Alumni Weekend: 
Sights and Sounds

The 2009 Centennial 
Medals

Architecture Across 
the Disciplines

The Finish Line

Endings and new beginnings at Harvard’s 
358th Commencement
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences • Harvard University

2 Alumni Weekend 2009
Drawn by seminars both timely and intellectually nourishing, GSAS alumni returned to Cambridge in record numbers to learn, reminisce, and reconnect. The weekend also included the first-ever graduate reunion of Harvard’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

8 The 2009 Centennial Medals
Art historian Svetlana Alpers, historian David Brion Davis, economist and foreign affairs specialist Thomas Schelling, and astronomer Joseph Taylor are the winners of GSAS’s highest honor.

10 Commencement 2009
Celebrating GSAS’s newest alumni in words and images.

12 Building New Meaning
The PhD program in architecture spans faculties and disciplines, exploring our built environment from new angles.

14 Alumni Books
GSAS authors on why to err is human, the genetic testing dilemma, poetry as environmentalism, the origins of empathy, and financial management that makes sense in any economy.

17 On Development
Homer Hagedorn’s unwavering support of the Graduate School helps keep Harvard strong at the center.

On the cover: Charisse Crenshaw and Ben Lee, who earned PhDs in 2009, celebrate the end of the journey.
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The GSAA is the alumni association of Harvard University’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Governed by its council, the GSAA represents and advances the interests of alumni of the Graduate School by sponsoring alumni events and by publishing Colloquy four times each year.

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from the dean

Allan M. Brandt
Dean, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences; Amalie Moses Kass professor of the history of science, Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Job Talk

It is Commencement season as I write, and as always, I am filled with pride at the accomplishments of our graduates. This group of scholars — 519 PhD recipients and 403 master’s recipients — stands poised to join our larger body of GSAS alumni in making vital contributions to knowledge, to professions within and outside the academy, and to society.

But of course, we are sending these graduates into a world filled with economic challenges more worrisome than anything we have seen in generations. Tough job markets are nothing new in academics, but as the broader economy has shrunk, the academic job market has grown tighter still, as have hiring markets in most every other sector. This year was particularly rocky: With the economy falling just as the job market kicked off, many listed positions were quickly frozen. And as retirement accounts took alarming plumes, more senior faculty deferred retirement, creating fewer vacancies.

Harvard is fortunate, and probably unique, in the resources it can devote to helping students address these obstacles. This spring, the Office of Career Services — which routinely offers interview preparation, a dossier service, and CV critiques for graduate students — partnered with GSAS to host a series of programs designed to help our humanities and social sciences candidates. In the first workshop — “Strategies for Launching Your Academic Career in a Down Economy” — two directors of graduate study, Kay Kaufman Shelemay of Music and David Armitage of History, shared perspectives and advice.

Among their tips: Apply anywhere and everywhere. Publish, publish, publish. Stay connected to Harvard — to your dissertation committee, colleagues who were a few years ahead of you, and your research community. And of course, be flexible.

In a tight market, students are becoming more aware of the value of applying simultaneously to faculty positions and post-doctoral fellowships. Once confined to the sciences, postdocs are now available across the spectrum, as the new Harvard College Fellows program in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences exemplifies. But the postdoc market has itself become tighter, making the strategic support and hands-on assistance of GSAS’s Fellowships Office all the more valuable.

Continually improving one’s teaching skills is critical to a successful portfolio, and here the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning is rich in resources. Syllabus planning, tips on effective discussion-leading, strategies for teaching in diverse classrooms and for using and providing feedback, in-person and videotaped assessments of teaching performances — the Bok Center makes all of these available to GSAS students early on, not just at job-search time.

The good news — not exceptional at Harvard, but worth emphasizing in gloomy times — is that our students are getting jobs. Our departments, which naturally focus on preparing students as scholars, are increasingly broadening their commitment to prepare students as job-seekers, too. Many offer wide-ranging placement services, including mock interviews and job talks, timelines of discipline-specific job cycles, and assorted other hands-on help.

Some departments showcase their candidates on their websites. In the History Department, for example, each candidate who requests one is given a personalized page where, in one handy place, a potential employer can see a brief academic profile, a current CV, dissertation title and abstract, and contact information. As of April 2009, 20 history candidates had secured academic jobs (tenure-track, postdoc, or other academic appointment) for next year.

GSAS surveys students three years after their graduations; responses consistently reveal that the vast majority of our students land desirable jobs — eventually. Getting from here to there will not be easy in the current environment, but there is a lot of help along the way. 
The economic crisis, Middle East strongmen, a moment in music history, the doings of deep-sea microbes, and the physics of black holes — these topics, and more, helped to draw the largest audience ever back to Cambridge for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences’ annual Alumni Weekend celebration, April 3–4.

Festivities kicked off on Friday with the first-ever reunion for graduate alumni of Harvard’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies. On Saturday, Alumni Day itself, economist Benjamin Friedman, AB ’66, PhD ’71, delivered a provocative keynote address on the intersection of economy and morality. In the afternoon, alumni chose from among six faculty symposia that made for a full day of intellectual stimulation and companionship.
When living standards rise, society becomes more tolerant, fair, and generous, Friedman said. But the opposite is also true.

Enlightened Thinking on Dark Times

Professor Benjamin Friedman opened his Alumni Day address by welcoming his large audience and, in a series of riffs on the hardships of graduate school, commending them for remaining loyal to GSAS. “I recall some years ago,” Friedman said with a smile, “when my dear friend Ned Keenan was dean of the Graduate School, there was a proposal for a committee on graduate student life, which Ned promptly dismissed as an oxymoron, and refused to constitute the committee.”

But Friedman, the William Joseph Maier Professor of Political Economy, was serious about his main topic, the social and political consequences of economic downturn. By the time this multidimensional economic slowdown is over, he said, the majority of American families will have gone a dozen years with “no improvement whatsoever in their material living standards.” Even before the recession, and despite an economy that grew respectably through the first seven years of the 2000s, wealth distribution was wildly unequal, with the fruits of economic growth “overwhelmingly” enjoyed by that portion of the population at the top of the income scale.

What does such inequality and stagnation auger? According to Friedman, nothing good. “History suggests it will be damaging to the social fabric of the country — to the political, social, and, I would argue, moral context of the country.”

Experience shows, he said, that when the bulk of the population is making gains in its material standard of living, society at large makes progress, growing more tolerant, fair, open, and generous. When the opposite conditions prevail, he argued, intolerance grows, and progress halts or reverses. Using immigration as an example, he drew a line between periods of economic stagnation and hostile or discriminatory policies — and then traced the opposite connection between periods of prosperity and more inclusive attitudes and laws.

“No society, no matter how rich it becomes, is ever immune to seeing its fundamental democratic principles placed at risk any time the majority of the population loses the sense of forward progress and also fails to see grounds for confidence that forward progress will be renewed,” said Friedman, arguing that the fiscal measures now being adopted are unpleasant — but essential.

“We are, alas, in a situation in which there are no cheap solutions,” he said. “Whatever we do is bound to be expensive, not just in dollars or euros or yen, but in terms of the compromises that we will inevitably have to make with principles about economic policy and the structure of our markets.

“In normal times, and with normal threats,” he continued, “one could debate whether those prices are worth paying. My conclusion is that, for reasons that go well beyond the economic, for reasons that are about the social and the political and the moral character of our society, they are indeed worth paying.”

Photographs by Martha Stewart, except as noted.
An afternoon at the Faculty Club, learning, laughing, and reconnecting

Following the keynote address, it was off to the Faculty Club for lunch, lively conversation, and reminiscence. Later, alumni attended symposia conducted by a group of distinguished Harvard faculty on topics ranging broadly across the disciplines. The exacting questions that those faculty members confronted after each session revealed clearly that this was a Graduate School crowd; no sleepy audiences in the house. In between rounds of intellectual stimulation, there was plenty of time for mingling with old friends and new acquaintances. 🍷

Top row, left to right: Lunch at the Faculty Club, under the watchful gaze of Harvard eminences; Shane Campbell-Staton, an incoming PhD student in organismic and evolutionary biology, inspects a test tube full of microbial life at Colleen Cavanaugh's symposium on the wonders of the deep sea; Coppelia Marincovic, SM '08, applied sciences, in conversation at lunch. Bottom row, left to right: Steven Bloom, PhD '80, economics, enjoys a laugh with a lunch mate; Longtime Buffalo Bills coach and GM Marv Levy, AM '51, history, and his wife, Fran Levy; Doug Davidson, AM '59, music, and his wife Carole Davidson, among the audience for Alexander Rehding’s Beethoven symposium.
“There was a wide spectrum of response. Some theologians found it easy to accept. Some scientists didn’t like the science in it.”
— Janet Browne, Aramont Professor of the History of Science, from “Two Hundred Years of Evolution: Celebrating Charles Darwin in 2009”

“We’re used to thinking of a black hole as this object that eats stuff, this monster, good for nothing. But it can be used as a source of energy, in principle.”
— Ramesh Narayan, Thomas Dudley Cabot Professor of the Natural Sciences, from “Black Holes”

Lively discussion and energetic debate as the experts analyzed three Middle East hot spots
“There’s amazingly abundant life at 2 1/2 kilometers down. Deep sea vents rival the rainforests for biomass.”
— Colleen Cavanaugh, PhD ’85, Edward C. Jeffrey Professor of Biology, from “Dancing in the Dark: Microbial Diversity, Symbiosis, and Deep-Sea Hot Springs”

“It’s important to design policy not that looks good in Cambridge or New Haven or Berkeley, but that looks good in Washington and London and Paris and Calcutta.”
— Robert Stavins, PhD ’88, Albert Pratt Professor of Business and Government, from “Getting Serious About Global Climate Change in the Post-Kyoto Era”

“Clearly the rulers use elections to legitimate their regimes. They want to be able to tell the people they have spoken. It’s an exercise in stage management.”
— Roger Owen, A. J. Meyer Professor of Middle East History, from “The Rise of the Arab Security State”

A Reunion for Middle Eastern Studies

Lively discussion and some energetic debate characterized an afternoon of panels exploring points of conflict in the Middle East, an ever-relevant subject given a timely and vibrant airing by GSAS faculty and alumni and accomplished scholars from other institutions.

Roger Owen, Harvard’s A. J. Meyer Professor of Middle Eastern History, delivered a typically illuminating talk on Iraq and its current challenges, to which Jon Alterman, PhD ’97, history, responded. Alterman is director and senior fellow of the Middle East program at the Center for Strategic and International Affairs, a Washington, D.C., think tank.

A symposium on Sudan, looking at recent films about the crisis in Darfur, was led by Eve Troutt Powell, AB ’83, PhD ’95, history and Middle Eastern studies. The complexity of the issue — and the emotions associated with it — was evident in the questions audience members had for Powell, an associate professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, and respondent J. Lorand Matory, AB ’82, professor of anthropology and of African American studies at Harvard.

Naghmeh Sohrabi, PhD ’05, Middle Eastern studies, described Iran’s presidential campaign in the months leading up to the June elections, a campaign that she said had captivated the nation. Sohrabi is the assistant director for research at the Crown Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Brandeis. Her respondent was Tarek Masoud, an assistant professor of public policy at Harvard.
Over the course of her career, Svetlana Alpers has carved a path as a singularly influential and galvanizing scholar whose impact on the discipline of art history has been both deep and wide. “From her first article,” says New York University art historian Mariët Westermann, “Alpers has surprised, delighted, and vexed her readers with novel readings and viewings of artists about whom, it would seem, we had said it all: Vasari, Bruegel, Rubens, Velazquez, Tiepolo, Rembrandt, Vermeer.” Alpers, the daughter of Harvard economist and Nobel Prize winner Wassily Leontief, is professor emerita of the history of art at the University of California, Berkeley, where she began teaching in the early sixties. Her books profoundly influenced the study of art history. Indeed, her ground-breaking 1983 book *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* reached beyond the discipline to stimulate new thinking across the humanities. Later books included *Rembrandt’s Enterprise: The Studio and the Market* (1988), which won the College Art Association’s Charles Rufus Morey Book Award in 1990; *Tiepolo and the Pictorial Intelligence* (1994), written with Michael Baxandall; and *The Vexations of Art: Velazquez and Others* (2005), in which Alpers looks backward and forward in time to understand the Velazquez painting *The Spinners.*

Svetlana Leontief Alpers
AB ’57, PhD ’65, fine arts

Photographs by Martha Stewart
DAVID BRION DAVIS
PhD ’56, history of American civilization

In an essay published this year in Reviews in American History, David Brion Davis traces his calling as a historian to “a year’s exposure to the rubble and suffering left from World War II.” But it wasn’t only the cruelties of war that affected him. On the boat to Europe shortly after the war ended, he saw that black soldiers were confined to the lowest hold in slave-ship–like conditions. In Germany, he witnessed violent conflicts between white and black American troops and heard racist speeches from commanding officers. The experiences shaped him profoundly. Today, as the Sterling Professor of History, Emeritus, at Yale University, Davis is considered the foremost scholar of slavery and its role in shaping U.S. and world history. He broke ground with The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture, published in 1966, which won the Pulitzer Prize, and has written or edited 17 other books, including The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution (1975) and Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World (2006). “His erudition, moral probity, tempered wisdom, human generosity, and remarkable modesty have served as models for his colleagues, readers, and students,” says Nancy Cott, Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History.

THOMAS CROMBIE SCHELLING
PhD ’51, economics

In a half-century of astonishingly broad-based work, Thomas Schelling has analyzed all manner of threats to humanity: nuclear arms, crime, and global warming, to name several. He found homes in both government service and academia, shaping policy and turning his early interest in bargaining strategy into a body of work on game theory, arms control, and conflict resolution that was recognized with the 2005 Nobel Prize in economics. Schelling is a Distinguished University Professor Emeritus, at the University of Maryland and the Lucius N. Littauer Professor of Political Economy, Emeritus, at Harvard. At the height of the nuclear arms race, his Strategy of Conflict (1960) laid out an approach to game theory with direct applications for military foreign policy and the prevention of war. He wrote two more books on the subject, Strategy and Arms Control (1961), with Morton Halperin, and Arms and Influence (1966). He’d worked on the Marshall Plan and at the White House in the early 1950s, and in the 1960s he advised the Kennedy administration on nuclear issues. A true social scientist, he later explored issues as diverse as addiction, segregation, and climate change, research that was published in Micromotives and Macrobhavior (1978), Choice and Consequence (1984), and Strategies of Commitment and Other Essays (2006).

JOSEPH TAYLOR
PhD ’68, astronomy

As a boy, Joseph Taylor spent hours building ham radio transmitters and antennas at his family’s New Jersey farmouse, once even shearing the chimney off the house with one of his creations. His parents probably had no inkling that those early adventures would lead to a groundbreaking career in astrophysics. Taylor, the James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor of Physics, Emeritus, developed an interest in pulsars — rapidly rotating neutron stars — soon after they were identified, in 1967. In 1974, while at the University of Massachusetts, he and graduate student Russell Hulse became the first to discover a pulsar in a binary system, thus providing the first proof of gravitational radiation and the strongest support yet for Einstein’s general theory of relativity. The discovery won Taylor and Hulse the Nobel Prize in physics in 1993. Taylor joined the faculty at Princeton in 1980. He has won many other awards, including the first Heineman Prize of the American Astronomical Society, the Henry Draper Medal of the National Academy of Sciences, the Carty Award for the Advancement of Science, and the Einstein Prize. He co-chaired a National Research Council panel whose report set U.S. priorities in astronomy and astrophysics for the period from 2000 to 2010.
On a day that started with worrying forecasts but ended with bright sunshine, Harvard awarded 922 degrees to students of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences — 519 doctors of philosophy, 336 masters of arts, and 67 masters of science. Abiding by tradition, University President Drew Faust welcomed newly minted GSAS alumni to “the ancient and universal company of scholars.” Two GSAS alumni were among the ten people awarded an honorary degree at Commencement: Religious historian Wendy Doniger, ’62, PhD ’68, and anthropologist Sarah Hrdy, ’69, PhD ’75.

Kristen Anne Woodberry, who earned her PhD in psychology, makes her parents proud on Commencement Day.

Commencement marshals getting pumped up to lead the GSAS procession into Harvard Yard for Morning Exercises: from left, Nancy Hutton, AM, history of science; Imad Kordab, PhD, applied mathematics; Katherine Surmanski, AM, regional studies—Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia; Kyle Brown, PhD, organismic and evolutionary biology; Michael Aubourg, SM, applied mathematics; Ben Lee, PhD, applied physics; Prasomo Putra Aminjih, SM, engineering sciences; and Charisse Crenshaw, PhD, molecular and cellular biology.

Soon-to-be graduates get festive in the Yard.

GSAS Administrative Dean Margot Gill applauds graduates assembled for the Diploma Awarding Ceremony in Sanders Theatre.

Dudley House master James Hogle enjoys a celebratory moment.

Photographs by Martha Stewart
6 Kyle Brown, who received his PhD in organismic and evolutionary biology, prepares to lead the graduates into the Yard.

7 It’s not just Jeffrey Murry who received his diploma (a PhD in biological science and public health): GSAS Dean Allan Brandt also presented “baby diplomas” to Murry’s daughters, Hannah and Kate.

8 Honorary degree recipient Wynton Marsalis delights the crowd at Morning Exercises with a stunning version of “America the Beautiful.”

9 Graduates and their families fill Sanders Theatre.

10 Adia Benton, who received her PhD in anthropology, sports a particularly beautiful lei for Morning Exercises.

More pictures are online at www.gsas.harvard.edu.
These were among the questions that motivated the third annual symposium of Harvard’s PhD program in architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning, held in April at the Graduate School of Design. And they tell a lot about the unconstrained and intellectually adventurous nature of the PhD program itself.

One of twelve interfaculty programs that the Graduate School administers jointly with other Harvard schools, the architecture PhD program draws resources and expertise from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Faculty of Design. It offers a uniquely interdisciplinary exploration into the ways in which built space affects the people who live in it, and how social, political, and cultural values affect the creation and design of that space.

“Architecture is the art of building — it’s about the uses, the form, the structure, and more,” says Antoine Picon, professor of the history of architecture and technology and the co-chair of the PhD program. “It can’t just be about the engineering. Architecture is about the why.

“One of the key benefits of being part of an interfaculty, interdisciplinary Harvard environment is that we have strong links across departments, such as the history of art, the history of science, anthropology, and more,” Picon continues. “It really creates a special place of exchange among the various dimensions of architecture that are needed to fundamentally understand the built environment.”

The program was instituted in its present form in 1987, although GSAS had previously established a PhD in architecture, landscape architecture, and regional planning in 1942, one of the first in the country. Today’s students are coming from both architectural practice and academia, drawn by the explicit collaborations with disciplines that most architecture schools don’t routinely cultivate. “What’s exciting is that it encourages the notion of transdisciplinary approaches and cross-fertilization, not just in a general way, but in light of a certain body of knowledge,” says GSD Dean Mohsen Mostafavi. “I believe it’s precisely this type of work that leads to things that are exciting and surprising.”

GSAS Dean Allan Brandt says that interfaculty programs like this one have a secondary benefit, too. They “have been an exceptionally good mechanism for building bridges among Harvard’s diverse faculties, especially centered on intensive graduate education that will produce the next generation of intellectual leaders both in the academy and in many instances beyond the academy,” he says. “There is actually tremendous interaction among faculty invested in these programs — people who might not have had a chance to work together if not for these programs.”

Graduates of the PhD program in architecture are historians, art historians, and historians of science in liberal arts settings, and they are also architectural historians and theorists at architecture schools. Some are researchers, working in public policy and in the sciences.

That diversity is appropriate for a program that looks well beyond the material. “Whether it’s a school or a hospital or a skyscraper, architecture embodies certain social values,” says Michael Hays, Eliot Noyes Professor of Architectural Theory, who is the PhD program’s other co-chair. “We try to find ways of making that building legible — of reading it and reading off it those social values and those social conventions and assumptions. Our

By David A. Kelly and Bari Walsh

**BUILDING NEW MEANING**

**ARCHITECTURE REACHES ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES**

Professors Antoine Picon and Michael Hays
THE AUTOMATED LANDSCAPE

“I’m interested in how everyday, ordinary people engage with space,” says Jana Cephas, a second-year PhD student in the architecture program. She’s looking at factory and domestic spaces of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and tracking the effects — on workers, on cityscapes — of new technologies and new modes and conceptions of work.

One focus is the Ford Motor Company’s Model T plant in Detroit, which housed the country’s first automated assembly line. The newly automated workplace was more lucrative for workers, but it exacted a steep toll, physically and psychologically. At the same time, new technologies and appliances in the home were changing Detroit’s domestic landscape, similarly reshaping the work of the domestic servants whom they would soon make obsolete.

“In a broader sense, I’m interested in new ideas people had about themselves in relation to their work,” Cephas says, “and how that affects the larger urban realm — how the spread of factories and domestic technologies constructs a different type of urban development than had ever been seen before.”

She came to Harvard already in possession of a master’s in architecture. For her PhD, “I wanted to be in a program where I had the freedom and space to evolve. I wanted to develop other methodologies, particularly in anthropology, so I could understand how these people understood themselves, and how cultures were developed out of that. I didn’t want just an architectural understanding of the spaces they were operating in.”

FINDING NEW WAYS TO “MAKE A BUILDING LEGIBLE” — TO READ THE SOCIAL VALUES IT EMBODIES.

Students and faculty examine the wider built environment, looking at what buildings and other spaces reveal about the changing nature of the contemporary urban landscape. “Increasingly, our students have become less interested in looking at architecture as just a high art. They’ve become much more interested in more anonymous buildings and the collections of buildings that everyday life takes place in,” says Hays. “As a consequence, there’s been a shift toward more interest in the entire urban fabric, rather than just an analysis of a single building like the Hancock Tower or Trinity Church.”

Picon says the program seeks to challenge students to understand the broader context for specific architectural problems. “We’re training the people who will help shape the education of tomorrow’s designers,” he says. “Students should not only be asking how something should be built, but whether it should be done or not, and how it fits into the larger context. We’re helping them learn to ask the right questions.”

CHARTING A NEW GLOBAL SPACE

Bill Rankin’s scholarly interests focus less on designed space than on what might be called construed space. A fourth year PhD student pursuing dual degrees in architecture and in the history of science, Rankin explores the history of cartography — “the history of space itself, how space became globalized, and what it means to have a global space,” he says.

Looking at the period from the late 19th century to the 1950s, he is tracking the creation of international mapping organizations and how they evolved through the world wars. “I’m looking at the change from a sort of scientific internationalism to a military internationalism,” he says. His dissertation will encompass three related lines of research: in-depth studies of aeronautical charting — including “the whole history of radar beacons, of painting letters on rooftops, to try to make the ground legible to aircraft”; the development of grid systems whose goal was “to try to make the spherical earth not spherical” for purposes of planning bombardments or laying out a highway; and radar navigation systems, the precursors to GPS.

“Thirty years ago, both the history of science and the history of architecture could in some sense be defined by the fact that they looked at scientists and architects,” he says. “Now, a lot of people are looking at both of these fields in different ways. If you want to write a history of space, you’re not just writing about designers or scientists.” His interests have taught him to “not stop where the science stops” and pushed him to engage with “a wider range of actors.”

Photographs by Martha Stewart
**BOZO SAPIENS**  
*Why to Err is Human*  
By Michael Kaplan,  
AB ’79, AM ’81, history,  
and Ellen Kaplan,  
AB ’57, AM ’59, fine arts  
(Bloomsbury Press,  
2009, 304 pp.)

In this witty and engaging book, the Kaplans (a mother-and-son team who previously collaborated on *Chances Are . . . Adventures in Probability*) investigate our capacity for shortsightedness, poor judgment, and error. They draw on work in neurobiology, psychology, anthropology, risk management, and ethics — examining everything from prejudice to bad investments, air disasters to unhappy marriages. With well-chosen anecdotes and quotations, they argue that we’re really just precocious primates working beyond the evolutionary limits of our own noggins. “In apprehension how like a god . . .” — or a hapless bozo? Think carefully before answering.

**MOTHERS AND OTHERS**  
*The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding*  
By Sarah Blaffer Hrdy,  
AB ’69, PhD ’75, anthropology  
(Belknap Press, 2009, 432 pp.)

What sets humankind apart isn’t tool-using or bipedal motion, Hrdy maintains. It’s our unique ability to sense the intentions and feelings of others. In exploring that capacity, she enlists sociobiology, primate research, archaeological findings on human precursors, and studies of hunter-gatherer peoples, such as the Aka and !Kung. Her conclusion: The wellspring of human empathy lies in our mode of childrearing, including not just genetic or adoptive parents but grandparents, parental siblings, older offspring — even day care providers.

**THE ISMAILIS IN THE MIDDLE AGES**  
*A History of Survival, a Search for Salvation*  
By Shafique N. Virani,  
PhD ’01, Near Eastern languages and civilizations  
(Oxford University Press, 2007, 322 pp.)

Many historians have challenged the notion that history is “told by the victors.” But Virani faced a particularly daunting task in undertaking this account of the Ismailis, the second largest branch of Shi’i Islam. In the thirteenth century, invading Mongols singled them out for annihilation, and for more than six centuries, the West — including so-called Orientalists — remained ignorant of their survival. Virani explores how their religion and culture helped the Ismailis endure through the early generations following the Mongol assault.

**TO TEST OR NOT TO TEST**  
*A Guide to Genetic Screening and Risk*  
By Doris Teichler Zallen, PhD ’66, organismic and evolutionary biology  
(Rutgers University Press, 2008, 224 pp.)

Zallen focuses on testing for “susceptibility genes,” which act in concert with other genes and environmental factors to cause disease. Susceptibility genes operate in the fuzzy realm of “risk,” increasing our vulnerability for, say, breast cancer or Alzheimer’s disease. Organizing the narrative around key questions — such as, “Will a particular test give me useful information?” — the author combines practical advice and excerpts from interviews with genetics experts and individuals who have personally faced the choice of having such genetic tests.

**CAN POETRY SAVE THE EARTH?**  
*A Field Guide to Nature Poems*  
By John Felstiner,  
AB ’58, PhD ’65, English and American literature and language  
(Yale University Press, 2009, 440 pp.)

Drawing on rich and varied examples — from ancient texts to Dickinson and Whitman to Frost, Denise Levertov, and Gary Snyder — Felstiner explores the nexus between poetic imagination and environmental consciousness. His narrative grounds individual poets in their experience of nature and emphasizes that their poetry can serve to open our own eyes to the natural and pastoral world, sparking environmental awareness and even activism.

**WEALTH MANAGEMENT IN ANY MARKET**  
*Timeless Strategies for Building Financial Security*  
By Bishara A. Bahbah,  
PhD ’83, government  
(Wiley, 2009, 300 pp.)
In the shadow of roiled markets and heightened economic uncertainty comes this well-organized and insightful work. Bahbah offers cogent advice on a wide range of financial matters — from saving for college education to trusts and estate planning, from managing consumer debt to diversifying investment portfolios — all written in plain English. Above all, he stresses that wealth management “is not just for the wealthy.” Economics may well be the dismal science, but this guide to personal financial strategies is admirably upbeat.

THE ODYSSEY EXPERIENCE
Physical, Social, Psychological, and Spiritual Journeys
By Neil J. Smelser, AB ’52, PhD ’58, sociology
(University of California Press, 2009, 286 pp.)

In this book, Smelser explores transformative events that he terms “odyssey experiences.” He defines these in the broadest possible manner, so as to encompass a wide range of life events, including bar mitzvahs (and other rites of passage), academic sabbaticals, tourism, college education, and psychotherapy. The narrative interweaves personal reminiscence, sociological analysis, and cultural criticism, including literature (The Odyssey, among others) and film (for example, Deliverance) to suggest the profound importance of such experiences — both for individuals and the culture.

RESTORATION
Poems
By Christina Pugh, PhD ’98, comparative literature
(Triquarterly, 2008, 88 pp.)

Pugh’s second volume (apart from a chapbook) is deeply personal yet resonant. It opens with “Chords at Night,” penned in the dark penumbra of 9/11, but her subjects range widely, and her vision encompasses both darkness and buoyant hope. Individual poems suggest the inspiration of young dancers, or a visit to World’s End, a conservation area in Massachusetts, or the experience of breast cancer treatment. Through it all, her language is luminous — almost musically tuned — as she assays the restorative power of poetry.

WIRED FOR WAR
The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century
By P.W. Singer, PhD ’01, government
(The Penguin Press HC, 2009, 512 pp.)

Singer ranges widely — from unmanned combat systems being used in Iraq to a cogent history of robotics from its late-nineteenth-century roots. His informative and lively story offers deft twists of humor and comic juxtapositions. But he reserves his darkest tones for the future, noting that many experts foresee the increasing displacement of human agency by rapidly evolving machines, leading Singer to reflect on the possibility — raised in so many science-fiction films — that the machines may ultimately gain the upper hand.

THE SCENT OF SAKE
By Joyce Lebra, PhD ’58, history
(Avon, 2009, 384 pp.)

Lebra sets her epic historical novel in nine-teenth-century Japan, from the final decades of the Tokugawa shogunate to the new Meiji era. She focuses on one woman — Rie Omura, the sole heir of a family of sake brewers. Rie is ambitious in a world that strongly discourages ambition among women. Yet she skillfully makes her way — despite her father’s skepticism, the machinations of ruthless competitors, a lustful and drunken husband, and the expectation that she raise the offspring of his geisha mistresses.

Authors: GSAS alumni who have published a general-interest book within the past year and would like it to be considered for inclusion in Alumni Books should send a copy of the book to: Colloquy, Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Holyoke Center 350, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138-3846. Questions? E-mail gsaas@fas.harvard.edu.

Submit Alumni Notes to: Colloquy, Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Holyoke Center 350, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138-3846; fax: 617-496-5333; or gsaas@fas.harvard.edu. Alumni Notes are subject to editing for length and clarity.
FAUST AS FELLOW TRAVELER

In a wide-ranging conversation at Dudley House in April, Harvard president Drew Gilpin Faust answered questions from GSAS students about the impact of the financial crisis on graduate initiatives, the path to a fulfilling career, the importance of Dudley as a unique Harvard common space, the need to strengthen graduate mentoring and advising, and the challenges facing higher education.

Appearing at a town hall meeting organized by the GSAS Graduate Student Council, Faust conjured her own graduate school experiences and, for a moment, became something more than the president of a globally influential research university; she became a fellow traveler.”I love seeing you all here,” she said, “because I was once you. It’s fun for me to imagine myself back into those decades ago when I was discovering my intellectual passions in the way that you are discovering yours now.”

Graduate students in the arts and sciences, Faust said, are central to Harvard and to all universities. The values that your work conveys, she told her audience, reflect “the pursuit of knowledge in its most unfettered form. We’re going to be depending on all of you to keep that flame of commitment alive.”

And yet the scholarly landscape is changing, she added. “All of you will be affected by what may turn out to be a real reconfiguration in how higher education has to think about funding itself,” she said. “I think we have a lot of political work to do making the case for higher education not simply as economic driver, though that is a part of what we need to explain to the public. The other, more challenging part is to defend all of higher education as a generator of knowledge and understanding that doesn’t necessarily have an instrumental purpose.”

OPTIONS TRADING

Reflecting concerns about tight job markets in both the academic and professional sectors, students turned out in large numbers for GSAS’s annual Career Options Day in April. Fifteen GSAS and Harvard alumni returned to Cambridge to anchor a day of panel discussions, organized by the Office of Career Services, exploring a variety of nonacademic career possibilities for AM and PhD candidates. From left, on the finance, technology, and patent law panel, are David Halstead (PhD ’99, organic chemistry, JD ’02), a partner in the law firm of Ropes and Gray, LLP; Stephanie Kladakis (AB ’96), principle engineer at NMT Medical; and Stacy Dick (AB ’78, PhD ’83, economics), chief financial officer of Julian Robertson Holdings and a member of the Graduate School’s Alumni Council.

PRAISING FAMOUS MENTORS

Professors Daniel Lieberman in Anthropology, Joseph Newhouse in Health Policy, and Jocelyn Viterna in Sociology are the winners of the 2009 Everett Mendelsohn Excellence in Mentoring Awards. The three were toasted at a Faculty Club ceremony on April 7 that marked the eleventh occasion of the awards, named in 2002 for Professor of the History of Science Everett I. Mendelsohn, a former Master of Dudley House. The awards recognize faculty members who go far beyond the call of duty to support and encourage their graduate students as scholars and as people. “All too often, it may seem like such efforts go unnoticed, but as the many passionate letters of nomination attest, they are not unappreciated,” said GSC officer Bruno Afonso at the ceremony. Indeed, the GSC received about 80 nominations this year from current students and GSAS alumni, recommending 26 professors for the award, said Sofia Becerra-Licha, a GSC vice president.
Strong at the Center
Harvard benefits from a robust Graduate School, says Homer Hagedorn, who has spent decades making sure it has one

By Geoffrey Movius, AB ’62, PhD ’71, English literature

Ask Homer Hagedorn what he thinks may lie ahead for graduate education in the United States, and he responds with vigor and characteristic confidence. “The future of graduate education is just awesome,” says Hagedorn, PhD ’55, history, a member of the Graduate School Alumni Council since the 1970s. “The importance of developing one’s powers of analysis and intellectual innovation has never been greater. In the Harvard context,” he continues, “we are going to train far more graduate students than there will be teaching posts available anywhere in the world. The blessings in this seeming predicament are, first, that the level of expertise achieved by those who do indeed find such jobs will be higher than ever; and, second, that we will have many superbly trained people to fill the complex jobs required in today’s society.”

In an economic climate where doomsaying has become a national pastime, the words are refreshing. They are also an apt reminder of why, for decades, the Graduate School has relied on Hagedorn for guidance in its fundraising and alumni relations efforts. As a former Alumni Council president, and as the chair of the Graduate School Fund since 1986, he has worked to better the lot of graduate students and improve the quality of their preparation. His passion for GSAS has inspired other volunteers and helped change, in countless ways, the landscape for students.

Homer Hagedorn, PhD ’55, history, introducing a faculty symposium on Alumni Day in April.

Having decided that he was not going to enter academe when he completed his Ph.D., Hagedorn found that his doctorate in history provided both a context and a vision that enabled him to excel in a number of other demanding jobs. After a Fulbright Fellowship that took him to the London School of Economics, he worked at MIT’s Lincoln Labs, at the Institute of Naval Studies, and finally at Arthur D. Little as practice manager for organization development. “In consulting, you have to deeply comprehend the history of a company or institution to know how and when to intervene successfully,” he says. During the last 30 years, drawing on his wide-ranging management experience, he has helped bring about a firmer structure and greater efficiency for GSAS fundraising programs. “Homer has used the skills and insight accumulated over the course of his career to shape and energize our alumni relations effort, much to the Graduate School’s benefit,” says Administrative Dean Margot Gill. “He understands the centrality of GSAS and the importance of supporting it, and he inspires others to support it, too. He is as energetic today as he was thirty years ago.”

The Graduate School Fund in particular has made remarkable progress under Hagedorn’s oversight, increasing its overall totals nearly fivefold since its founding in 1986. “I certainly am only one of many who have provided both leadership and support to this effort, but in the very beginning, it was tough going,” he said.

The Graduate School Fund is critical in times of economic uncertainty, because its unrestricted resources give Dean Allan Brandt the freedom to allocate funding according to the School’s current pressing needs. Those needs include the funding of Graduate Society Fellowships, research workshops in the departments, and English-language training, all of which directly bolster the scholarly mission of GSAS and, as Hagedorn emphasizes, Harvard as a whole.

“It is essential that Harvard have a strong graduate school in the arts and sciences,” he says. “It is crucial in recruiting excellent faculty to have the best graduate students. They are also very important in maintaining the quality of teaching in the College, especially now that they are being well-trained to teach.

“Graduate study in the past — even the fairly recent past — was often frustrating, lonely, and underfunded. Those of us who experienced that remember it well, and many of us have tried hard to make the experience as good as possible for the students who come after us.”

For information about supporting the Graduate School Fund, and about the critical role of unrestricted giving in the life of GSAS, contact Marne Perreault, director of GSAS Giving, at 617-495-1629 or marne_perreault@harvard.edu.
Alumni Events and Notices
Questions? Need more information? Contact the GSAS Office of Alumni Relations at gsaa@fas.harvard.edu or 617-495-5591.

REGIONAL EVENTS
For information about alumni events near you, please check the alumni section of the GSAS web site (www.gsas.harvard.edu) or contact gsaa@fas.harvard.edu.

Thursday, October 1 | Santa Barbara
Bruce Western, professor of sociology at FAS and director of the Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality and Social Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, will give a talk exploring the role of incarceration in social and economic inequality in American society.

Wednesday, October 14 | Seattle
GSAS Dean Allan Brandt, Amalie Moses Kass Professor of the History of Medicine and professor of the history of science at FAS, will give a talk exploring the social history of cigarettes, epidemic disease, and other public health threats.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: THE GRADUATE SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION COUNCIL
Submit a nomination for the GSAA Council, the governing body of the Harvard Graduate School Alumni Association. Nominees typically have achieved distinction in their careers or in their community service and share a strong commitment to Harvard and to graduate education.

To Nominate
Submit a letter stating your reasons for selecting the candidate to the GSAS Alumni Association at gsaa@fas.harvard.edu or Holyoke Center 350, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

ATTENTION, RECENT GSAS GRADS!
We want to stay in touch with you as we begin to plan a series of opportunities designed to connect recent graduates with their more seasoned counterparts and with current GSAS students who would value your experience and advice. Please drop us a line at gsaa@fas.harvard.edu to let us know of your interest, and stay tuned for more information about this new initiative.