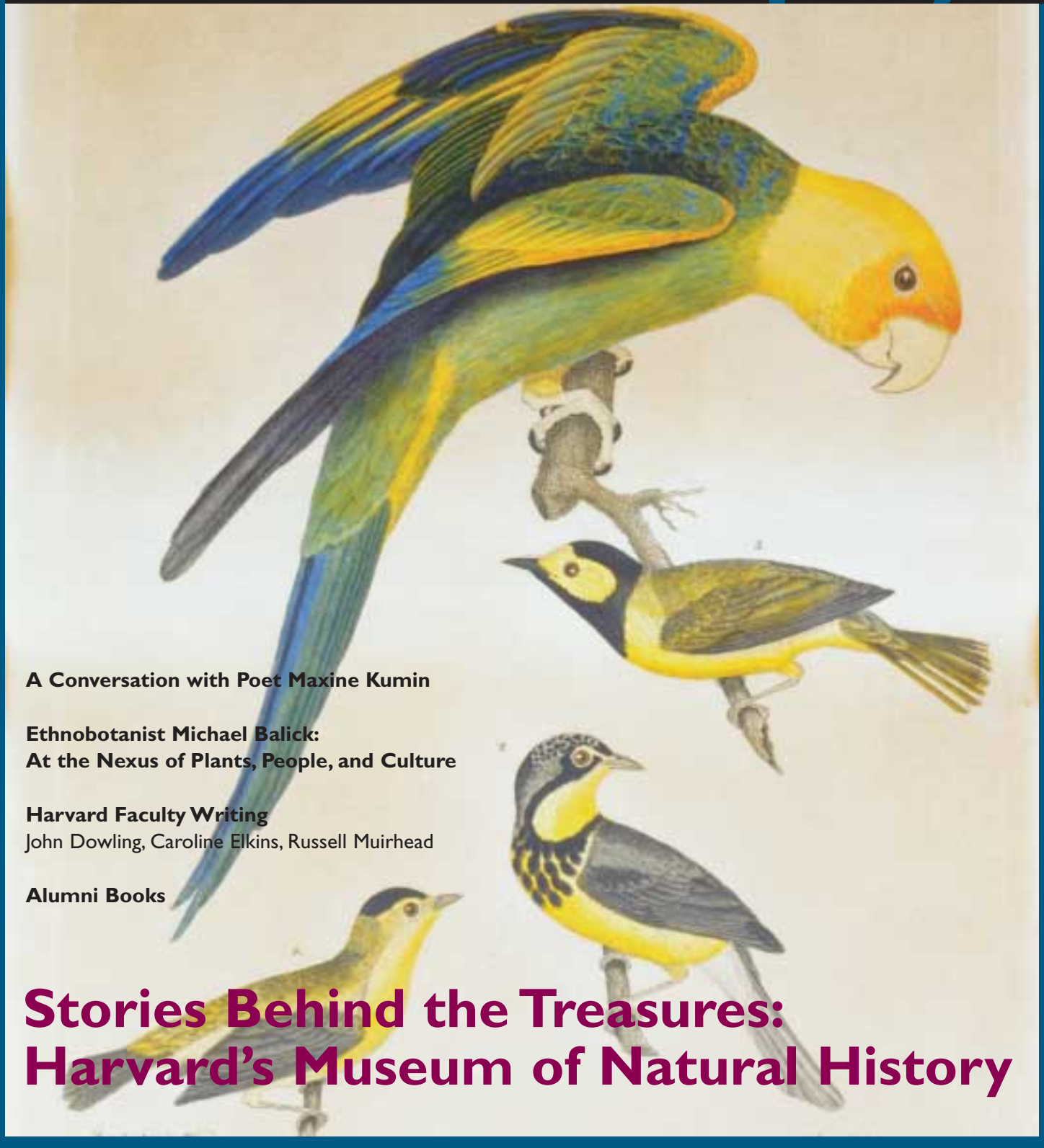
SPRING 2005

# Colloquy

ALUMNI QUARTERLY

*The* GRADUATE SCHOOL *of* ARTS AND SCIENCES • HARVARD UNIVERSITY



**A Conversation with Poet Maxine Kumin**

**Ethnobotanist Michael Balick:**
**At the Nexus of Plants, People, and Culture**

**Harvard Faculty Writing**
John Dowling, Caroline Elkins, Russell Muirhead

**Alumni Books**

## Stories Behind the Treasures: Harvard's Museum of Natural History

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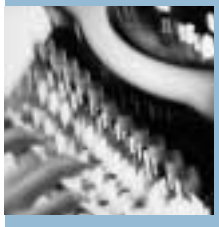



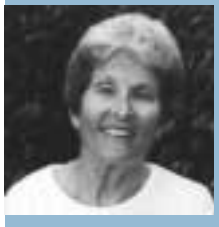



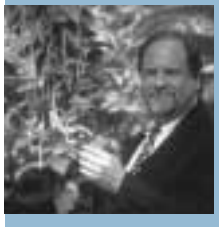



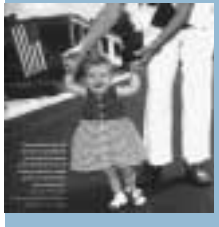



**Correction:** In the winter 2005 issue of *Colloquy* we incorrectly noted an award received by Harvard's Amartya Sen, the Thomas W. Lamont University Professor. He won the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998.

On the cover: The Carolina parakeet, collected before 1811. Photo by Mark Sloan. From *The Rarest of the Rare: Stories Behind the Treasures at the Harvard Museum of Natural History.*

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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Peter T. Ellison,
PhD '83, anthropology
dean, Graduate School
of Arts and Sciences

# A Look Back

After five challenging and rewarding years, I will be stepping down as dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences this June. I look forward to returning full time to teaching and research in the Department of Anthropology. As I prepare to leave my University Hall office, I can't help but reflect on what has been achieved during my tenure. In doing so, I feel both proud of the past and optimistic about the future.

Perhaps the most important achievements have been in the area of graduate student funding. My predecessor, Christoph Wolff, began a complete overhaul of the system of financial aid for GSAS graduate students, which has now come nearly to completion. When Dean Wolff began the push for better funding, the standard package of support offered to PhD students in the humanities and social sciences was for two years only, and some students were admitted without even that level of support.

Beginning this year, doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences will receive five full years of support, including a year of support at the dissertation-writing stage, enabling them to complete their degrees and launch their careers in a timely fashion.

Doctoral students in the natural sciences have long had higher levels of funding than humanities and social science students due to their ability to serve as research assistants on faculty projects. However, they were routinely required to teach in their first year on campus at the same time that they were trying to take courses, pass exams, and gain entry to a lab. We have now substituted fellowship support for this first year of teaching, to the benefit of both graduate and undergraduate students.

These changes have triggered cascading beneficial effects, including a new emphasis on the quality of training provided to teaching fellows—and record-setting yields in admissions.

Another key advance has been in the growth of interfaculty PhD programs, which now number 15. These programs bring together faculty from Harvard's graduate Schools to cooperate in training students in exciting new interdisciplinary frontiers. Through its stewardship of these programs, GSAS has become the most visible thread running through the entire University community, from Longwood to Allston to Cambridge, helping to make it greater than the sum of its parts. Particularly notable in this regard was the 2004 launch of the Harvard Integrated Life Sciences program, coordinating nine different biology programs at Harvard under one faculty-led committee. As interdisciplinary work becomes more and more prominent at Harvard and elsewhere, we should expect to see GSAS continue to play a leading role in training the best talent.

We continue to attract superb students from around the world, and continue to expand our ability to support them.

Over the past five years, a third focus of activity has been the effort to develop better graduate student housing opportunities on campus. This priority has clearly been embraced by the University administration. New housing facilities will soon open in the Longwood Medical Area and in Cambridge—and there are ambitious plans for Allston as well. Many of these new residences will incorporate social and academic functions as well that will bring graduate students more fully into the 24-hour life of the campus community.

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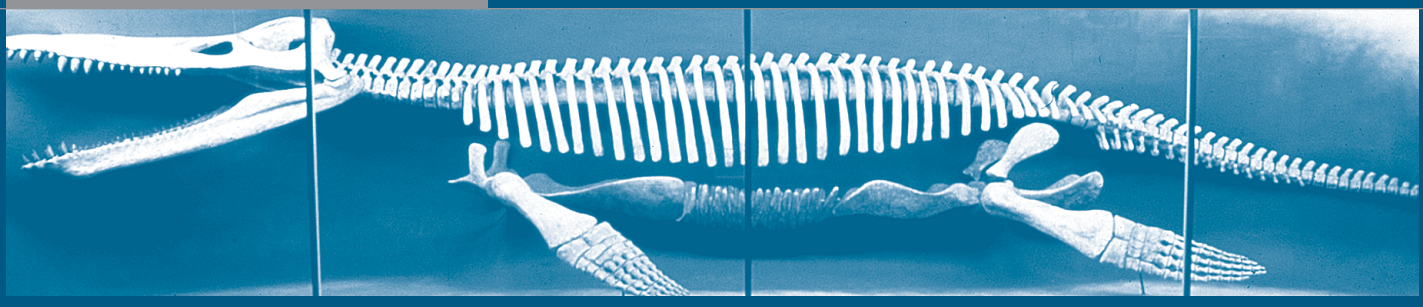


# The Rarest of the Rare

## STORIES BEHIND THE TREASURES OF HARVARD'S MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

BY SUSAN LUMENELLO

**Did you know that Harvard has the world's largest collection of ant specimens? A matchless assortment of crystallized gold, housed in a vault beneath Harvard Square? Meriwether Lewis's last bird, collected during the Lewis and Clark expedition? All are part of the Harvard Museum of Natural History, along with the better-known animal, bird, and reptile specimens; the famous glass flowers collection; and minerals and gems to attract the eye and imagination.**

No less fascinating than the museum's contents are the larger stories the specimens tell, as related in the engaging new book *The Rarest of the Rare: Stories Behind the Treasures at the Harvard Museum of Natural History* (HarperCollins), by Nancy Pick, who served as a staff writer for the museum.

The Harvard Museum of Natural History comprises the collections of the Harvard University Herbaria, the Museum of Comparative Zoology, and the Mineralogical Museum. The key year in the history of the collections was 1859, when Harvard's Louis Agassiz, naturalist extraordinaire, opened the Museum of Comparative Zoology. That year is also noteworthy because it marked the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. What makes the convergence so fascinating is that Agassiz remained a staunch creationist until his death, long after most scientists had come around to Darwin's point of view. "It's just a wonderful irony," Pick says.

Agassiz was a "species-mad scientist," she continues. "If you don't believe that species can change over time…you have to believe that every variation that exists on earth is a separate species." Agassiz's reputation has suffered not only because of his anti-evolutionist views, but also due to his racist beliefs. "One of the things that's so unnerving is that he believed there was more than one human species, and basically that blacks were a different species," she says.

Still, Pick found much to admire about the man. In the book, she says she aimed to "talk about how good a scientist he was, even though he refused to believe in evolution. He was extremely charismatic, extremely important. [He] did ground-

All photos in this article by Mark Sloan, except where noted. Courtesy of Harvard Museum of Natural History.

Pictured above, the Kronosaurus or *Kronosaurus queenslandicus*, collected in 1932.

breaking studies of fossil fish, and gave us the term 'ice age' at a time when it was impossible for people to believe there was once 300 feet of ice above our heads... If you think about it, it's really quite a radical notion."

Before Agassiz, Harvard's natural history collection was more a "cabinet of curiosities," Pick says. "Agassiz was the one who made the museum a scientific place. He was the great visionary."

Writing *The Rarest of the Rare* had its moments of sadness, Pick says, because so many of the book's stories focus on extinct creatures, from the Tasmanian tiger to the dodo. "We're now in the midst of the sixth great mass extinction," she says. "[T]his one is not caused by meteorites or some other natural phenomenon—it's caused by human beings."

One particularly affecting story in the book concerns the Xerces blue butterfly, which became extinct only in the 1940s. The species dwindled as the city of San Francisco rose, likely due to a cluster of causes, including urbanization, loss of habitat, and an invasive South American ant. The Xerces blue could have been saved, Pick says. "There was something heartbreaking about the beauty of these butterflies, their fragility, and how recently they had become extinct."

But the museum is as much about the present as it is about the past. Scientists are now able to extract DNA from museum specimens and use it to understand the evolution of particular species.

Such DNA is useful to biologists working on a massive project called the "Tree of Life," Pick says. The Tree of Life would map the evolution of all species over time, showing how every species is related to every other, and tracing which came first. Scientists can of course extract DNA from living animals, but they are also increasingly good at recovering DNA from museum specimens, even those collected many years ago.

*continued on page 8*

## "Blood, Sweat, and Bones" by Nancy Pick

In the 1930s, Harvard sent an expedition to Australia, in hopes of collecting specimens of kangaroo, wombat, and Tasmanian devil. The scientists did indeed find marsupials—but they also found something larger.

This skeleton of a gigantic marine reptile was discovered by William Schevill, a graduate student on the expedition who spent months tooling around North Queensland in a dusty Ford pickup, looking for fossils. During his scouting, a sheep rancher named R.W.H. Thomas mentioned that there was something odd protruding from rocks in his paddock. Schevill hurried to the site. Sticking out of the rocks were bones from this enormous pliosaur, *Kronosaurus queenslandicus*.

Because the bones were embedded in solid limestone, Schevill enlisted help from a British migrant trained in the use of explosives. The fellow—nicknamed The Maniac, due to rumors that he had killed a man—dynamited out huge blocks of limestone encasing the fossils. The blocks were then shipped to Harvard, each one weighing some six tons.

Freeing the bones from the limestone presented another time-consuming and expensive task. It took several years to prepare the nine-foot-long skull for public display. The remaining blocks sat in the museum for more than a decade, until Godfrey Lowell Cabot, the Boston carbon-black magnate, donated $10,000 for the work. (He had a long-standing fascination with sea serpents.)

In the end, the job cost even more. Museum preparators Arnold Lewis and James A. Jenson spent two years extracting the bones, using chisels and acid. The skeleton—about 60 percent complete—was then reconstructed under the guidance of distinguished Harvard paleontologist Alfred S. Romer.

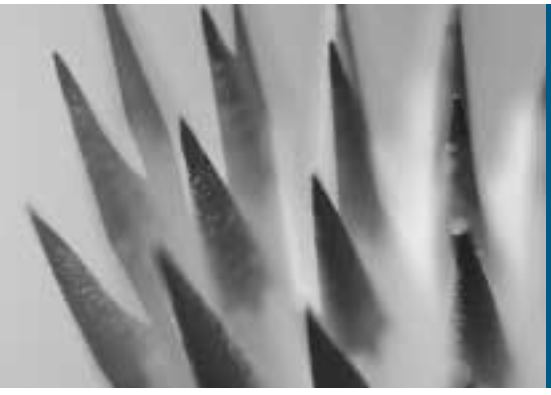
Romer's reconstruction is controversial among today's paleontologists. This is not surprising, given that new generations often reinterpret fossil finds. Unfortunately, Romer made it difficult for scientists to get at the original fossil materials, for he encased the real bones in plaster and added fake plaster "bones" where he believed necessary.

*Museum of Comparative Zoology Archives*

The hunt for fossils in Queensland, Australia, circa 1932. GSAS student Schevill is on the far right.

Colin McHenry, a pliosaur expert in Queensland, contends that Romer made the Kronosaurus too long. He believes that Romer added about eight plaster vertebrae too many, and that the true length should be about 30 feet, not the current 42 feet. McHenry bases his views on comparisons with related specimens around the world.

Even downsized, Kronosaurus would have been a fearsome sight as it patrolled the oceans some 135 million years ago. With teeth the size of bananas, it may well have killed its prey simply by snapping off their heads.



# REASSESSING THE HUMAN LIFE SPAN, COLONIAL DEVASTATION, AND INGREDIENTS FOR A PLAYFUL ECONOMY

*Colloquy* regularly presents excerpts from new books written by Harvard faculty in the arts and sciences. In this issue, you'll find recent work by neuroscientist John Dowling; historian Caroline Elkins; and Russell Muirhead, a scholar of contemporary political thought. —*The editor*

## "How Long Could We Live?"

By John E. Dowling

John E. Dowling (AB '57, PhD '61, molecular and cellular biology, MED '61) is the Gordon and Llura Gund Professor of Neurosciences and Professor of Ophthalmology.

From *The Great Brain Debate: Nature or Nurture?* Copyright © 2004 by John E. Dowling. Published by Joseph Henry Press/National Academies Press: Washington, DC.

It is common knowledge that average life expectancy has increased spectacularly in the past 100 years. In Europe and the United States, the average life span was less than 47 years in 1890 and by the 1990s it was more than 75 years. During the decade of 1968–1978, average life expectancy rose at the phenomenal rate of one month per year for all those over 50! In Japan, the figures are even more impressive; by the mid-1990s the average life expectancy for women was about 83 years of age. Japanese men, like men the world over, had a lower average life span of 77 years. Developing countries also showed substantial increases of average life expectancy in the 1990s.

But what about absolute life expectancy? Has that increased? Here the news is quite different. Ancient texts mention individuals living to 120 years of age, and today we occasionally hear of someone that old, but this is very exceptional. The age at death of the longest-living human that is well documented was 122 years, and in the fall of 2003 the then-oldest man in the world died at the age of 114. He was Japanese and the oldest woman alive at that time, also Japanese, was 116 years old. Indeed, if one looks at the trends in human longevity from antiquity to the present day, it has not increased significantly if at all …

Whereas average life expectancy has increased dramatically as a result of medical advances and improved housing and sanitation, the maximum life span has not. The number of people who live to be 60 has increased from less than 20 percent in the early nineteenth century to more than 80 percent today, but the end-point of life expectancy remains at about 100 years of age.

Although the average life expectancy has been increasing virtually linearly since the 1960s in Western countries, it is expected to level off with an average life expectancy of about 85. In other words, it is likely that we are already coming close to our maximum average life expectancy, if there is a biological limit to absolute life expectancy.

My view is that this limit is real and I suspect it might relate to the brain and its aging. Whereas we can replace hearts, lungs, and livers, we cannot replace brains or even brain cells, at least at the moment, and some believe that we will never be able to replace whole brains. Indeed, as someone glibly pointed out, if whole brain transplants were possible, it would be far better to be the donor rather than the recipient, for obvious reasons! This is why there is so much interest in the possibility of stem cells remaining in the adult brain …

Indeed, if they are present generally, or even in a relatively few places, and could be induced to generate a variety of new neurons to replace dying or dead ones, one might suppose that we could renew our brains and increase maximal life span.

The transplantation of embryonic stem cells into a brain to replace dead neurons and maintain brain circuitry is another possibility that is receiving much attention. Alternatively, it might be possible to find ways to stop or slow the neurons' aging processes. All these possibilities are being explored, but at the moment they are still very distant.

## "Britain's Assault on Mau Mau"

By Caroline Elkins

Caroline Elkins (PhD '01, history) is an assistant professor of history.

From *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya.* Copyright © 2005 Caroline Elkins. Published by Henry Holt & Company: New York.

Kenya was…a relatively small place for the European population, both settlers and colonial administrators, who lived and socialized there. Weekends were often spent together in places like the Muthaiga Club or [colonial Judge] Thacker's trial residence, the Kitale Club, where all local whites drank, ate, danced, and enjoyed themselves long into the night. …John Nottingham, who was a young district officer at the start of the Emergency, remembers how influential settler racial extremism was and how many members of the Administration, already colored by a sense of racial and moral superiority over the local African population, easily slipped into its logic. "All we heard was how savage Mau Mau was, shoot to kill. You can't imagine how often I heard, 'The only good Kuke is a dead Kuke.' There was this idea that Mau Mau was savage, just completely atavistic, and somehow had to be gotten rid of, regardless of how it was done. This idea was everywhere." During a brief stop in Nairobi in the spring of 1954, journalist Anthony Sampson likewise observed what he later called the "dehuman-

ization of the enemy" by local settlers and colonial officials. "I heard it everywhere I went," he said. "How many Kukes had to be gotten rid of, how many Kukes did you wink today. [It was] almost like they were talking about big game hunting." The historical record is littered with lengthy descriptions from settlers and colonial officials of Mau Mau "vermin," "animals," and "barbarians," who lived in the "untidy, sprawling heaps…hovels, with seething mud and animals in the huts," or in the "bush" with other wildlife. Like other predatory animals, they were "cunning," "vicious," and "bloodthirsty." Thus Mau Mau became for many whites in Kenya, and for many Kikuyu loyalists as well, what the Armenians had been to the Turks, the Hutu to the Tutsi, the Bengalis to the Pakistanis, and the Jews to the Nazis. As with any incipient genocide, the logic was all too easy to follow. Mau Mau adherents did not belong to the human race; they were diseased, filthy animals who could infect the rest of the colony, and whose very presence threatened to destroy Kenya's civilization. They had to be eliminated.

## "Playful Work"

By Russell Muirhead

Russell Muirhead (AB '88, PhD '96, government) is an associate professor of government.



Amid the celebration of the "new economy," some conceive of ideal work as a form of play. Unlike the conforming, loyal "man in the gray flannel suit," who by glad-handing and good cheer worked his way into a stable bureaucratic order, the successful players in the new economy are audacious, committed, and fun-loving. Michael Lewis, in his portrait of the entrepreneur Jim Clark (founder of Silicon Graphics and Netscape), defines the new economy's heroes. Creative and impulsive, they take risks. Self-defining, they bristle at the suggestion that work defines them. They embrace change—and lack patience. This is elaborated in Po Bronson's description of Silicon Valley in the 1990s high-tech boom. Bronson chronicled characters who work hard more from passion than habit or fear, who aim to break out on their own rather than establish a safe place in the big organization. They are proud of this passion and subtly scorn those in whom it is lacking. Lewis and Bronson looked only to the winners of the technological economy, at a time when winnings were large, but their descriptions carry a point: winners of the new economy have found work that is like play.

Yet the playfulness some prize seems as much born of disappointment as of hope. Insofar as playful work is experienced as cynical and transient, it represents more of an escape than an embrace. By creating an ironic distance between work and worker, this sort of playfulness protects one from the *Dilbert*-like senselessness of the workplace more than it engages one in the flow of an absorbing activity. For instance, the editors of *Gig* (a compilation of interviews done in the 1990s with people about their work) argue that in contrast to the work ethic depicted in Studs Terkel's 1972 book *Working*, the ethic now is "more casual, transitory, cynical, and playful." This ironic temperament resists the suggestion that the world might be remade in the image of any grand ideology—yet also disdains enchantment with the world as it is. *This* sort of playfulness is safe; it takes the advantages it inherits for granted, and forgoes risk. Edgy without being critical, this temperament is not often earnest: declarations are always modified, serious moments leavened by a knowing wink. Moreover, real commitments like work are made to seem less real by viewing them as a sort of game, or play.

To see work as play in this sense is to defend oneself from disappointment by isolating work in a self-contained (safely distant) place. Of course, the reality of work is that it is often set apart from the rest of life. Work is truncated from the family, not only taking place in a distinct location but also following norms that would be out of place at home. Play is an apt metaphor when work seems like a game that, however unpleasant, is disconnected from the larger society. In these respects, the fragmentation of work makes work more like play: its meaning is self-contained. To think of our work as play in this sense is to find some protection from the insults, the stupidity, and the insecurity of the workplace.

# alumni notes

## Anthropology

**Joseph L. Popp, PhD '79,** announces the publication of his new book, *Popp's Concordance to Darwin's On the Origin of Species* (Man and Nature Press).

## Comparative Literature

**Laurence Senelick, PhD '72,** celebrated the Anton Chekhov centennial (2004) by editing and translating the Norton Critical Edition *Anton Chekhov's Selected Plays*, as well as lecturing on Chekhov in St. Petersburg, Oxford, and throughout the United States. His current projects are editing and translating the complete plays of Chekhov, which will contain work that has never appeared before in English, and an encyclopedia of Russian theater. Senelick is the Fletcher Professor of Drama and Oratory at Tufts University and a recipient of the St. George Medal of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

## English and American Literature and Language

**Robert Bell, PhD '72,** was named 2004 Outstanding College Professor by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. Bell holds the William R. Kenan Jr. chair at Williams College. The award was presented in November 2004.

## History

**Richard Nelson Frye, PhD '46, GSA '49,** the Aga Khan Professor of Iranian *Emeritus* at Harvard, will publish his memoir *Greater Iran: A 20th-century Odyssey*, this spring (Mazda Publishers). In it, he describes witnessing changes in Afghanistan, Iran/Persia, and Tajikistan; and "how a boy from a small Midwestern town" came to dedicate a career to explaining the history and cultures of Iran and Central Asia. Frye will publish a translated edition of *Ibn Fadlan's Journey to Russia: A 10th-century Traveler from Baghdad to the Volga River* this spring (Markus Wiener Publishers).

## History of Science

**William R. Newman, PhD '86,** received an endowed chair, the Ruth N. Halls Professorship, at Indiana University at Bloomington. Newman chairs the Department of History and Philosophy of Science there and teaches the history of early modern and medieval science. His book *Promethean Ambitions: Alchemy and the Quest to Perfect Nature* (University of Chicago Press; reviewed in the *New York Times* and *International Herald Tribune*) was published last year. His coauthored book, *Alchemical*

*continued on page 9*

# INTERPRETING EVERY SIGHT, EVERY SMELL AND SOUND:

*How pleasant the yellow butter*
*melting on white kernels, the meniscus*
*of red wine that coats the insides of our goblets*

*where we sit with sturdy friends as old as we are*
*after shucking the garden's last Silver Queen*
*and setting husks and stalks aside for the horses*

*the last two of our lives, still noble to look upon:*
*our first foal, now a bossy mare of 28*
*which calibrates to 84 in people years*

*and my chestnut gelding, not exactly a youngster*
*at 22. Every year, the end of summer*
*lazy and golden, invites grief and regret:*

*suddenly it's 1980, winter batters us,*
*winds strike like cruelty out of Dickens. Somehow*
*we have seven horses for six stalls. One of them,*

*a big-nosed roan gelding, calm as a president's portrait*
*lives in the rectangle that leads to the stalls. We call it*
*the motel lobby. Wise old campaigner, he dunks his*

*hay in the water bucket to soften it, then visits the others*
*who hang their heads over their Dutch doors. Sometimes*
*he sprawls out flat to nap in his commodious quarters.*

*That spring, in the bustle of grooming*
*and riding and shoeing, I remember I let him go*
*to a neighbor I thought was a friend, and the following*

*fall she sold him down the river. I meant to*
*but never did go looking for him, to buy him back*
*and now my old guilt is flooding this twilit table*

*my guilt is ghosting the candles that pale us to skeletons*
*the ones we must all become in an as yet unspecified order.*
*Oh Jack, tethered in what rough stall alone*

*did you remember that one good winter?*

# A Conversation With Poet Maxine Kumin

By Charles Coe

Pictured above, Maxine Kumin. In addition to her 15 collections of poetry, Kumin is the author of four novels; a collection of stories; a memoir; three books of essays and critical writing, including most recently *Always Beginning: Essays on a Life in Poetry*; and several children's books, including four written with friend Anne Sexton. A recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, Kumin has also served as Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress before that post was renamed Poet Laureate of the United States and was poet laureate of her home state of New Hampshire from 1989 to 1994. She has taught at Princeton, Columbia, Brandeis, MIT, and other institutions.

**So writes the poet Maxine Kumin** in the title piece of her 15th and latest volume *Jack and Other New Poems* (W.W. Norton & Company: 2005). The collection showcases her tremendous gifts of narrative and observation, and offers a unique perspective on the natural world that is both deeply moving yet clear-eyed and unsentimental.

While on Florida's Sanibel Island, taking a mid-winter break from the New Hampshire winter, Kumin (AB '46, AM '48, comparative literature) spoke by telephone to discuss her perspectives on life and work.

"Right now, I'm on sabbatical from everything," she says. "No teaching, no writing. My husband and I spend our time walking on the beach or swimming in a heated pool. I read *The New York Times* every day—all the way through—something I never have a chance to do up north.

"I do happen to be working on some translations of work by a Russian Israeli poet. And my daughter and I have been collaborating on some translations of a Belgian poet." She suddenly chuckles at the realization that her time in Florida is beginning to sound like something other than most people's idea of a relaxed getaway. "I'm very ambivalent about being on vacation," she says. "I don't take kindly to leisure; I'm something of an unregenerate Calvinist Jew."

As much as Kumin enjoys a break from the New England winter, she eagerly anticipates a return to the New Hampshire horse farm that has for years served as her greatest source of personal and professional inspiration. "My work all comes from a sense of place. We live deep in the woods on a derelict dairy farm that we've spent 40 years restoring. We've cleared more than 15 acres of pastureland. The landscape is craggy and unforgiving: all granite outcroppings and scrubby wild overgrowth. But we've become intimately attached to it.

"I lie awake in the morning, listening to bird songs. If a horse coughs in the middle of the night, I wake up. If it's one cough, maybe he's just clearing his throat, and if he's quiet after that I'll go back to sleep. More than one cough and it might be asthma; I have to get out of bed and go to the barn. I'm always interpreting every sight, every smell and sound.

"And my garden is of vital importance to me," she says. "I have seven raised beds, three feet wide and thirty feet long. I grow almost everything we eat. I blanche and freeze. I pickle. I'll do ridiculous things, like putting up twenty jars of blueberry jam in a season. My garden takes up a lot of my time when I'm not at my desk.

"And when I'm at my desk, I don't just write; it's my looking post. I can see down into the paddock. We're at the top of a dead-end dirt road, and I have a perfect view from my desk. Nothing goes unnoticed. I can see our dogs lying at the edge of the road, praying for someone or something to come up so they can repel the invader with barks."

Kumin's work is as grounded and unadorned as the life she shares with her husband on the family horse farm.

"To the dismay of some modernists, I suppose, I'm an old-fashioned poet—a story teller," she says. "For me, a poem without at least some sort of narrative thread is meaningless; it doesn't engage me." Her straightforward writing style, which pointedly avoids the showy and self-conscious, is very much a reflection of the unadorned, austere beauty of her New England home. She doesn't consider her poetry "cutting-edge" or experimental, and doesn't mind being considered a bit old-fashioned by some.

"A lot of my poetry wouldn't really work as free verse, though I do turn to that fairly often," she says. "When I do, I confess I feel I'm in Indiana with a 360-degree horizon, and my eyelids are pinned open. Where should I break the line? When is this a stanza? Paradoxically, I find that working within the structures of traditional forms gives me the freedom to express myself. It makes many of the decisions—such as line length, metrical pattern, and so on—ahead of time."

Kumin first studied the craft of poetry at Radcliffe, earning her bachelor's degree there in 1946 and her master's degree in comparative literature from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences two years later.

Kumin describes her years at Harvard as "yeasty, heady times." "Some of us would hang out for hours at the old Hayes Bickford Restaurant talking about

*continued on page 16*

*continued from page 3*

One scientist has taken DNA samples from the shells of Galapagos tortoises collected more than a century ago to pursue a restoration project. Historically, every island in the Galapagos had its own distinct species of tortoise, Pick says. Through human interference, however, certain species have become intermingled, and some tortoises are now living on the "wrong" islands. By studying the DNA of tortoises collected 150 years ago, the biologist was hoping to sort out the muddle and restore the tortoises to their proper homes.

A recent *Boston Globe* article told how Scott Edwards, professor of organismic and evolutionary biology and curator of ornithology, is using DNA from the museum's many bird specimens to see where in the evolutionary journey birds diverged from reptiles. He is also using genetic data to help maintain endangered species.

Scientists also get DNA samples in the museum's Hide Room, which, as its name indicates, is filled with the hides of hundreds of animals. Biologists use the samples for many types of studies, such as documenting the ways in which species change over time and determining whether enough genetic variation exists for a species to remain viable.

No one has used specimen DNA in attempting to clone an extinct creature—at least so far. Scientists in Australia recently gave up an effort to bring back the Tasmanian tiger using DNA samples (not, however, from the specimen in the Natural History Museum).

**Above, from left to right:**
Pictured above: (left) the cabinet used by Vladimir Nabokov for storing samples of butterfly genitalia when he was a research fellow at the Museum of Comparative Zoology in the 1940s; (middle) this specimen of the long extinct Tasmanian tiger was acquired by the Natural History Museum in 1882; (right) specimens of the Xerces blue butterfly, which became extinct in 1941 due to urbanization; they once thrived in the San Francisco area.

"Most scientists are totally skeptical that this will ever be possible," Pick acknowledges. "But no less an authority than biologist E.O. Wilson [Harvard's Pellegrino University Professor *Emeritus* and a GSAS alumnus, PhD '56] says that you have to use your imagination and look to the future. It may someday be possible to take DNA from a very old museum specimen—even if the DNA is not in perfect condition, some of it can be recovered—and figure out a way not only to clone it but to get the full set of chromosomes, and, then, using a host species, bring [the animal] back. It's just short of science fiction."

Not all that long ago, some scientists considered natural history museums to be outmoded places for research. When the double helix was discovered in the 1950s, Pick says, "everybody who was anybody wanted to become a molecular biologist." Many biologists began viewing species in terms of their DNA, rather than in the familiar terms of life cycle, habitat, structure, coloration and diet. Traditional biologists were seen as "horribly old-fashioned," Pick says. "Then, in the 1980s, there was this real renewal of interest in natural history museums, because people realized that all the DNA in the world wasn't going to save animals… These collections became important again."

Harvard scientists also use the museum to present their research to wider audiences. A recent exhibition, *Origins: Life's First 3 Billion Years,* was based on the work of Andrew Knoll, the Fisher Professor of Natural History and professor of earth and planetary sciences. The exhibition has "microscopes set up to get people thinking, 'Well, what was the Earth like three billion years ago?'" says Pick.

Most of the museum collection is out of the public eye—with approximately 21 *million* specimens, there is simply not enough space to display them all. Yet one of the more humorous pieces is temporarily on view for all to see, a painting by naturalist John James Audubon that Pick refers to as his "shameful lie."

"The lie is that Audubon backdated his painting," she explains. "He did this illustration of the American ruffed grouse and dated it 1805. But if you hold the paper up to the light, you can see that the watermark on the paper is dated 1810—the paper did not *exist* in 1805." Audubon was trying to be first to depict that particular species of bird. He wanted to best Alexander Wilson, who lived a generation before him and who was the great name in ornithology in America—until Audubon. Harvard also has Wilson's painting of the ruffed grouse.

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences continues to enroll the greatest number of international students at Harvard. Thus, we have a particularly important role to play in making Harvard a university with a truly global compass. We have wonderful programs to support our international students, from the moment their applications are accepted to the moment they receive their diplomas. At a time when it is particularly important to do so, GSAS provides a very welcoming face for the University.

We continue to attract superb students from around the world, and continue to expand our ability to support them. This year we concluded a historic agreement with CONACYT, the Mexican equivalent of the National Science Foundation, to fully support PhD students from that country. Additional support came from the Fundación Mexico en Harvard, an alumni group. This is a wonderful example that we hope to follow in the future.

In all of these ways and more, GSAS continues to move from strength to strength, carried forward by a talented and dedicated staff and a loyal and active alumni community. I can say with confidence that the next GSAS dean is in for a wonderful experience!

"So this was a fun, if somewhat esoteric, story that Thomas Barbour, the museum director back in the 1930s, really loved," Pick says. "He hung these illustrations…side by side in his office to show that Audubon was a bit of a scoundrel."

…In the 1980s, there was this real renewal of interest in natural history museums, because people realized that all the DNA in the world wasn't going to save animals.

Pick's personal favorite "story behind the specimen" is Vladimir Nabokov's genitalia cabinet, a wooden cabinet used by the novelist to store his collection of male blue butterfly genitalia. Nabokov was actually a research fellow in zoology at Harvard in the 1940s, and once one recovers from the image of the author of *Lolita* studying butterfly genitalia in a Harvard laboratory, one asks: why that subject in particular?

"The genitalia of male blue butterflies is extremely complex," says Pick. To the naked eye, two butterflies might appear virtually identical. But peer at their genitalia under a microscope, and the differences can be striking. Today, scientists still analyze butterfly genitalia to help distinguish between species, even in an age of DNA studies.

Indeed, though he was long considered a dilettante, it has turned out that some of Nabokov's taxonomies are still accepted. In 1999, the book *Nabokov's Blues: The Scientific Odyssey of a Literary Genius* was published to demonstrate the legitimacy of his research. "Nabokov was a serious taxonomist," Pick says. "He actually did quite a good job at distinguishing species that you would not think were different—by looking at their genitalia under a microscope six hours a day, seven days a week, until his eyesight was permanently impaired."

*The Harvard Museum of Natural History is located at 26 Oxford Street, Cambridge; tel.: 617-495-3045; e-mail: hmnh@oeb.harvard.edu; Website: www.hmnh.harvard.edu.*

# alumni notes

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*Laboratory Notebooks and Correspondence*, of colonial American scientist George Starkey, is forthcoming, also with the University of Chicago Press. Newman is the principal investigator in a multi-year National Science Foundation–sponsored project to edit and analyze the "chymical" papers of Isaac Newton.

## Junior Fellows Program

**Elliott Mendelson, GSA '58,** writes that his new book, *Introducing Game Theory and Its Applications* (CRC Press), "treats two parts of game theory that usually attract different audiences. The first deals with combinatorial games, including tic-tac-toe, checkers, chess, and other parlor games. These are especially attractive to problem-solvers who enjoy finding strategies for winning challenging games. The second class of games is more general and covers that part of game theory that is required of graduate students in economics and business, and also finds applications in biology and political science." Mendelson, professor of mathematics *emeritus* at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, is also the author of *Introduction to Mathematical Logic*.

## Sociology

**Mounira Maya Charrad, PhD '80,** has received the 2004 Distinguished Scholarly Publication Award from the American Sociological Association for the Outstanding Book in the field of sociology for her book *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco* (University of California Press, 2001). The book, which focuses on women's rights and nation-building, previously received awards from the American Political Science Association, the Phi Alpha Theta International History Honor Society, and the Eastern Sociological Society. Charrad is an associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas at Austin.

**Bonnie Menes Kahn, PhD '82,** writes: "A common thread runs through all of [my] work. *Cosmopolitan Culture: The Gilt-edged Dream of a Tolerant City* (Atheneum, 1987) was about membership in a city, a loyalty to a great purpose. *My Father Spoke French: Nationalism and Legitimacy in Alsace, 1871-1914* (Garland, 1990), based on my dissertation, was about membership in a nation. *Building Wisdom's House: A Book of Values for Our Time* (Perseus, 1997), coauthored with three prominent clergy members, was about religious attachment. So it is no surprise that the work I just finished, *Loyalty and Constance: A Sociology of*

*continued on page 11*

# plant life

## Ethnobotanist Michael Balick Reflects on a Career at the Nexus of Plants, People, and Culture

*By Susan Lumenello*

For someone who has worked to protect and promote native lands and cultures around the world for 30 years, receiving an award for scientific cooperation is both apt and inevitable. Which explains why the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) recently awarded the 2004 International Scientific Cooperation Award to Michael Balick, a scientist, curator, and research director for the New York Botanical Garden.

Balick has worked there since receiving his PhD in organismic and evolutionary biology from Harvard in 1980. In addition to his multi-tiered responsibilities at the Garden, Balick spends several months each year conducting fieldwork in Central and South America, Asia, and the Pacific. He helped to establish a major botanical garden in Costa Rica, and cofounded the Ix Chel Tropical Research Foundation in Belize, which promotes conservation and sustainable farming.

He has received millions of dollars in research grants and contracts from health care, governmental, environmental, and conservation groups to study indigenous plants that can be used, for example, in the fight against cancer and HIV/AIDS; to learn how local people around the world use plants for their own health care; and to examine the nutritional makeup of plants used for food that Western science has yet to analyze.

While the AAAS award is a milestone for Balick, he sees it "more importantly" as a kind of disciplinary coming of age for the little-known field of ethnobotany as well.

"The notion of an ethnobotanist running off to a remote field site is a very 19th-century concept," he says. "I think we've shown that by using state-of-the-art research tools [for] contemporary problems, ethnobotanists have a place in 21st-century science, particularly interpreting the natural world for those colleagues who carry out most of their work in laboratories or in virtual worlds."

Ethnobotany emerged in the late 1800s as a science that simply listed medicinal plants used by indigenous people. By the 1940s, the science had expanded its focus to encompass understanding the relationship among plants, people, and culture.

Credit for this evolution is due in large part, Balick says, to his Harvard mentor—and GSAS alumnus—Richard Evans Schultes, the Edward C. Jeffrey Professor of Biology *Emeritus* who died in 2001.

"Schultes devoted his life to exploring the relationship between Amazonian peoples and their environment," Balick says.

Recognizing the power of traditional healing was at the heart of the ethnobotany evolution, as initiated by Schultes. In the early 1980s, while conducting fieldwork in Colombia, Balick witnessed a particularly dramatic example of that power.

A young Guahibo man was hunting for deer in the forest when a deadly *Bothrops* snake struck him. Hearing his cries, the hunter's companions came for him and saw he was suffering from the fast-acting venom. They took him back to the village, but when the pain became too great, they began the 24-hour journey to a small field hospital. He was given anti-venom and intravenous liquids and drugs, but the hunter's elevated breathing, severe edema, and dangerously low body temperature and blood pressure did not offer much hope for his survival.

But the hunter was lucky. A Guahibo shaman, a patient in the hospital, saw the patient and, assessing his symptoms, saw that he was suffering from snakebite. The shaman told the doctor that the hunter did not understand the treatment he was receiving from the hospital and offered to complement the Western therapy with the "smoke-blowing treatment."

This consisted of traditional chanting and blowing cigarette smoke toward the patient's head, arms, and legs. While continuing to chant, the shaman soaked a cigarette in a glass of water and then sprinkled the "tobacco water" on the patient. According to Balick, who was present with attending physician Magnus Zethelius, the ritual took approximately one half-hour. Within minutes, the patient relaxed, and his vital signs returned to normal.

Balick and Zethelius described the experience in a widely published report that appeared in the *Journal of Ethnopharmacology:* "The synergistic effect of the spiritual and physical treatments was significant enough to save the patient's life in this particularly traumatic case," Balick says.

Though Balick has trekked to his share of far-flung places, America's immigrant culture allows him to conduct important fieldwork a subway ride away from his office at the New York Botanical Garden.

Recently, he has been working with traditional healers in the city's large Dominican community. Through a network of botanicas, healers sell herbs to a population that Balick estimates to be over one million.

Courtesy of the New York Botanical Garden

Ethnobotanist Michael Balick's 15 books include the coauthored *Rainforest Remedies: One Hundred Healing Herbs of Belize* (1998), *Plants, People, and Culture: The Science of Ethnobotany* (1996, with fellow GSAS alumnus Paul Alan Cox), and *Medicinal Plants: Can Utilization and Conservation Co-exist?* (1997). Here, Balick (left) collects plants with local ethnobotanist Francisco Sohl on Pohnpei, Micronesia.

"These people often use traditional remedies as their first line of treatment for primary health care issues, and, as they get more serious, go to the emergency room," he says. "We're seeking to help allopathic (Western) primary health-care practitioners have a greater understanding and an appreciation of Dominican traditional medical systems so there doesn't have to be a significant jump between the botanica and the emergency room."

Funded in part by the National Institutes of Health, Balick and his Botanical Garden colleagues are focusing on herbal and plant-based anti-inflammatories used by these Dominican healers. Part of the work that Balick and his colleagues are doing involves putting these herbal remedies through the efficacy studies similar to those conducted by the FDA on pharmaceuticals. "We're hopefully going to be able to make some recommendations on mixtures used by the community practitioners," he says.

For instance, herbal remedies such as saw palmetto seed and *Prunus africana* bark, both used to combat enlarged prostate in men, appear to work "extremely well," Balick says, "and at a fraction of the cost of a typical pharmaceutical product or a more radical surgical intervention." *Prunus africana* is an evergreen found mainly in Africa and known as Pygeum.

Because compounds made from simple plants and herbs can rival expensive drugs, traditional communities need to protect their botanical legacies from commercial exploitation. For a scientist, then, Balick has become rather expert in the field of intellectual property rights. In fact, at GSAS in the 1970s, Balick was told he was the first biology graduate student to take Business School courses. He studied with the renowned Ray Goldberg, a professor of agriculture and business, now *emeritus*, and an expert on the global food system.

The best way to protect the intellectual property rights of indigenous communities, Balick says, is to publish inventories of plants and their medical and therapeutic applications. "That insures that any patents that are ever developed by an outsider could be challenged [legally] as a 'prior invention' on the basis of indigenous knowledge that has been codified," he says.

Balick is undertaking one such inventory on the Micronesian island of Pohnpei. Working with locally trained ethnobotanists, the Pohnpei Council of Traditional Leaders, and other international and local groups, he and his colleagues are documenting the traditional uses of plants on the island—while promoting biological *and* cultural diversity as well.

"This [project] brings in the concept of devolution," Balick says. "You've heard of evolution? Well, devolution, in this sense, is about the loss of knowledge of living things and their uses. Unfortunately, devolution is happening at a rapidly increasing pace as the world globalizes itself."

As much as Balick works with plants these days, he says he also is helping communities to document traditional tool- and textile-making and farming methods. "Part of our work is about … allowing people to stand up for their roots, so to speak, and really retain their culture."

## alumni notes

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*Trust Relationships*, discusses trust as the basis of attachments, loyalties, and memberships."

### Urban Planning

**Melville C. Branch, PhD '49,** writes that a special collection of his work has been established at the Virginia Commonwealth University Library. Branch is the Distinguished Professor of Planning *Emeritus* at the University of Southern California's School of Policy, Planning, and Development and a pioneer in the field of urban planning. His 23 books covered corporate planning; the use of sample surveys, aerial photography, and remote sensing in city and regional planning; and comprehensive planning theory and principles, among other topics.

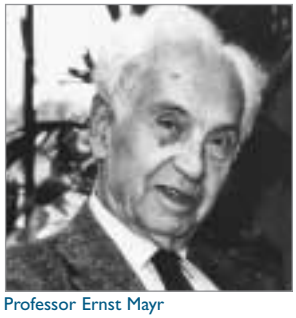
### In Memoriam

**Marian Kamil Dziewanowski, PhD '51, history,** died February 18, 2005, at age 91. A scholar of Polish history, Dziewanowski taught at Boston College, Boston University, and the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. As a child in Kiev, he witnessed the Russian Revolution, and his family eventually moved to Warsaw. During World War II, he served with the Polish cavalry and later was an instructor at the Institute of Parachutists and Saboteurs in England. He also served as an assistant military attaché with the Polish government-in-exile in Washington, DC. Dziewanowski retired from teaching in 1983 but lectured at Oxford University, the University of Paris, and University of Bordeaux. His books include *Russia in the 20th Century* (6th edition, 2002); *War at Any Price: World War II In Europe, 1939–1945* (2nd edition, 1991); and *Poland in the 20th Century* (1977).

**Amy Johnson, PhD '98, Middle East studies**, died December 2, 2004, from injuries received in a car accident in November 2004. At the time of her death she was associate professor of history at Berry College (Georgia). She was also the faculty sponsor for Berry College's successful Model Arab League. Her book, *Reconstructing Modern Egypt,* was published in 2004 by Syracuse University Press.

**Carl Moser, PhD '48, chemistry,** died December 17, 2004, in Paris. A theoretical chemist, he was the first director of CECAM (European Center for Atomic and Molecular Computations), founded in 1969 and located in Lyon, France. He retired in 1990. For more information about Carl Moser, contact Marvin Paulshock, PhD '48, chemistry, at mxpaul@msn.com.

### Harvard Evolutionary Biologist Ernst Mayr Dies



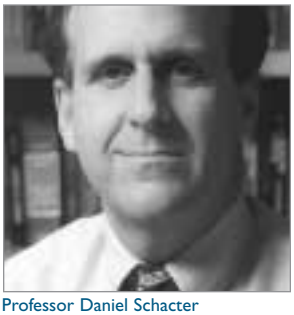
Professor Ernst Mayr

Ernst Mayr, the Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology *emeritus,* died February 3. He was 100. Called the Darwin of the 20th century, Mayr was arguably the preeminent evolutionary biologist during a career that spanned eight decades. He was the Agassiz Professor of Zoology from 1953 to 1975, when he retired and took an *emeritus* title. He led the Museum of Comparative Zoology from 1961 to 1970.

In a statement, William C. Kirby, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, said, "Professor Mayr's contributions to Harvard University, and to the field of evolutionary biology, were extraordinary by any measure. As a professor, museum director, benefactor to our library of comparative zoology, and leading mind of the 20th century, he shaped and articulated modern understanding of biodiversity and related fields." In a remembrance, the *New York Times* recognized as one of Mayr's most important contributions to biology "his persuasive argument for the role of geography in the origin of new species." Mayr was also an accomplished ornithologist and named more than 24 bird species. His many books include *What Evolution Is* (2002) and, most recently, *What Makes Biology Unique? Considerations on the Autonomy of a Scientific Discipline* (2004).

### Harvard Psychologist Wins National Academy of Sciences Award

*Liza Green*



Professor Daniel Schacter

Daniel Schacter, the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Psychology, won the Award for Scientific Reviewing from the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), in February 2005. The $10,000 prize is awarded annually for excellence in scientific reviewing within the past 10 years. Schacter was chosen "for his numerous books and reviews, which illuminate and explain the psychology and neuroscience of human memory for specialists, scientific colleagues, and the public," according to an NAS statement.

### National Academy of Engineering Elects Harvard Chemist

*Harvard News Office*

Professor George M. Whitesides

The National Academy of Engineering (NAE) elected 74 new members and 10 foreign associates, it was announced in February. Among the honorees was George M. Whitesides, the Mallinckrodt Professor of Chemistry, "for the development and promulgation of methods of self-assembly and soft lithography." Election to the National Academy of Engineering is among the highest professional distinctions accorded an engineer. Howard Raiffa, professor *emeritus* at Harvard Business School, was also elected "for contributions to decision analysis, negotiation analysis, and engineering decision-making."

### How—and Why—the Flytrap Does It

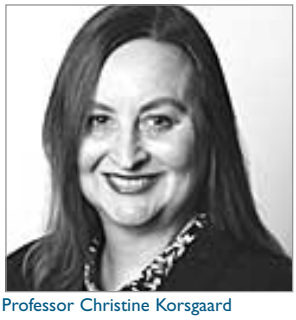
Lakshminarayanan Mahadevan, the Gordon McKay Professor of Applied Mathematics and Mechanics, has figured out how the Venus flytrap snaps shut. When the hairs inside its two leaves are stimulated, the leaves can clamp onto whatever touches the hairs in one-tenth of a second. But why—and how? According to Mahadevan, the snapping action results from the curved shape of the leaves, which store and release "elastic energy" like a rubber band does when it is stretched and then snaps back into shape. Geometry, not evil intent is behind the plant's action, *Little Shop of Horrors* notwithstanding. The study was published in *Nature* in January 2005.

## Norton Professor of Poetry Named

Daniel Barenboim, longtime music director and conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, will be the next Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard, the *Chicago Tribune* reported in February. Barenboim will deliver the Norton lectures in spring 2006. The professorship is awarded to poets in the broadest sense, and has been held by artists and scholars including Leonard Bernstein, T.S. Eliot, Harold Bloom, and Frank Stella.

Daniel Barenboim

Harvard News Office



Professor Christine Korsgaard

## Harvard Philosopher Wins Mellon Foundation Distinguished Achievement Award

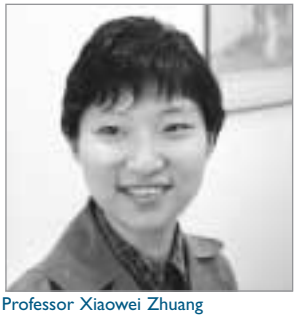
Christine Korsgaard, the Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Philosophy, was one of four recipients of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Distinguished Achievement Award, it was announced in December 2004. The awards honor scholars "who have made significant contributions to humanistic inquiry," according to the foundation, and are given to the individual and his or her institution through the establishment of grants. Korsgaard, who earned her PhD in philosophy from Harvard in 1981, is one of the leading figures in contemporary moral philosophy. She is the author of the books *The Sources of Normativity* and *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (both 1996).

## GSAS Alumnus Honored as National Technology Laureate

Robert M. Metcalfe, PhD '73, mathematics, was one of three individuals named as National Medal of Technology Laureates for 2003 by President Bush. Medals were presented at a White House ceremony this March. Metcalfe developed the Ethernet, the precursor to the Internet, and is a partner at Polaris Ventures, a technology firm in Waltham, Mass. The medal is the United States' highest honor for technology innovation. Watts S. Humphrey, GSA '54, applied mathematics, received a medal for work in software engineering.

Robert Metcalfe

Harvard News Office



Professor Xiaowei Zhuang

## Hughes Institute Names "Most Promising" Scientists

Two Harvard researchers were among 43 scientists named Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) investigators in March: David R. Liu, a professor of chemistry and chemical biology; and Xiaowei Zhuang, an assistant professor of chemistry and chemical biology and assistant professor of physics. Liu, who studies the biochemical reactions of molecular synthesis, was also among *Popular Science* magazine's "Brilliant 10" of young scientists in the United States for 2004. Zhuang, who uses ultrasensitive optical imaging to understand how viruses invade cells, was a MacArthur Foundation "genius" Fellowship recipient in 2003. The two join an elite group who will receive generous long-term funding (more than $300 million in biomedical research over the next seven years) for their labs from HHMI. Approximately 300 scientists were nominated for these prestigious positions. There are now 343 HHMI investigators nationwide; most work in the Boston-Cambridge area.

— *Compiled by Susan Lumenello.*

# ALUMNI BOOKS

## INFORMAL EMPIRE

Mexico and Central America in Victorian Culture

By Robert D. Aguirre, PhD '90, English and American literature and language
University of Minnesota Press, 2005, 296 pp.

"Informal imperialism," as defined by the author, refers to the pilfering or legitimate acquisition of Latin American cultural artifacts that ended up filling the British Museum and other Western museums in the 19th century. But were these objects originally collected with scholarly intent or as exotic curiosities of an "other" culture? Aguirre is associate professor of English at Wayne State University and coeditor of the forthcoming book *Connecting Continents: Britain and Latin America, 1780–1900* (Rodopi Press).

## SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Staging the American in China


By Claire Conceison, AM '92, regional studies–East Asia, GSA '97
University of Hawaii Press, 2004, 297 pp.

Chinese views of Americans have changed—and, in many cases, soured—over the past 20 years, and it shows in that nation's theater. Conceison looks at several recent plays that portray American or Western characters from across the ethical spectrum, including *Swing, The Great Going Abroad,* and *Bird Men.* The author is an assistant professor of drama at Tufts University and an affiliate at Harvard's Fairbank Center for East Asian Research.

## DIVORCE IN JAPAN

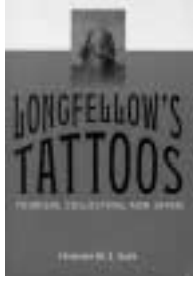
Family, Gender, and the State, 1600–2000

By Harald Fuess, PhD '95, history
Stanford University Press, 2004, 240 pp.

Japan has long had one of the highest divorce rates in the world; indeed, it was the divorce epicenter in the early part of the 20th century. Liberal divorce laws allowed couples to negotiate the dissolution of their own marriages, and the culture was much more accepting of the practice than Western nations were until fairly recently. Fuess, an associate professor of modern Japanese history at Sophia University (Japan), explores the history of divorce in Japan and reveals some fascinating cultural realities. Fuess is the editor of *The Japanese Empire in East Asia and Its Postwar Legacy* (1999).

## LONGFELLOW'S TATTOOS

Tourism, Collecting, and Japan




By Christine M.E. Guth, PhD '76, fine arts
University of Washington Press, 2004, 234 pp.

On June 1, 1871, Charles Longfellow, telegraphed his father, the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Have suddenly decided to set sail for Japan today." The junior Longfellow headed East in search of adventure, but he returned home years later an authority on Japanese culture, in particular the resonance of tattoos, ritual clothing, and other forms of personal art. His hundreds of photographs document a rarely seen period in that country's history. Guth's other books include *Art, Tea, and Industry: Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle* (1993).

## THE FATE OF FAMILY FARMING

Variations on an American Idea


By Ronald Jager, PhD '64, philosophy
University Press of New England, 2004, 244 pp.

The family farm, writes the author, "is way up there next to God and country, close to baseball and motherhood." Jager, who grew up on a small Midwestern farm, documents the

rise and decline of farming as a way of life and ownership, and what the institution's prospects are, given such factors as powerful agribusiness interests and biotechnology. Jager was professor of philosophy at Yale University and is the author of several books, including *Last House on the Road* (1994).

## THE ALLURE OF TOXIC LEADERS

Why We Follow Destructive Bosses and Corrupt Politicians—and How We Can Survive Them


By Jean Lipman-Blumen, PhD '70, sociology
Oxford University Press, 2004, 320 pp.

Why do employees, citizens, and other members of large groups follow and even continue to admire leaders who are known or found to be corrupt or worse? This study delves into the thought processes of followers of cult leaders such as Jim Jones, employees of companies involved in recent corporate scandals, and others. Lipman-Blumen is the Thornton F. Bradshaw Professor of Public Policy and Professor of Organizational Behavior at Claremont Graduate University (California). Her previous books include *Hot Groups: Seeding Them, Feeding Them, and Using Them to Ignite Your Organization* (1999).

## NEW ENGLAND'S CRISES AND CULTURAL MEMORY

Literature, Politics, History, Religion, 1620–1860

By John McWilliams, PhD '68, English and American literature and language
Cambridge University Press, 2004, 366 pp.

New England's cultural values and identity grew out of transformative and crisis-laden events that accompanied the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the abolitionist movement, and the Civil War, McWilliams contends. But what *was* New England during those long decades? This is an in-depth study of a region and its cultural reaction to crisis. The author is the Abernethy Professor of American Literature at Middlebury College. His previous books include *The American Epic* (1989).

## AMERICA'S LOST WAR

Vietnam: 1945–1975


By Charles E. Neu, PhD '64, history
Harlan Davidson, 2005, 272 pp.

The United States' involvement in Vietnam reaches back to the mid-1940s when a fledgling Vietnamese government sought American aid against French colonial rule. Neu traces the long journey in brief, but still offers an in-depth look at the complex interconnected reasons leading to the Vietnam War. Neu, formerly a professor of history at Brown University, is currently an adjunct professor of history at the University of Miami. His many books include *After Vietnam: Legacies of a Lost War* (2000).

## THE MEDICAL DELIVERY BUSINESS

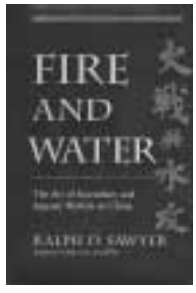
Health Reform, Childbirth, and the Economic Order


By Barbara Bridgman Perkins, AM '69, medical sciences
Rutgers University Press, 2004, 252 pp.

Over the past two decades, a business approach to maternal and infant care has transformed the experience of childbirth into one involving more surgery and high-tech procedures, contends Perkins. She calls for a "delivery system" that emphasizes caring over economic advantage. The author is an independent scholar and has published widely on health care.

## FIRE AND WATER

The Art of Incendiary and Aquatic Warfare in China

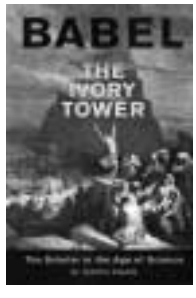



By Ralph D. Sawyer, AM '70, regional studies–East Asia, GSA '82; with Mei-chün Lee Sawyer, Westview Press, 2004, 445 pp.

Before the 14th-century invention of gunpowder, Chinese warriors used fire and water to destroy their enemies—or to defend against them. This highly detailed history of early warfare examines offensive and defensive strategies used, weapons created, and even how specific sieges were waged. The author, a leading scholar of Chinese warfare, has served as a consultant in Asia. His many other books include *The Essence of War: Leadership and Strategy from the Chinese Military Classics* (2004) and a notable translation of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (2003).

## BABEL AND THE IVORY TOWER

The Scholar in the Age of Science




By W. David Shaw, PhD '63, English and American literature and language
University of Toronto Press, 2005, 288 pp.

In the opening chapter, Shaw describes his latest book as "a celebration of scholars and an elegy for their passing." Deeply personal yet carefully researched, this new volume looks at how university curricula and culture have changed over recent decades, and how—or whether—the humanist scholar can negotiate the "maze" that is contemporary higher education. The author is professor of English *emeritus* at Victoria College, University of Toronto. His previous books include *Origins of the Monologue: The Hidden God* (1999).

*continued on page 16*

Anthony Loew

Maxine Kumin pictured here with her horse Deuteronomy, from the cover of her memoir *Inside the Halo and Beyond: The Anatomy of a Recovery.*

*continued from page 7*

poetry. After I finished my master's degree, I got a job teaching at Tufts. They'd never hired a woman in the English department before, and that year they hired two. But we were only allowed to teach freshman composition to physical education majors and dental technicians."

As her skill and reputation as a teacher and poet grew, she moved from teaching grammar to gym teachers to lecturing at numerous universities, including Princeton, Tufts, and Brandeis. In 1973, she was "stunned" when her collection *Up Country: Poems of New England* won the Pulitzer Prize.

"I thought it was a hoax when a reporter called, but an hour later I got the official word. I was dazed," she says. "Terrified. Television reporters were in my face almost immediately. We were living in Newton [Mass.] then, and the next day I fled to the farm, which at that time was our weekend hideaway—with a leaky roof, gaping clapboards, and briars everywhere. I basically spent the next two weeks trying to get over the fear that winning such a prestigious prize would make me too self-conscious to write."

In the years following, Kumin got a great deal of practice coping with that particular fear; she's received virtually every major award and accolade that might come a poet's way, including the Poets' Prize, the Aiken/Taylor Award for Modern Poetry, and the Ruth E. Lilly Prize. She's served as poetry consultant to the Library of Congress (a position that in later years evolved into that of United States Poet Laureate). She received the GSAS Centennial Medal in 1996 and recently was named the winner of the 2005 Harvard Arts Medal, which honors alumni who have achieved excellence in the arts or made a special contribution through the arts to education or the public good.

In 1998, Kumin overcame a personal disaster that would have a profound impact on her life and work.

While participating in a carriage competition, she was thrown when her horse bolted and suffered the kind of cervical spine fracture that's usually fatal and, if survived, almost always results in quadriplegia.

Remarkably, she not only survived, but was mobile less than a year later. She wrote of this journey in her 2000 memoir *Inside the Halo and Beyond: The Anatomy of a Recovery* (the term "halo" refers to the steel cage in which her head was stabilized by four titanium pins screwed into her skull).

*Inside the Halo* is a remarkable mix of despair and hope, a moving tribute to the family and friends whose love and support carried her through the ordeal. It's the artist as alchemist—transforming the ugliness of suffering and pain into beauty. "I think I can honestly say that my near-fatal accident merely stiffened my resolve to do the best work I was capable of," she says. That resolve remains clear in *Jack and Other New Poems*—the work of an important artist who shows no signs of slowing down.

Near the end of *Jack* is a poem titled "For Stanley, Some Lines at Random," in which she offers a wish for longtime friend and colleague Stanley Kunitz (a fellow GSAS alumnus and Centennial Medalist), whose work, by happy accident of the alphabet, has for years sat on the bookshelf next to hers, "spine on spine." It is a wish that will for both of them undoubtedly come true:

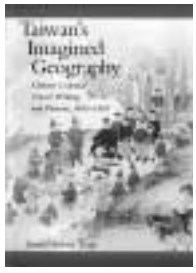
*Upright or slant, long may we stand*
*on shelves dusted or not*
*to be taken up by hands*
*that cherish us.*

Charles Coe is a poet and freelance writer living in Cambridge, Mass.



## TAIWAN'S IMAGINED GEOGRAPHY

Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895



By Emma Jinhua Teng, AB '89, PhD '97, East Asian languages and civilizations
Harvard University Asia Center, 2004, 370 pp.

"Imagined geography," writes the author, refers to geography distinguished by culture—an "imagined community"—rather than by the physical location of a place. In this instance, the place is Taiwan and its unique cultural geography, which once made it seem a far more distant neighbor to imperial China than the miles separating them would indicate. In her new book, Teng looks at the writings of Chinese visitors to the "savage island" for insight into the historical relationship between the two. The author is an associate professor of Chinese studies and the Class of 1956 Career Development Chair at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

## THE AMERICAN FAMILY

Across the Class Divide


By Yasushi Watanabe, PhD '97, anthropology
Pluto Press, 2004, 240 pp.

In this absorbing ethnography, the author turns his lens on two distinct if vanishing Boston cultural groups: the working-class families of South Boston and the upper-class Brahmins of Beacon Hill and Boston's tony suburbs. Watanabe is assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Information at Keio University (Japan) and was a senior associate of St. Antony's College, Oxford.

**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, Byerly Hall 300, 8 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138-3654. Questions? E-mail gsaa@fas.harvard.edu.

— *Compiled by Susan Lumenello.*

# The Art of Graduate Funding: One Student's Story

By Ann Hall

Art didn't play much of a role in first-year graduate student Andrei O. Pop's childhood in Romania. "The art museum in Bucharest had closed," Pop explains. "Romania's dictator Nicolae Ceausescu had taken over the Royal Palace as his personal residence." Pop's parents, both graduate students in mathematics at the University of Southern California, moved to Los Angeles when he was 10 years old, and for the first time, he found himself exposed to a rich spectrum of art, from hip-hop to the Getty Museum collection.

"My scholarly interest in art began during high school," Pop says, "though I pursued it only as an independent interest before I enrolled in college."

As an undergraduate at Stanford University, he initially focused on computer science, but increasingly felt drawn to the arts. "I found that I needed balance in my life and eventually [saw that] I could achieve that by studying art history." Through reading art history books, he discovered many areas for in-depth study and became even more attracted to the subject.

After graduating from Stanford as an art history major with a minor in computer science, Pop took a year off to consider his options. "I worked in a museum and tutored while I researched graduate programs in art history," he says. "I spoke to my undergraduate professors to identify the best scholars and programs in the field."

In the end, Pop applied to seven schools and chose Harvard based on the quality of the faculty, the department size, and the sheer variety of experiences that would be open to him. "It was important for me to be in a place where I could be continually stimulated," he says.

Pop currently focuses his research on how politics influences artists. "I'm really interested in the moments of turmoil as new governments struggle for dominance and especially in the way artists and intellectuals respond to such change," he says. In particular, Pop is fascinated by the ways in which artists have expected their art to alter the course of events.

Tony Rinaldo

Andrei Pop: "Having the fellowship up front means that I can be bolder in my choice of subject."

Last fall, Pop became one of the first recipients of the Ashford Dissertation Fellowship, a gift from Theodore H. Ashford, AB '58, and his family, and designed to support graduate students in the humanities and social sciences. The fellowship will allow Pop to focus on his dissertation without worrying about how to support himself.

"Harvard's offer was very generous, and the Ashford Fellowship took a weight off my mind," he says. Students who are writing their dissertations often face difficulties in finding the necessary funding for their final year.

The Ashford gift came soon after President Lawrence H. Summers established the Presidential Fellowships, which have been used in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences to supplement annual awards and add a $25,000 full-year, dissertation-completion fellowship. The Presidential Fellowships were funded for three years in the expectation that others would step in to assure their continued availability.

Ashford decided to take up the challenge, and his gift came at a crucial time. Although GSAS is committed to providing dissertation-completion fellowships for all eligible students in the humanities and social sciences, substantial funding is still needed to meet this goal.

Because it is early in his academic career, Pop knows his studies may lead him in an unexpected direction. He welcomes that possibility. "You can become interested in a topic that you don't know at all," he says. "Once you begin researching an idea, you can find that it will overturn your original supposition.

"I don't feel I have to orient myself so much toward finding a topic that will please a fellowship committee," Pop adds. "Having the fellowship up front means that I can be bolder in my choice of subject. I'm very fortunate, and I hope to use this opportunity well."

To find out about supporting the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, please contact Katherine Christy at 1-800-VERITAS or at katherine_christy@harvard.edu.

Ann Hall is a senior writer in Harvard's Office of Alumni Affairs and Development Communications.

Colloquy
GSAS ALUMNI QUARTERLY

# Alumni Events and Notices

For more information on GSAS alumni matters, contact GSAS Alumni Relations (e-mail: gsaa@fas.harvard.edu; tel.: 617-495-5591), or visit the GSAS Website at www.gsas.harvard.edu/alumni.

## Thursday and Friday, April 28 and 29, 2005 | Cambridge, MA

**Career Options Panels.** Academic Career Options Panels (April 28) will feature GSAS alumni panelists who teach and conduct research in a variety of academic settings.

Nonacademic Career Options Panels (April 29), will feature GSAS alumni who have parlayed their advanced degrees into exciting careers in such fields as nonprofits, the arts, and education; communications and publishing; public policy, international development, and government; financial services, patent law, and consulting; and high tech and biotech.

Contact the Office of Career Services at 617-495-2595 or go to www.ocs.fas.harvard.edu for more information on this program.

## Tuesday, May 17, 2005 | Toronto, Canada

Niall Ferguson, professor of history, will speak on "Empires: Past and Present." His books include the best-selling history of World War I, *The Pity of War*; *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*; and *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire*.

## Connecting With Harvard

- Visit the Harvard Alumni Association Website (www.haa.harvard.edu) and access faculty lectures through Harvard@Home, search the online alumni directory, update your contact information, register for events and travel-study programs, and sign up for e-mail forwarding.
- GSAS alumni can use library reading rooms and be admitted to the Widener stacks and most Harvard College libraries six days per calendar year (Library Privileges Office, 617-495-4166); enjoy access to Harvard University Employees Credit Union products and services (www.huecu.org or 617-495-4460); and use the Malkin Athletic Center, Blodgett Pool, or Hemenway Gym (http://gocrimson.ocsn.com/ot/membership.html).
- Recruit employees or participate in a Career Chat through the Office of Career Services (617-495-2595 or go to www.ocs.fas.harvard.edu).

## Currently on Harvard@Home

"Living Healthier, Living Longer: Part III" offers a leading-edge look at critical questions of lifestyle, health, and medicine, according to the Harvard Alumni Association notice. In this program: Daniel Schacter, the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Psychology, on the seven categories of memory "sins"; Robert Stickgold, associate professor of psychiatry, on sleep, dreams, and memory; and Julie Buring, professor of medicine, and Andrew Nierenberg, associate professor of psychiatry, on the risks and benefits of alternative medicine. View the program at http://athome.harvard.edu/dh/lhlc.html.

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