information technology. We need to look carefully at the ratio of risk to reward, and there’s no one-size-fits-all approach to that.

What new data collection tools do you see making an appearance in the next few years? Probably RFID—Radio Frequency Identification—is one we’ll be hearing a lot about soon. RFID uses small radio tags that can identify individual products, not merely classes of products as bar codes can. These tags can be read when placed in fairly close proximity to a reader and are being used for supply chain management as well as a variety of other more exotic uses, like tracking prison inmates and hospital patients. The tags use microchips that are about half the size of a grain of sand. Naturally, a lot of retailers are very excited by the possibilities and a lot of privacy advocates are very concerned.

But in your book you discuss the benefits of data collection technology, though most of what I’ve read on the subject emphasizes the dangers.

And, certainly, there are many dangers. But a lot of media coverage of this situation has been emotional and doesn’t view it as a risk/reward assessment. I wrote this book because I wanted to provide people with the tools and information to make those assessments for themselves. The government and the business community certainly have vital roles to play in helping to solve some of these problems that arise from information technology. But as individual consumers, we all have to bear the ultimate responsibility to protect ourselves.

Living in an information age is like driving a car. Driving a car is certainly more dangerous than sitting at home, but the benefits of getting swiftly from point A to point B can be great. And while taking commonsense precautions like staying on the right side of the road won’t guarantee your safety, they do make it far less likely that you’ll be injured. This book shows you where the yellow line in the middle of the road is, and gives you tips on how to avoid crossing into oncoming traffic.

Amanda Welsh can be reached at amanda@amandawelsh.com. A Website for the book is available at www.identitytheftprotectionguide.com.

Charles Coe is a freelance writer living in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
FOOD FUTURIST

A soybean farmer in Niantic, Illinois, shows how beans look after their husks are removed.

continued from page 3

Watson doesn’t think the hamburger-as-pufferfish dilemma will become a reality for at least another generation. But it will happen, he said, and not so much for cultural reasons as a simple “response to danger.”

Trying to understand the globalization of food has also led Watson to the study of the soybean, a crop culturally and literally rooted in the dual arenas of his scholarship, the American Midwest and East Asia. So, while Golden Arches East revisited is coming this fall, Watson expects a similar collection of essays to be published next year under the title The Global Soybean.

Like McDonald’s, American farmers want to sell their products to East Asian consumers. But concerns about bioengineering (about 90 percent of America’s soybeans are genetically modified) and cultural imperialism (East Asia has its own soybeans to cultivate) are having an impact.

“The Japanese are very wary of genetically modified foods because they’ve had a lot of food scares … in the last decade or more …”

Midwest for about 40 years, Watson said, and they became inspired to document the changing rural culture.

“I became the unofficial photographer of the Oxford Township Volunteer Fire Department in Henry County,” Watson said. “What we did was go around and burn down empty farmhouses so the fire department could practice.” The resultant vacant lot would then be bulldozed and turned into soybean- or cornfields.

“In the past if you looked at what would be called a ‘section’ there would be five or six farms with trees, barns, cows, and chickens,” he continued. “Now all the little farmhouses are gone. American farms are being amalgamated, incorporated into larger and larger sections. It’s the industrialization of agriculture reaching its end form. Farm culture is pretty well gone. So we’re interested in tracking this development.”

Again Watson brings the distanced eye of the anthropologist, even to this homegrown project. “One has to be careful of romanticizing the family farm,” he said. “A lot of people who write and talk about the family farm are urbanites looking for a past that never existed. I’m sorry. I grew up in the Eisenhower farm era, and it was tough!”

“The Japanese are very wary of genetically modified foods because they’ve had a lot of food scares … in the last decade or more …”

On His Plate
Watson has several other projects in the scholarly pipeline, including a 20-year study of kosher restrictions on diet in contemporary Jewish communities, an idea that emerged from teaching his very popular course “Food and Culture.”

Another of Watson’s projects is taking him back to his roots. During a recent sabbatical, he and his wife Rubie Watson, a senior lecturer in anthropology at Harvard and the former director of the Peabody Museum, spent some months in rural Illinois. Neither had spent significant time in the

alumni notes

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significant contributions to the lives of women through her service, teaching, and research. She retired in June 2004 as a professor of clinical psychology.

Statistics
Thomas R. Belin, PhD ’91, was named a fellow of the American Statistical Association in August. He is associate professor of biostatistics at the University of California at Los Angeles. Belin was honored “for development and dissemination of methods for handling incomplete data; for contributions in applied biostatistics, census coverage evaluation, record linkage, and mental health research” and for service to the profession.

Study of Religion
Carl W. Ernst, PhD ’81, received the first Bashrahil Prize for Outstanding Cultural Achievement in the Humanities in July for his book Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World (University of North Carolina Press, 2003). The book is intended to clarify the diversity of and debate within the Islamic tradition. The prize carries a $30,000 cash award and was established this year in Egypt by the board of trustees of the Sayyid Muhammad Salah Bashrahil Prize for Outstanding Cultural Achievement. Ernst is the Zachary Smith Distinguished Term Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Lindsey Harlan, MTS ’80, PhD ’87, was given the 2004 Nancy Batson Nisbet Rash Faculty Research Award “for excellence in academic research.” The award was given this September by Connecticut College, where Harlan is a professor of religious studies. Her primary research focus is religion in South Asia, especially India. She has conducted research and published on South Asian diaspora in the US and Trinidad and is currently writing a book with the tentative title of Lasting Impressions: Hero Cults in India. Her book The Goddesses’ Henchmen: Reflections on Gender in Indian Hero Worship was published in 2003 with Oxford University Press.

To Share Your News
Please submit Alumni Notes to: Colloquy, Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Byerly Hall 300, 8 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138-3654; or e-mail your news to gsaa@fas.harvard.edu. Please include your telephone number or e-mail address. Alumni Notes are subject to editing for length and clarity.
had been the chaplain of an English philanthropist, Selina Hastings, the countess of Huntingdon. Wheatley shrewdly apostrophized the countess in the Whitefield elegy, and sent a letter of condolence with the poem enclosed. With the poem’s subsequent publication in London in 1771, Wheatley suddenly had a wide readership on both sides of the Atlantic. It made her the Toni Morrison of her time.

**The Chase Begins**

By Owen Gingerich

Owen Gingerich is the Research Professor of Astronomy and of the History of Science Emeritus.

For years Copernicus had been writing a treatise on his Sun-centered cosmology, as already promised long before in his *Commentariolus*, and by then he had a thick manuscript. But he had never had a disciple, someone to whom he could introduce the intricacies of his astronomy. So [he and Georg Joachim Rheticus] began to discuss his hypotheses, as they were called then, really a term closer in meaning to our modern word devices. Copernicus must have told Rheticus about both levels of his hypotheses—the big one being his cosmological arrangement that put the Sun near the middle of a system of planets (including the Earth) wheeling around it, and the secondary, more technical, batch of hypotheses that accounted for the details of planetary motion. As the two men sat together discussing the details of the heliocentric motion. As the two men sat together—

It required a printer with an international outreach to make the publication financially viable. Even Wittenberg, with its busy text-book publishers, was hardly the place for such an enterprise. Maybe this is why Rheticus brought along the three bound volumes as a gift for Copernicus. The three of the five titles included therein had been printed by Petreius.4 They gave visible evidence that the Nuremberg printer could handle Copernicus’s magnum opus. Whose idea was this? Maybe Johann Schön er in Nuremberg had suggested that such a display could persuade Copernicus to send his manuscript back to Germany, or it might have been Petreius himself. Schön er was well connected with the Petreius shop, dusting off old manuscripts from the Nuremberg archives or producing new works of his own and sending one to press every year or so.

But Copernicus was reluctant to release his book to a printer. Scholars have deduced that he wanted time to incorporate the trigonometric methods of Regiomontanus’s *Triangles*, one of the gift books from Rheticus, into the mathematical section of his treatise. Rheticus had brought along from Schön er some observations of Mercury. And in making changes to some of the parameters in the planetary theory, he had not had time to bring the tables into full agreement with the revised numbers.5 The book was still filled with inconsistencies not as yet ironed out. And Copernicus feared it would just be an object of scorn and derision, or would become the book nobody read.

4 The three bound volumes ... contained five titles.

5 Proclus’s *Greek Almagest* (Basel, 1538) was bound alone. Wicelio’s *Greek Alum* (Petreius, 1535) was bound with Apollonius’s *Instrumentum proeni mobile* (Petreius, 1534). The Greek edition of Euclid’s *Elements* (Basel, 1533) was bound with Regiomontanus’s *De triangulis* (Petreius, 1533). Since Copernicus’s original manuscript survives, which is most unusual for a book printed in the Renaissance, it is possible to see that this is the case.

§ In the preface to his book, Copernicus expressed his reluctance to publish, saying he feared he would be “hisped off the stage” and: “The scorn that I had to fear on account of the newness and absurdity of my opinion almost drove me to abandon a work already undertaken.”

—Paula Szocik, director of alumni relations
Called peripheral neuropathy—or, pain in the extremities—it’s a potential consequence of certain chronic diseases, including diabetes, shingles, and AIDS. Until recently, nothing could relieve the pain of this condition. But a new drug, Lyrica (pregabalin), is now being used in Europe to treat this problem, and as an add-on therapy for epilepsy. Approval of Lyrica for use in the United States is expected soon.

Lyrica also shows promise as a treatment for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). In clinical trials, it appeared to be more effective—and to have fewer side effects—than Xanax or Effexor, currently the standard treatments for GAD. Notably, it is neither addictive (as is Xanax) nor a cause of sexual dysfunction (as is Effexor).

The inventor of this multi-talented drug is Richard B. Silverman, who received his PhD in organic chemistry from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in 1974. Silverman, a mild-mannered but enthusiastic man whose main interests outside work are his family and playing golf, became fascinated with chemistry at age 8. His brother, 13 at the time, had just received a chemistry set and decided for his first experiment to produce an invisible flame. The two ran up to their bedroom to conduct the experiment, and Silverman said, the flame really was invisible until it set the curtains ablaze. “Mom came into the room and hit the roof,” he said. “We put out the fire.” And the chemistry set was banned.

The fruit forbidden, Silverman—now a professor in both the Departments of Chemistry and of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Cell Biology at Northwestern University—dreamed of chemistry until his teen years, when his parents relented and bought him his own chemistry set. Silverman delighted in orchestrating transformations of color and texture that made him want to understand it all. In high school, he says, “I was probably the only kid in the class trying to learn chemistry.”

After majoring in chemistry in college, Silverman came to GSAS hoping to develop new approaches to synthesizing organic compounds, but the Vietnam War intervened. Silverman was drafted after his first term and was sent to work in a medicinal chemistry lab at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, the nation’s oldest school of public health and preventive medicine. When he returned to Harvard, faculty members David Dolphin and Jeremy Knowles helped guide the young chemist’s interests towards enzymes and their mechanisms.

As a faculty member at Northwestern, where he began teaching in 1976, Silverman soon applied the principles of organic chemistry to the designing of enzyme inhibitors, including the compound that would become Lyrica, for use as therapeutic agents.

In the case of Lyrica, Silverman set out to create an anticonvulsant agent as a treatment for epilepsy. It worked quite well, though not in the way Silverman had anticipated. One hypothesis about epilepsy’s cause is that an imbalance exists between neurotransmitters that excite and those that inhibit nerve cells. Silverman thought that his new compound would right the imbalance by targeting the inhibitory neurotransmitters—increasing their production and blocking their breakdown—so they would counterbalance the nerve-exciting neurotransmitters. It was later discovered that the drug actually works by targeting the nerve-exciting neurotransmitters, specifically by interfering with their release. The serendipity of his success amuses Silverman.

There was also serendipity in the discovery of some of Lyrica’s other medical applications. Neurontin, an epilepsy drug that reached the market in the 1990s, is structurally related to Lyrica. “People who were taking Neurontin for epilepsy who also suffered from neuropathic pain found that the drug mitigated the pain, and [they] started to put notices on the Internet,” says Silverman. “Physicians found out, and it really took off.” Because of the two drugs’ similarity, Lyrica was tested—successfully—for its effectiveness in this regard.

Since Northwestern University holds the patent, Lyrica (which is licensed to Pfizer, Inc.) will provide a substantial boost to the university’s bottom line. Although the fruits of his labors on Lyrica are about to burst forth, Silverman’s mind is elsewhere. The compound that became Lyrica was licensed more than 10 years ago, and he’s now hard at work on new projects.

One new compound shows powerful anti-addictive properties in animal studies. “You can get animals addicted to cocaine, and if you give them this compound, they lose their craving for that abusive substance.”

Another might reduce the brain damage caused by neurodegenerative diseases, such as stroke and Parkinson’s disease. Some of that damage is caused by the neurons’ overproduction of nitric oxide, but Silverman’s compound inhibits the enzyme that makes nitric oxide.

In this case, the challenge was to avoid inhibiting the production of nitric oxide in the blood vessels, where it helps control blood pressure. The enzymes that synthesize nitric oxide in the neurons and blood vessels, respectively, differ ever so slightly, and Silverman has used his understanding of that difference to design inhibitors that block the neuronal form without touching the enzyme in the blood vessels.

Silverman is also working on novel anti-tumor compounds. Catalyzed by an intellectual fervor refined at Harvard, Silverman channeled his childhood enthusiasm for chemistry into a life’s work of developing new drugs that can bring relief to countless people struggling with pain and epilepsy.

David Holzman writes from Lexington, Massachusetts, about science, medicine, and automobiles.
US Poetry Landmarks Include Harvard

In August, the Academy of American Poets announced that it had selected 31 sites throughout the United States as National Poetry Landmarks, including the Woodberry Poetry Room in Harvard’s Lamont Library. The National Poetry landmarks were chosen after a public nomination process. Among the other sites on the list are the birthplaces of poets Carl Sandburg (Galesburg, Ill.), Emily Dickinson (Amherst, Mass.), and Langston Hughes (Lawrence, Kan.); the Marianne Moore Collection at the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, and places of “poetic inspiration” such as the Brooklyn Bridge. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s Cambridge home and the Grolier Bookshop, a mainstay of Harvard Square bookshops and the American literary community, were also named to the academy’s list. The complete roster of National Poetry Landmarks is available at www.poets.org/academy/news/pr040805.cfm.

McCann Receives Manhae Grand Prize

David McCann, the Korea Foundation Professor of Korean Literature, has been named a recipient of the Manhae Grand Prize in the category of academic studies, it was announced in May 2004. Other prize recipients include Nelson Mandela, who will be awarded the Manhae Peace Prize. The Manhae Grand Prize is one of the most prestigious prizes in Korea; previous Prize recipients include former Korean President Kim Dae-jung, who also received the Nobel Peace Prize. The Prize was established to honor Han Yong-woon, a Buddhist monk and poet who wrote under the pen name Manhae and devoted most of his life to the independence of his homeland.

Strominger Receives ASBMB-Merck Award

Jack L. Strominger, the Higgins Professor of Biochemistry, is the recipient of the 2004 American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB)-Merck Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to research in biochemistry and molecular biology. According to an ASBMB statement, Strominger has made contributions in two distinct fields involving molecular recognition in immunity and infection: the chemical structure of bacterial cell walls and the ways in which bacterial enzymes recognize penicillin. For example, he identified some 30 enzymes that are necessary for the synthesis of bacterial cell walls. “As a result of the emergence of drug-resistant bacteria,” the ASBMB noted, “many of these are now under investigation as possible targets for new chemotherapeutic agents.” Most recently, Strominger has focused on the study of human autoimmune diseases, in particular, multiple sclerosis.
Biologist Wins Lasker Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award

Matthew Meselson, the Thomas Dudley Cabot Professor of the Natural Sciences, won the 2004 Albert Lasker Award for Special Achievement in Medical Science in September, the New York Times reported. Meselson was honored for work in two research areas: medical science, and the eradication of chemical and biological weapons. In his career, Meselson developed a technique to distinguish the densities of DNA strands, which has been used for decades to answer questions in molecular biology. Meselson also predicted the process by which cells “correct mistakes” in their DNA. His recent research has focused on how sexual reproduction has contributed to evolution; his theory is that asexual organisms are doomed to extinction. The Lasker Awards have been given out since 1948 to honor scientists, physicians, and public servants working to prevent, treat, and cure disease. The awards have come to be known as “America’s Nobels” because so many Lasker Award-winners have gone on to receive the Nobel Prize.

GSAS Alumni Gift Supports Open Collections Program

The Harvard Gazette reported in July 2004 that GSAS history alumni Lisbet Raising (PhD ’93) and Peter Baldwin (PhD ’86) have given $5 million to support the University Library’s Open Collections Program. This gift enables Harvard to make research materials from libraries across the University freely available over the Internet. Harvard established the Open Collections Program in 2002 to provide access to digitized resources selected from Harvard’s library and museum collections. Said the Gazette: “Its first subject-based resource, ‘Women Working, 1870-1930,’ will provide access to digitized resources selected from Harvard’s library and museum collections on women’s roles in the US economy between the Civil War and the Great Depression.” “Women Working” can be viewed online at http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww. Raising is a historian, and Baldwin is a professor of history at University of California at Los Angeles. For more information about Harvard’s libraries, visit http://lib.harvard.edu.

New Planet, Small Telescopes

In August, scientists at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics (CfA) and colleagues from other research institutes announced the discovery of a new planet that circles another star and is about the size of Jupiter. Significantly, they reported that the discovery had been made using a network of four-inch telescopes, comparable to those available in department stores. The planet—called TrES-1 in honor of being the first planet found by the Trans-Atlantic Exoplanet Survey—is located about 500 light-years from Earth, according to the astronomers. TrES-1 is the first extrasolar planet discovery made by a dedicated survey of many thousands of stars and using relatively modest equipment, said a CfA statement. The survey scientists identified 16 candidate planets using the small telescopes, and large observatories pinned down the findings. The small telescopes were built with “off-the-shelf parts and complex computer analysis.” According to the CfA statement, “the search process locates planets whose atmospheres can be probed with the Hubble Space Telescope, paving the way for a greater understanding of giant worlds around other stars.” According to the astronomers, TrES-1 is unlikely to support life. It’s much nearer to its star than Mercury is to the Sun, and its surface temperature is probably about 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit. Nonetheless, some researchers believe that the moons of planets like TrES-1 are logical places for life to exist. No moons have ever been detected beyond our solar system. But if Hubble identified signs of water in TrES-1, that finding would give added impetus to the search for a moon or moons. Headquartered in Cambridge, Mass., CfA is a joint collaboration between the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and the Harvard College Observatory.

—compiled by Susan Lumenello
THE IRAQ WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES
Thoughts of Nobel Peace Laureates and Eminent Scholars
Edited by Irwin Abrams, PhD ’38, history, and Wang Gungwu

There are few topics more timely and more appropriate for this selected group to comment on. Contributors include Peace Prize-winners the Dalai Lama, on the importance of non-violence; F.W. de Klerk, former president of South Africa, on American leadership; and Bernard Lown, co-founder of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, on changes in nuclear policy. Contributing scholars include Harvard’s Lisa Martin, professor of government, who takes up the situation of multilateral organizations in the post-war era.

Abrams is the leading authority on the history of the Nobel Peace Prize. He has edited three volumes of Peace Prize lectures and wrote The Nobel Peace Prize and the Laureates: An Illustrated Biographical History, 1901–1987 (1988). He is the Distinguished University Professor Emeritus at Antioch University. Gungwu is Emeritus Professor of the Australian National University and director of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore.

THE WORD IN THE WORLD
Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789–1880
By Candy Gunther Brown, AB ’92, PhD ’00, history of American civilization

Participation in a “textual community” was essential to the mission of early American evangelical Christians. Here the author recounts how a publishing industry grew out of the idea that spreading the Word on paper was as useful to the cause as doing so from a pulpit. In addition to Bibles, evangelicals also published works such as the 19th-century bestseller Ben-Hur. Brown is assistant professor of American studies at St. Louis University.

AIR POWER
The Men, Machines, and Ideas that Revolutionized War, from Kitty Hawk to Gulf War II
By Stephen Budiansky, SM ’79, applied mathematics

The airplane’s role in modern warfare is significant. But Budiansky describes how generals and politicians too often have viewed aerial combat as immune from the brutalities of war “on the ground”—and how they have repeatedly discounted its technological limitations. Budiansky is also the author of Battle of Wits: The Complete Story of Codebreaking in World War II (2000), and writes for The Atlantic Monthly, New York Times, and Washington Post, among other publications.

AFTER BROWN
The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation
By Charles T. Clotfelter, PhD ’74, economics

In its 50th-anniversary year, Brown v. Board of Education has inspired books, academic conferences, and questions about school desegregation then and now. Clotfelter explores the decision’s effect on interracial contact in schools, presenting new evidence showing that, while Southern schools have integrated, segregation still exists elsewhere in the United States. In fact, writes Clotfelter, educational policy trends have led some education leaders to stress “school quality over desegregation.” The author is the Z. Smith Reynolds Professor of Public Policy Studies and professor of economics and law at Duke University. His books include Buying the Best: Cost Escalation in Elite Higher Education (1996).
ORDINARY ENCHANTMENTS
Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative

By Wendy B. Faris, PhD ’75, comparative literature

Magical realism is a literary style located, according to the author, “at the intersection of modernism and postmodernism,” and is one of the strongest trends to emerge in the literary world in the 20th century. Here, Faris offers an overview of the style's elements and a liberal embrace of its practitioners—including Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, Salman Rushdie, Maxine Hong Kingston, and even Henry James. Faris also explains the political implications of magical realism as an approach to postcolonial literature and an alternative to the dominant mode of Western literary realism. Faris is coeditor of Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community (1995) and author of Labyrinths of Language: Symbolic Landscape and Narrative Design in Modern Fiction (both 1988).

CHINA MADE
Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation

By Karl Gerth, PhD ’00, history

China’s struggle to achieve cohesion as a nation has been well documented. A significant and fascinating feature of that struggle is China’s effort during the last century to nationalize consumer culture. Clothing, in particular, was part of the National Products Movement at the heart of China’s “anti-imperialist” boycott. Gerth explains the thinking behind the movement, its distinct messages to male and female consumers, and the continuing relevance of “nationalistic consumerism” today. The author is assistant professor of history at the University of South Carolina.

NARRATIVE FORM
Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative

By Suzanne Keen, PhD ’90, English and American literature and language

This is a small but instructive book for creative writing teachers, fiction writers, and critical readers. It categorizes varied approaches to story telling—from the traditional and postmodern to the meta-narrative—and clarifies critical jargon and relevant literary theories. The author provides abundant literary examples. Keen is a professor of English at Washington and Lee University. Her previous book was Romances of the Archive in Contemporary British Fiction (2001).

A VERY DANGEROUS WOMAN
Martha Wright and Women’s Rights

By James D. Livingston, PhD ’56, applied sciences, and Sherry H. Penney

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucretia Mott are better known figures in the 19th-century women’s rights and abolition movements. But Martha Wright, Mott’s younger sister, was a major leader, serving as president of the Woman Suffrage Association and working with her friend Harriet Tubman in the Underground Railroad. The story of Wright’s life, complete with excerpts from numerous letters, sheds light on those days of political struggle and one woman’s personal drama. Livingston, a direct descendant of Martha Wright, is a senior lecturer in MIT’s Department of Materials Science and Engineering. His wife, Penney, is the Sherry H. Penney Professor of Leadership in the University of Massachusetts at Boston’s College of Management.

BRINGING THE EMPIRE HOME
Race, Class, and Gender in Britain and Colonial South Africa

By Zine Magubane, PhD ’97, sociology

This interesting book seeks to explain the “poetry” of economics, specifically concerning the South African slave trade of the 19th century. Magubane writes that “images of blackness—of black bodies, black labor, black leisure, and black suffering” became metaphors to help European citizens understand the concept of a burgeoning international capital- ism. What’s important about this, Magubane contends, is what such figurative language reveals about “the intentions of the individuals who deploy it”—namely, that economic subjugation can be explained away in terms of social subjugation. The author is an associate professor of sociology and African studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is also coeditor of the book Hear Our Voices: Race, Gender, and Black South African Women in the Academy (2004) and editor of Postmodernism, Postcoloniality, and African Studies (2003).

ROTARY
Poems

By Christina Pugh, PhD ’98, comparative literature

This collection presents what poet (and GSAS alumna) Gail Mazur called “a tough-minded delicacy.” Pugh is a visiting assistant professor of English at Northwestern University. She is the recipient of the Grolier Poetry Prize, a Ruth Lilly Poetry Fellowship, and several other honors; her poems have appeared in The Atlantic Monthly, Ploughshares, and other publications.

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THE COLUMBIA COMPANION TO AMERICAN HISTORY ON FILM
How the Movies Have Portrayed the American Past

Edited by Peter C. Rollins, AB ’63, PhD ’72, history of American civilization

The perfect book for the cinephile with a historian’s bent. This compendium is organized into such categories as wars; notable people, including American presidents, Christopher Columbus, and Babe Ruth; demographic groups, such as women, children, and races; “institutions and movements,” such as the family, football, and school; and myths and heroes, such as the detective and the self-made man. The book shows which subjects Hollywood has focused on over the decades—and those it has chosen to ignore. Rollins is the Regents Professor of English and American film studies at Oklahoma State University and has published widely on film and history. He is editor-in-chief of the journal Film and History.

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND THE SOCIAL ACCELERATION OF TIME

By William E. Scheuerman, PhD ’93, government

Changes in technology (communications, in particular), social patterns, and the “tempo of everyday life” are continually compressed. This situation, writes Scheuerman, is creating anti-democratic realities as seen, for example, in the proliferation of executive decision-making at the expense of legislative deliberation and in the abandonment of “the rule of law” by multinational corporations. Since the world is unlikely to slow down, Scheuerman contends, institutions must adapt in a way that embraces democratic values. Scheuerman is professor of political science at the University of Minnesota and author of Carl Schmitt: The End of Law (1999), among other books.

THE GREAT WALL OF CONFINEMENT
The Chinese Prison Camp Through Contemporary Fiction and Reportage

By Philip F. Williams and Yenna Wu, PhD ’86, East Asian languages and civilizations

China’s prison camp network has endured for more than 2,000 years. This book brings to light the life of those on the inside, including excerpts of historical and contemporary memoirs, as well as insights into the culture and unique language of what is known as the laogai system. Wu is professor of Chinese and director of the Asian Languages and Civilizations Program at the University of California at Riverside and author of Ameliorative Satire and the 17th-century Chinese Novel (1999), among other books; coauthor Williams is professor of Chinese at Arizona State University.

AN INTRODUCTION TO MILL’S UTILITARIAN ETHICS

By Henry R. West, PhD ’65, philosophy

Mill’s theory of Utilitarianism—that the “production of happiness and reduction of unhappiness” should guide our ethical, moral, and law-making standards—has long been both controversial and misunderstood, West contends. In accessible language, he discusses the various aspects of Mill’s theory and their attending controversies (for example, why Mill argued that some pleasures are superior to others). The author is a professor of philosophy at Macalester College.
One of the most important components of the graduate experience comes at the end: After years of study and research, students craft their ideas into a manuscript that becomes their dissertation. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences continues to affirm the crucial importance of this stage, with the ultimate goal of providing dissertation completion fellowships to all eligible students. These awards not only help graduate students to complete their degrees in a timely fashion but also aid GSAS in recruiting the best students to its programs.

Alumni contributions to the Graduate School Fund furnish Graduate Society Dissertation Fellowships to a lucky few each year. Jeremiah James is one such recipient. Originally from Nashville, James attended St. John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland, where the history of science piqued his interest. After graduation, he decided to enroll at Harvard to study with Peter Galison (AB ’77, PhD ’83, history of science), a leading scholar in the history of the physical sciences, in one of the best history of science departments in the country.

“I’m studying the history of modern chemistry and in particular the early days of the work of Linus Pauling and his group at Caltech,” James explains. “One of the immediate things the fellowship did was to give me the freedom to travel if it was necessary.” Even though James had completed the bulk of his research, he took advantage of the opportunity to review documents at the Rockefeller Archives in Sleepy Hollow, New York; at the California Institute of Technology; and at the Pauling Archives in Oregon—trips he could not have made if he had a teaching or work schedule to maintain. “The flexibility to travel was an enormous boon.”

He also concentrated solely on writing, without needing to continue teaching in order to make ends meet. “It’s not easy to try to write and teach at the same time,” James says. “Even though you have your research done and are able to make some headway, it’s very difficult to divide your attention between teaching and completing the writing and polishing of the dissertation.” Most students realize they need to take at least a semester off to finish and often face financial hardship while they do. “There’s a real shift in perspective in having a year just to finish the dissertation, without the distraction of other responsibilities. I know very few people who have been able to finish without taking time off.”

James notes that the time is also necessary because the dissertation helps position students for the future. “You need to fine-tune the work and prepare for the job market,” he says. “Focusing solely on the dissertation increases the quality of the finished product and helps prepare it for future publication.”

The University recently channeled funds to GSAS that will help to enhance financial aid for graduate students. This news demonstrates a Harvard-wide commitment to this crucial aspect of graduate student work. However, these funds are not sufficient to provide each eligible student with a dissertation fellowship. That goal will require substantial additional financial support. It is necessary not just to attract the finest students but also to provide them with the time needed to complete their dissertation in a timely fashion after so many years of hard work.

James hopes to find an academic position at a liberal arts college with a good mix of teaching and research, and he knows that the benefits of this dissertation year will help him in the job search. “The aid of the fellowship continues beyond the actual graduate student career.”

History of science PhD candidate Jeremiah James is writing his dissertation on the work of Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling.
Upcoming Faculty Talks

For more information on the events noted below, please call 617-495-5591 or e-mail gsaa@fas.harvard.edu.

Wednesday, October 20, 2004
Chicago, IL
David Blackbourn, Coolidge Professor of History, will speak on “Have Germans Faced Up to Their History in the 20th Century?” Professor Blackbourn is currently completing the book, The Conquest of Nature: Water and the Making of the Modern German Landscape, which brings together environmental, social, cultural, and political history. His most recent publication is The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918 (1997, 2nd edition 2003).

Wednesday, October 27, 2004
Santa Barbara, CA
Avi Loeb, professor of astronomy, will speak on “The Past and Future Evolution of Our Universe.” His research focuses on black holes, stars, quasars, and the nature and formation of the universe, and he has published his research in scientific journals and book chapters.

Thursday, October 28, 2004
Seattle, WA
Gary Urton, Dumbarton Oaks Professor of Pre-Columbian Studies and chair of the anthropology department’s archaeology wing, will speak on “Numbers, Knots, and Mnemonics in the Inca Empire.” He is currently developing the Harvard Khipu Database Project, to aid in decoding the knotted strings that recorded quantitative and narrative information about the great Andean empire. Professor Urton’s most recent books are Inca Myths (2000) and Signs of the Inka Khipu: Binary Coding in the Andean Knotted-String Records (2003).

Monday, November 22, 2004
New York, NY
Robert Kirshner, Cloers Professor of Science, will speak on “The Extravagant Universe.” His research focuses on observational and theoretical cosmology and the early universe, extragalactic astronomy, instrumentation, astronomical detectors and telescopes, supernovae and supernova remnants. He is the author of The Extravagant Universe: Exploding Stars, Dark Energy, and the Accelerating Cosmos (2002).

Monday, December 6, 2004
Washington, DC
J. Richard Hackman, Cahners-Rabb Professor of Social and Organizational Psychology, will speak on “What It Takes to Connect the Dots: Individual vs. Team Approaches to Intelligence Analysis.” Professor Hackman conducts research on team dynamics, social influences on individual behavior, and leadership. His most recent book is Leading Teams: Setting the Stage for Great Performances (2002).

Monday, March 14, 2005
New York, NY
Alberto Alesina (PhD ’86, economics), Nathaniel Ropes Professor of Political Economy and chair of the Department of Economics, will speak on “The Welfare State in Europe and the US: Why Are They So Different?” His most recent book is Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference (2004, with Harvard’s Edward Glaeser) and his research interests include political economy, monetary and fiscal policy, and macroeconomics.