The Human-Animal Bond
VISITING SCHOLAR REBECCA SKLOOT INVESTIGATES HER OBSESSIONS
Above: The “Ways with Words” conference at the Institute on March 3 and 4 is about language in present-day society as it relates to, mirrors, and affects perceptions of gender. Please join us in person or via live webcast as a variety of experts—including anthropologists, computer scientists, linguists, journalists, performing artists, and psychologists—explore the interplay of gender and language. Register and learn more online.

The Radcliffe Institute is fully social. Keep up with us by joining our communities on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+.

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Ways with Words
Exploring Language and Gender

Features

Vital Signs
BY DEBORAH BLAGG
Infectious disease experts connect on Africa in a Radcliffe workshop.

The Human-Animal Bond
BY COLLEEN WALSH
Visiting scholar Rebecca Skloot investigates a sometimes complex and controversial relationship.

Living by the Sea
BY CORYDON IRELAND
Maryanne Kowaleski brings medieval maritime English culture into focus.

Fellowship & the Family Man
BY PAT HARRISON
Peter Behrens explores his family’s past through fiction set in Canada, England, Germany, and Ireland.

Departments

From the Dean 1
Around the Institute 2
New Books 32
Campaign News 34
Events Online 38
Newsmakers 40
Quick Study 48

The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University
Aspiring and Inspiring at the Radcliffe Institute

Our aspirations in the sciences drew crowds to our campus and to our website. We held a symposium to assess and redress the absence of women in leadership positions in the biotechnology industry, followed by a reception at which eager students, young professionals, and seasoned veterans created new connections to combat the problem. (See page 38.) Appropriately, activities around Radcliffe Yard this fall gave voice to the ambition embodied by this tall, bronze figure reaching for the sky.

Visitors to the Radcliffe Institute now pause to admire Aspiring, a stunning new sculpture created by artist Phlyssa Koshland ’71 and installed a few months ago near the front entrance to Fay House. (See page 34.)

Our annual science symposium, a fascinating and wide-ranging exploration of DNA, exhilarated an audience ranging from accomplished scientists to curious members of the public. Experts in fields as diverse as biology, ethics, and forensics shared their knowledge with a packed Knafel Center and online attendees from as far away as Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. (See page 4.)

In the arts, we premiered two exhibitions and then extended them because they were so well received. The newly renovated Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery in Byerly Hall opened with teamLab at Radcliffe: What a Loving and Beautiful World, an interactive installation created expressly for us by a collaborative of Japanese artists, engineers, and computer scientists. (See inside back cover.) Also extended by popular demand was the Schlesinger Library’s Corita Kent: Footnotes and Headlines, which beautifully complemented the Harvard Art Museums’ major show Corita Kent and the Language of Pop, with bold graphics, papers, and photographs from the library’s extensive Corita Kent collections.

This fall, in partnership with the Harvard University Native American Program and as part of our Initiative on Native and Indigenous Peoples, we presented a staged reading of Sliver of a Full Moon, a powerful play about the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, in which we heard from Native American survivors of abuse who had testified before Congress. In the compelling panel discussion that followed, an energized audience grappled with the difficulties still faced by Native communities. (Full video is online.) This spring, the initiative will continue with a poetry reading, a photography exhibition, and a major conference.

When we award the Radcliffe Medal in May to Janet Yellen, chair of the board of governors of the Federal Reserve, we will combine intellectual inspiration with community celebration. On that day, as on every day here at the Institute, we will aspire to bring together the worlds of action and ideas, and reach for the sky.

Lizabeth Cohen
Dean
Radcliffe Kicks Off Third Public Art Competition

Although it may seem to some that Latent (e)Scapes, the most recent winner of the Radcliffe Institute Public Art Competition, has only just arrived in Radcliffe’s Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Garden, cycle three of the competition has already begun.

By December 11, the competition had 86 registrants—more than four times the number from the previous one. Final submissions were due on January 29.

Launched in 2012, the Radcliffe Institute Public Art Competition offers students a unique opportunity to build a site-specific installation for prominent display in the Wallach Garden, in Radcliffe Yard. Keojin Jin MDes ’14 and Juhun Lee MDes ’14, representing 1 of 20 teams competing, designed the winning project, Sature the Moment (seen above), in cycle one of the competition. Christina Leigh Geros MAUD, MLS ’15, then a graduate student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD), beat out 21 other teams to win cycle two with Latent (e)Scapes.

Students currently enrolled in any Harvard degree program are eligible to participate in the competition. In 2016, for the first time Radcliffe teamed up with Harvard’s Wintersession to prepare registrants for submission: A fully enrolled intensive workshop that ran from January 19 to 23, Radcliffe Institute Public Art Competition: Designing for Public Space exposed 20 students (including undergraduates and GSD students) to the rich history and practice of public art and mentored them in the technical aspects of creating proposals exclusively for the competition. Led by Julian Bonder MDes ’96—a professor of architecture at Roger Williams University whose own work and scholarship focus on the relationship among memory, trauma, and public space—the workshop also featured visiting experts in public art, design, and proposal development.

A jury of distinguished Harvard faculty members is now selecting the shortlist for cycle three, assessing submissions on the basis of creativity and of construction and budget feasibility.

The winning design—which will receive a $10,000 prize—will be announced in the spring, with construction to begin in June 2017.
This fall, the Radcliffe Institute expanded the Radcliffe Professorship program—started 15 years ago to recruit new senior faculty members to Harvard—to include tenure-track Radcliffe Assistant Professors.

Young scholars are often faced with competing demands—teaching, mentoring, and becoming active members of their departments—that make it difficult for them to pursue the ambitious research agenda needed to advance in their fields, let alone integrate into the broader Harvard community.

New faculty members awarded a Radcliffe Assistant Professorship will spend a year as fellows at the Institute during their first three years at Harvard, allowing them to advance their scholarship in a multidisciplinary community and make connections across and beyond Harvard’s campus.

The first two appointments are women scientists. In January, Marine Denolle joined the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, where she works on understanding the sources of earthquakes and predicting their motion in populated areas. She earned her PhD in geophysics from Stanford University. During her fellowship year, she will be the Radcliffe Alumnae Fellow, named for the hundreds of Radcliffe College alumnae who endowed a fund to “encourage the work of a scholar of exceptional promise and also honor the role of Radcliffe College in promoting scholarship of the highest quality.”

Cora Dvorkin joined the Harvard faculty in the Department of Physics on July 1, 2015. She studies questions in fundamental physics that can be tested with cosmological data, including theories related to dark matter. Dvorkin earned her PhD in physics at the University of Chicago and will hold the Shutzer Assistant Professorship—established by Fay and Bill Shutzer ’69, MBA ’72—during her first three years at Harvard.

Khalil Gibran Muhammad has been appointed a Suzanne Young Murray Professor at Radcliffe and named a professor of history, race, and public policy at Harvard Kennedy School. Currently director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library and a visiting professor at the City University of New York, Muhammad will begin his academic appointments at Harvard on July 1, 2016.

The second appointee, after Nancy E. Hill, to the Murray Professorship, Muhammad previously served as an associate professor of history at Indiana University. He joins nine tenured Radcliffe Professors and two Radcliffe Assistant Professors, all of whom have the opportunity to be Radcliffe Institute fellows during their early years as Harvard faculty members.

“When we first supported the Radcliffe Professorships, it was based on the hope that the Institute could be instrumental in bringing stellar faculty to the University,” says Suzanne Young Murray ’62, who—with her husband, Terry Murray ’62—has supported the Institute since its founding in 1999. “The professorships have certainly established their value, and Professor Khalil Muhammad is an excellent addition to Harvard and a credit to Radcliffe.”


A native of the South Side of Chicago, he graduated with a BA in economics from the University of Pennsylvania and received his PhD in American history from Rutgers University, specializing in 20th-century United States and African American history.
Limitless:
DNA Science’s Brave New World

Students, academics, and practitioners gathered at Radcliffe to hear how research using DNA has expanded our knowledge of the past, shapes the world we live in today, and points toward synthetic DNA.

SINCE 1953, WHEN JAMES Watson and Francis Crick proposed the double-helical structure of DNA, our fascination with our own genetic code has seemed nearly limitless. From gene therapy to personalized medicine, cloning to genetically modified food, forensic science to genetic disease risk, DNA science has been at the forefront of our national discourse, both professional and popular. Yet so often the discussion is fragmented among academic institutions. The law school might discuss forensic DNA science, while the medical school focuses on breakthrough treatments for genetic disease. This year, the Radcliffe Institute’s annual science symposium, “The Past, Present, and Future of DNA,” took an entirely different approach. Led by researchers from all walks of DNA science, the symposium, held on October 2, 2015, at the Knafel Center, looked across the entire continuum of DNA science, emphasizing the common goals, hopes, and fears. With participation from a packed and rapt audience, the symposium highlighted the powers we can harness by understanding our own genes and those of organisms around us, but did not neglect a fearless examination of the ethics of our brave new world.

The Past: New Secrets from Old Bones
Although analyzing the degraded DNA present in many ancient bone fossils proved elusive to scientists for decades, recent breakthroughs now allow useful genetic data to be gathered even from samples in which the DNA is heavily fragmented. According to John Hawks, the Vilas-Borghesi Distinguished Achievement Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, this new technology is allowing ancient hominid fossils to reveal new secrets.

“It turns out that human evolution is much less linear than previously believed,” said Hawks. About 3 percent to 4 percent of the DNA of modern European and Asian peoples is shared with Neanderthals, and 3 percent to 5 percent of the DNA of modern Melanesians and Aboriginal Australians is shared with ancient Asian hominids called Denisovans. “Some ancient gene variants are still beneficial today,” noted Hawks, such as a Denisovan vascular gene variant that allows for improved fetal growth at high altitudes. This gene variant is prevalent among the modern Tibetan population.

Using similar technology, Beth Shapiro, an associate professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, has gathered and analyzed hundreds of ancient DNA samples in the Arctic from the bones of species present in the last Ice Age that are now either surviving or extinct. She has found that as a species population declined toward extinction, the genetic distance between individuals increased. “As a species’ habitat became more and more patchy, the populations of those patches became isolated and declined simultaneously,” said Shapiro. These findings are helping to inform strategies for conserving threatened species.

The Present: Linking Families and Solving Crimes
Modern humans differ from one another, on average, at about 1 in every 1,000 of the chemical letters, called nucleotides, that make up DNA. When a certain char-
characteristic change in a section of DNA nucleotides is shared among people, those people have a common ancestor. Such a section is called a DNA marker. Spencer Wells, former explorer-in-residence and director of the Genographic Project at National Geographic, and his team use these markers to construct large-scale human family trees that broadly encompass every modern human being. “To date, the project has analyzed markers of descent in nearly 800,000 people from 140 countries,” said Wells. “Thanks to public enthusiasm, the number of volunteer human genomes analyzed continues to grow exponentially.”

DNA markers can also be used to solve crimes by matching a sample of DNA found at a crime scene with a known DNA sample in a criminal database. According to Greg Hampikian, a professor of biological sciences and of criminal justice and the director of the Idaho Innocence Project at Boise State University, this technology is a double-edged sword. Forensic DNA science faces widespread problems, including sample contamination and mix-ups during testing. These are all known to have led to false convictions. Misleading statistical language is also a problem. “If the chance that a sample does not match the suspect is 1 in 10,000, then there are about 64 other people in the city
of Boston for whom that is also true,” Hampikian noted. “But juries have trouble with that idea.” Samples with DNA mixtures are also difficult to analyze and have been incorrectly used to convict suspects. Not all is lost, however. As the cost of DNA sequencing continues to fall, forensic scientists will be able to affordably sequence larger sections of DNA, which will make matching a sample with a suspect less prone to errors.

The Future: Editing Our Own DNA

Scientists have become experts at reading the chemical letters in DNA from every kind of organism. Jacob Corn, the managing director and scientific director of the Innovative Genomics Initiative at the University of California, Berkeley, is working on the next step—editing our own DNA. He described an enzyme-based system isolated from bacteria that can be used to edit DNA with unprecedented accuracy in nearly every organism tested. “One near-future application of the technology is editing cells ex vivo for use as made-to-order bone marrow transplant therapies for hematopoietic diseases. In the long term, it may be applied to produce...
Mitochondria, the “energy factories” in our cells, contain their own DNA, which is inherited only from the mother. This DNA is distinct from the 23 pairs of chromosomes in the cell nucleus, which are inherited from both. When a mother’s mitochondrial DNA has a mutation, it can result in devastating mitochondrial disease in her children. To circumvent this problem, both a healthy donor egg and an egg from a woman with mitochondrial disease are fertilized with her partner’s sperm. The nuclear DNA from both fertilized eggs is removed. Then the nuclear DNA from the woman with the mitochondrial disease is placed in the donor egg. “The result is a healthy embryo that contains normal mitochondria plus normal nuclear DNA from the woman with mitochondrial disease and her partner,” said Murdoch. This technique will soon be available in the United Kingdom. Murdoch focused mainly on the ethical issues of mitochondrial donation, including the rights of the unborn child and the parental status of the mitochondrial donor.

Janet Rich-Edwards ’84, SD ’95—a faculty codirector of the science program at the Radcliffe Institute, an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, and an associate professor of epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health—closed the symposium by pointing out that humanity is the first species that can edit its own evolution. “What we have learned today is that we have a fantastic, brand-new toolbox to work with in DNA science, and all of us, not just the scientists and researchers, have a responsibility to consider how we want to use it,” she said. “Let’s just be sure that our intelligence doesn’t outrun our wisdom.”

Jillian Lokere is an independent medical and science writer.
Domestic Disturbance

Finding the stories of marginalized household workers in the Schlesinger Library

There is an old African proverb: Until lions write their own history, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. Archival collections usually represent the hunter. Fortunately for historians, the Schlesinger Library has collections that reflect the lion—the lives of ordinary women. In the course of researching my book *Household Workers Unite: The Untold Story of African American Women Who Built a Movement* (Beacon Press, 2015), I faced the problem of archival silences and biases. Because domestic workers are in most cases not formally educated, have little access to mainstream media channels, rarely write memoirs or reflections, and are unlikely to deposit their personal papers in a library, locating their voices was no easy task.

My goal with this book was to present the perspective of women, especially poor and working-class women of color, who are often invisible in public discourse. I was eager to piece together not just the stories told about domestic workers but also the stories that domestic workers told—and to analyze what those stories reveal about how these relatively disempowered women understood their labor and history.

I turned to the rich collections of women’s and gender history housed at the Schlesinger Library, which holds the papers of Frieda S. Miller and Esther Peterson. White feminists who spent decades lobbying for labor protections on behalf of domestic workers, Miller and Peterson were instrumental in the formation of the National Committee on Household Employment, an organization that in 1971 sponsored a national conference of household workers. That meeting resulted in the first national organization of domestic workers, the Household Technicians of America. The Miller and Peterson collections offer a window into the sometimes fraught but sometimes collaborative relationship between middle-class feminists and African American domestic workers.

Domestic workers relied on history and storytelling to mobilize a movement to reform household labor. They told stories about being treated as if they were on an auction block—having their teeth examined when they applied for a job. They talked about their family histories—their mothers, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers who brought dignity to this occupation. They told stories of abuse and exploitation, such as those at the Bronx Slave Market of the 1930s, where workers with the most-scarred knees were preferred because they were the ones who scrubbed floors down on all fours. Stories like these challenged the “Mammy” stereotype of a content and loyal household worker that had long defined the occupation. The stories became a means to establish boundaries on the terms of their labor: scrubbing floors on hands and knees, for example, was deemed unaccept-
er whose voice I discovered was Carolyn Reed, from New York City, who headed a national organization of domestic workers. In 1979, Reed attended a two-week institute at Sarah Lawrence College—where Gerda Lerner had founded the women’s history program—that brought together women organizers and activists. Reed wanted women’s historians to think more deeply about the importance of paid domestic work in women’s history and also wanted to educate workers about history. She launched a project titled “Our Right to Know,” which integrated the history of black women’s labor and resistance into organizing efforts.

Bonita Johnson, who headed the project, said, “The most important part of the project are household workers themselves. Each and every technician has a lifetime of experiences that individually and collectively make up a rich history that deserves documentation. These life histories will draw a picture of household employment today. They will also connect us with our past and guide us in the future!” For household worker organizers, history—both their family histories and the broader history of this occupation—mattered.

While media and popular culture might not afford us opportunities to understand the powerful actions and messages of domestic workers, collections like the ones I used in the Schlesinger Library provide evidence of a long history of organizing and resistance.

Premilla Nadasen is an associate professor of history at Barnard College.
Karole Armitage: Dancing In and Out of the Box

In her four decades in the profession, the dancer and choreographer has gone from proper to punk to pop. Now she looks toward the Great Plains for her possible next steps.

Back in New York City, the choreographer Karole Armitage goes into the studio, spends an hour warming up with yoga, spends two to four hours alone making combinations, collaborates with her dancers for eight hours, and finishes her day with three or four hours of administration and thinking about the artistic output of the day. The artistic director of the Armitage Gone! Dance company, she sometimes does this six days a week. It’s a grueling schedule that Armitage has followed since she was 17 and dancing for George Balanchine. Being a dancer is hard work.

Becoming the Punk Ballerina
Armitage fell in love with dance at a young age, when a dancer with the New York City Ballet moved to her hometown of Lawrence, Kansas, and became a dance teacher. She taught her students Balanchine ballets for their recitals. If it hadn’t been for that instructor, Armitage might have become a different kind of artist, or a writer. “I was born with this idea that I wanted to be an artist, because I wanted to understand what it means to be a human,” she says. “What it means to be alive.” Instead, she chose to write on the air with her body—and this is how she came to know her place in the world.

Years later, she would join Balanchine’s company in Geneva, performing some of the very masterpieces she’d learned as a child. But after a couple of years, Armitage says, “I felt I was an impostor in a tutu.” High bun in tow, she made the taboo decision to move to New York to pursue modern dance with Merce Cunningham. “He was kind of startled, I think, because no one who did ballet would suddenly show up there,” she says. Soon he took Armitage into his company, and she cut her hair.

But Armitage’s transformation was not yet complete. In the late 1970s, she discovered punk and its “delirious joy of destruction.” Attracted to the rawness and direct emotionality of that culture, she created a punk-infused piece. “People just liked it, and one thing led to the next,” says Armitage.

The punk ballerina was born. “To this day, I love extreme contradiction: hyperlyricism and then raw, tense, and violent accents,” she says. “It’s never very interesting in the middle.”

Of course, her style has continued to evolve. For the past 10 years or so, she’s been experimenting with a different form of movement: a nonlinear dance vocabulary inspired by fractal geometry. “You can hit your hip, and the force of that takes your body out of alignment, and you can imagine that that energy flow hits another dancer, and that pushes them into motion,” she explains. “These kinds of ideas just bring a very different quality of movement to the stage.”

Armitage wants her dancers to look as if they’re moving spontaneously—and she likes to see mental activity along with the physical. She feels

“To this day, I love extreme contradiction: hyperlyricism and then raw, tense, and violent accents. It’s never very interesting in the middle.”
this elevates the form: “It becomes almost less materialistic because it’s not: Taking a shape. Taking a shape. Taking a shape.”

Now dancers find her from around the world: Asia, Europe, South America. What they all bring is the refinement, virtuosity, and precision of ballet, coupled with a wildness, a funkiness. Says Armitage, “It takes a renegade spirit who wants to break down and try new things—it’s much more of a struggle to be making a new dance vocabulary than it is to do what is already familiar.”

Refocusing Her Artistic Vision

Remember that grueling artistic director schedule? Armitage is taking a bit of a break from it. This year, she’s the Mildred Londa Weisman Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute, where, she says, her ideal typical day consists of a few hours in the studio for morning dance work, followed by afternoon studies in her Byerly Hall office (which is outfitted with a ballet barre in addition to the standard shelf, desk, and chair).

Not that she has many typical days.

Armitage admits to a big curiosity, which she’s brought this year to Radcliffe. Not content to collaborate solely within the arts—she has worked with artists such as Jean-Paul Gaultier, James Ivory, Madonna (whose iconic “Vogue” video she choreographed), and David Salle—Armitage also seeks out scientists, such as the theoretical physicist Brian Greene. “I love collaborating with scientists in particular...
because I think the rigor of the scientific process gives them a great deal of humility,” she says. This year, at multidisciplinary Radcliffe, Armitage has been talking about consciousness with fellows in many other disciplines.

Long fascinated by Plains Indian culture, Armitage is further exploring consciousness and is working with a team of Native Americans to develop an outdoor, immersive dance and theater experience on the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. For this ambitious project, she’s been commuting often to Haskell.

“I felt I was an impostor in a tutu.”
philosophical, and intellectual endeavor—has all but disappeared from the media landscape. “There is no doubt that dance is in a terrible crisis in the US right now,” she says. Funding has dried up, and theaters and universities present fewer dance programs because they can’t find an audience. She notes that the only media outlet to regularly feature dance reviews is the *New York Times*. “When I was a kid and I was a professional dancer, the *New Yorker* had a dance review almost every week; now it’s twice a year,” says Armitage. “Dance has just disappeared from the media—and that, in our culture, makes it disappear.”

Not that she’s going to give up. She hopes that the rise of competition dance in the United States might breed enough familiarity with the form to boost concert dance. “Competition is something that Americans really understand,” she says. “Maybe it gets them familiar with dance, and therefore it’s a good thing, because people wouldn’t otherwise know about it at all.”

In the meantime, Armitage plans to just ride it out, as she says she’s done all her life. “People like me, we’re going to persist,” she says. “We’re going to continue to work and create—and it’s a political act, because doing noncommercial work that is not part of the capitalistic system, fighting the powerful forces built into the system . . . I tell you, it’s a major commitment and not for the faint of heart.”

The ballerina is still punk.

Indian Nations University, in Lawrence, Kansas. “It’s really all going to be about the people I meet who are interested in collaboration,” she says. “I’m trying to really get inside this other way of conceiving time and space.” The experiential aspect is key to the project’s success, and Armitage believes that working closely with Native American dancers will bring her the proper worldview to pursue the project. “There’s such an incredible feeling of renaissance and optimism in the Plains Indian culture right now, and there’s a great vitality,” she says. “So I’m very excited.”

When she’s not attending to her studies on consciousness and the ethnobotany and traditions of the Great Plains, Armitage continues to choreograph. She has a complex commission from London’s Philharmonia Orchestra—to Stravinsky—and is also doing a new program for Boston Ballet, which will premiere on May 6. She’s already met with the Boston dancers for a few rehearsals, just to get to know them, but she’ll most likely have only three weeks in the spring to bring the ballet from her brain to the stage.

Where Has Dance Gone?
Another mission for Armitage is to bring to the masses a level of comfort with her medium. She notes that concert dance—a meditative,

In an October lecture, Armitage discussed dance’s potential to make meaning, even without words or plot. Afterward, she sat in conversation with Richard Colton, who codirects Summer Stages Dance at Concord Academy.
INDEPENDENT MIND

A former Guatemalan judge keeps close watch on corruption.

IN APRIL, THOUSANDS OF protesters flooded Guatemala City demanding the resignation of President Otto Pérez Molina and Vice President Roxana Baldetti after both were implicated in a wide-ranging customs corruption scandal.

The march sparked a wave of nationwide demonstrations and signaled a watershed moment for a country scarred by civil war, violence, and corruption. Among the protesters was Claudia Escobar, a former appellate judge who joined the diverse group of students, seniors, business professionals, and union workers calling for change.

“It was really something that you cannot imagine,” said Escobar on a recent afternoon in a bright office in Radcliffe Yard. “You cry because you see all these people [saying], ‘We don’t want corruption anymore . . . justice now!’ It was the most emotional moment for me.”

Escobar missed the culmination of those demonstrations, in September, when Molina and Baldetti were arrested, and she missed the election of a new president on September 6, 2015. After criticizing the selection process for Guatemala’s appellate and supreme court justices and going public with evidence of corruption in late 2014, she eventually decided to leave the country with her family for the safety of the United States. But her actions, many agree, were key in helping further expose corruption.

And she is still pressing for change. In Cambridge, as the Radcliffe Institute’s 2015–2016 Robert G. James Scholar at Risk Fellow, Escobar will use her experience in her home country as a case study for a research project that explores how corruption is directly linked to a lack of judicial independence. “I am very excited to have time to investigate that,” she said.

“IT’S not only about a president that has to go to jail, this is a system that needs to be reformed.”

Claudia Escobar, Radcliffe’s Robert G. James Scholar at Risk, met with Pope Francis in September to discuss reforms that she believes need to occur in Guatemala.

rule for the son of a powerful official in a divorce case. “She knew that decision was going to cost her her post,” Escobar said, adding that she sensed that one day she, too, would have to choose between serving “justice or some other interest.”

It didn’t stop her. In 2009, Escobar and a group of colleagues began pushing for greater transparency and independence in the judicial system. They urged officials to overhaul the selection of
tests even drew the attention of a Vatican official, who organized a meeting with Pope Francis in September.

But despite her efforts, a high court in Guatemala ruled the elections fair at the end of 2014. Escobar stepped down from her appellate position in protest. She planned to continue as a judge in a lower court, but she was intimidated at work, she said, and feared for her family’s safety. “I realized I could not work or live in that environment.”

With her in the Boston area during her fellowship are her 5-year-old and 15-year-old sons, her 21-year-old daughter, and her husband, an American who periodically travels back to work in Guatemala as a legal tax consultant. Her three other children, all in their 20s, live in Louisiana, where Escobar went to school, at Louisiana State University.

Leaving Guatemala meant saying good-bye to her ailing parents and three sisters, and Escobar hopes to return someday. Still, she knew she had to speak out. When debating whether to release the tape, she couldn’t stop wondering how she would feel in 10 years if she did nothing. “To think that I could have helped make this change but kept it to myself,” she said.

Escobar is hopeful, but she knows that her country needs large-scale change. She told the pope during their meeting in September, “It’s not only about a president that has to go to jail; this is a system that needs to be reformed.”

Colleen Walsh is a staff writer for the Harvard Gazette. This article is adapted from one that originally appeared in the Gazette.
Vital Signs

Every year, the Academic Ventures program at the Institute convenes 35 private workshops and seminars to advance early-stage knowledge across disciplines and even continents. At this workshop, infectious disease experts connected on Africa-based initiatives.

“The people in this room have done amazing research utilizing everything from basic science to new technologies,” said Thumbi Ndung’u, the scientific director of the HIV Pathogenesis Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in Durban, South Africa, and cochair of an October Radcliffe workshop that convened 30 leading infectious disease experts from Harvard and Africa.

Ndung’u and Phyllis Kanki, a professor at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, organized “Focus on Africa: Infectious Diseases” to encourage information-sharing and collaboration among those who work on the front lines of research on Ebola, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis B, and other diseases that disproportionately affect populations in sub-Saharan Africa and increasingly threaten to spread across the globe.

“We have the tools, but we need to coordinate our efforts,” emphasized Ndung’u. “By getting to know each other’s strengths, we can broaden the impact of our research nationally and regionally.”

The urgent need to build Africa-based research capacity was a recurring theme throughout the two-day workshop. On a continent that carries 25 percent of the world’s disease burden, Ndung’u noted, there are just 400 researchers per 1 million people. “And only 1 percent of disease researchers in Africa are Africans.”

Kanki has spent more than two decades studying HIV with colleagues in Senegal. She led Harvard’s participation in the United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in Botswana, Nigeria, and Tanzania and plays a key role in Harvard’s component of the Medical Education Partnership Initiative in Nigeria, a consortium of six Nigerian medical schools working toward improving curriculum and research capacity.

After its launch, in 2003, Kanki said, “PEPFAR gave tens of thousands of patients access to treatment. But there was no funding for research to determine what protocols were most effective.” Advocacy for facilities and equipment to monitor treatment and care has since led to upgrades such as the three genome sequencers now operating in Nigeria.

“Sequencing technology is critical for scientists working on problems such as drug resistance,” she noted.

Locally available sequencing technology is especially useful in the midst of health emergencies. Nathan Yozwiak, a project manager and infectious disease specialist with Harvard University and the Broad Institute, talked about the importance of genome sequencing during the most recent Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone. Previous work on Lassa hemorrhagic fever with research partners in West Africa made it possible “to quickly sequence 70 percent of all Ebola cases in Sierra Leone in the first three weeks of the epidemic,” he said.

For public health officials, Yozwiak explained, information from DNA sequencing can help identify the source of the virus, show mutation rates over the course of an outbreak, and track geographic spread within countries and across borders.

Keeping the focus on Ebola—which, like TB, has made a recent comeback in Africa—Amadou Sall described the 2014 outbreak as “a wake-up call.” “We need to be innovative when it comes to surveillance,” said Sall, a research director at the Institut Pasteur de Dakar, in Senegal, and the leader of a program to establish mobile diagnostic facilities in multiple locations across West Africa. Noting that “the world is crisis-oriented,” Sall called for “regional champions” who will stay focused on research and response plans for priority diseases between outbreaks. “Ebola is not gone, and other diseases are coming,” he cautioned.

Also in Senegal, where...
device developed by Lee that makes it possible to test HIV levels in blood samples closer to the source of care, saving time and increasing the efficacy of treatment. “For critically ill patients and especially for infants,” she said, “this can be lifesaving.”

In the ongoing effort to attract funding, develop in-country research and treatment, and broaden education opportunities for young African infectious disease scientists, there are reasons for optimism. Harvard Medical School professor Bruce Walker serves on the steering committee of a 10-year initiative funded by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute that has built a state-of-the-art TB/HIV research facility in South Africa. With such high-tech tools as “advanced flow cytometry, mass spectrometry, and confocal microscopy now close to the center of the epidemic,” Walker said, “anything we can do in Boston, we can now do in Durban.”

At the workshop’s end, Kanki cited the Radcliffe Institute’s role in inspiring new insights and strengthening connections among her colleagues from Harvard and Africa. “Everybody came away with at least one or two ideas about new things they might like to do, new projects, new approaches,” she said. “The signs are good,” concurred Ndung’u, citing the rapid growth of African economies and scientific output that is increasing at an annual rate of 21 percent, versus 9 percent worldwide. “There are many creative minds in sub-Saharan Africa, and they have the capacity to change the future.”

Deborah Blagg is a freelance writer.
Radcliffe’s VISITING SCHOLARS PROGRAM brings to campus researchers, scientists, practitioners, and artists who enrich intellectual activities and cross-disciplinary explorations at the Institute and across the University.
Animal Bond
In 1988, when Rebecca Skloot first heard the name of the woman whose cancerous cells had become “immortal,” thriving in research labs around the world long after killing their host, little did she know she had found the story of her life—or one of them, as it turns out.

By now, many know Skloot as the author of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Crown, 2010). The book paints a vivid picture of Lacks’s life and recounts how her diseased cells, taken without her consent or even knowledge, helped advance some of the greatest breakthroughs in medical science long beyond her death in 1951. The book shot up the *New York Times* best-seller list soon after it was published, the success a reflection of its astonishing story and of Skloot’s attention to detail and drive to get the facts right. The book took her more than 10 years to research and write, and she still crisscrosses the country to talk about it, often alongside members of the Lacks family.

Part detective story, part family saga, part portrait of US race relations, and part history of cell technology, *Henrietta Lacks* struck a deep cultural nerve. A *Times* reviewer called it “one of the most graceful and moving nonfiction books I’ve read in a very long time . . . it feels like the book Ms. Skloot was born to write.”

In a sense, it was. As a 16-year-old, around the same time she learned about
Henrietta Lacks’s cells, Skloot saw her father decline from marathon runner to “completely incapacitated,” unable to walk, with almost no memory. “He just became this stationary, what seemed to be a dying person in our living room,” recalls the author, who conducted research for her new book while she was a visiting scholar at the Radcliffe Institute this past fall. Looking for answers, her father enrolled in a clinical trial. With her new driver’s license, Skloot took him to weekly appointments where doctors would test his stamina by making him run to the point of collapse on a treadmill, or check his balance by having him crawl around on all fours. It was a traumatic experience for a loving daughter.

“There I was, as a kid, just sort of watching this happen to my father and being in the room for all of it.”

Her father’s illness—which turned out to be a virus that had attacked his brain—fueled her interest in science and research and her obsession with Lacks. But as she worked on the Lacks project, a separate book idea never entirely receded, Skloot says, one that combined her passion for science with another obsession: animals.

Skloot’s love affair with creatures great and small runs deep. As a young girl she opened a surgery ward in her bedroom for her stuffed animals. She smuggled “pets” into the house, including a rat that she hid in her closet. She even broke into the neighbors’ house to kidnap their dog for playdates.

When she struggled to engage in school, her parents tried to coax good grades from Skloot with the promise of pets if she performed well, which she never did. Even so, on her 16th birthday, she got an Alaskan malamute mix...
The day after her lecture at the Radcliffe Institute, Skloot met with more than 60 Harvard students whose concentrations range from history to chemistry to evolutionary biology. They met in Fay House, where Skloot described her path from underachieving high-school student to best-selling author.

“My freshman year of high school, I got a .5 grade point average,” she said. “I don’t know how that’s even possible.” She was bored with school and didn’t follow the rules. “The teachers had given up on me, but my parents understood that this energy I had was not being channeled in a productive way.”

After failing that year of high school, in Portland, Oregon, Skloot transferred to an alternative public high school. There, her teachers encouraged her to create her own curriculum and to take classes at the local community college. With her ardent affection for animals, Skloot had long planned to become a veterinarian, so she enrolled in a medically focused biology course, where she first heard about Henrietta Lacks, the woman whose story she would later investigate and write for more than a decade. With her teacher’s encouragement, Skloot pursued her interest in Lacks. In the process, she became a straight-A student.

In college, Skloot studied hard to become a vet. “I had ‘vet tunnel vision,’” she said. That is, until she discovered writing. She wrote papers on subjects she cared deeply about—including the ethics of using animals as research subjects and the overlooked Henrietta Lacks—prompting her writing teacher to encourage her to consider becoming a science writer.

Skloot quoted her teacher’s words, which she said have influenced her ever since: “Letting go of a goal doesn’t mean you’ve failed, as long as you have a new goal.”

She described her current work as literary journalism, in which she uses characters, dialogue, descriptions of weather, and other techniques that fiction writers use. Unlike traditional journalists, she doesn’t look for news hooks or scoops or topics. Stem cells, for example, are not a story but a topic. “To me, it’s always about the stories,” Skloot said.

PAT HARRISON
with a fluffy black, gray, and white coat. She called him Sereno.

“He went everywhere with me,” says Skloot, “on my crazy escapades.”

Planning to eventually become a vet, Skloot worked several part-time jobs as a technician in veterinary clinics and research labs and, to help pay her undergrad tuition, at Colorado State’s veterinary school. It was a challenging time, as Skloot struggled with the intersection of science and ethics. In the clinics, she took care of people’s pets, while in the morgue’s freezer she saw firsthand the “end result of all the teaching and research.” In one lab, she assisted a researcher working on a virtual-reality program he hoped would replace the use of live dogs for teaching anatomy and surgery, while in another, she watched important science being done with laboratory animals.

“All my jobs were mirroring all these big questions I was having,” she says. “How do we take care of animals ethically? How do we decide when you use an animal in research versus when you use some of these other models?”

Those questions coincided with her decision to take a writing class to fill a school requirement, and a writer was born. Skloot’s work fed her creativity and filled her class assignments. “I was hemorrhaging stories about the world of veterinary medicine.”

After graduation, she passed on vet school for a master of fine arts program at the University of Pittsburgh, producing a thesis on forgotten women in science that eventually morphed into The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.

The book was deeply influenced by her early work with animals, Skloot says. Her experience in clinics, research labs, and the morgue helped her become “the person who wrote Henrietta Lacks’s story,” she says. “I started off in this place of facing these really big, complicated ethical questions from the inside, and seeing both sides.”

Offering different points of view is what she plans to do with her new book, which will explore the often complex and sometimes controversial dimensions of the human-animal bond and investigate, as her website puts it, “some of the biggest, and as yet unanswered, questions at the heart of animals’ roles in our lives.”

“I value the science,” Skloot says. “It’s incredibly important. And I also understand the ethical questions from very personal experience, both on the human side and the animal side.”

“In a sense that’s what I feel like I was trying to do in the first book,” she adds. “Take these worlds that don’t trust each other, don’t understand each other, can’t talk to each other, and as a result, bad things happen, both for science and for people, and sort of say, ‘Okay, let’s see if we can look at the places where these overlap and how can we have a productive conversation based on facts about all of this.’ That’s what I’m hoping to do.”

Much of her research involves diving into her own past, poring over 20-year-old notes from college. She laughs and calls her early writing “overwrought,” but her initial instincts about capturing narrative details on the page have proved invaluable.

“I don’t even know how I would be able to write this book if I hadn’t been writing about it for two years in my undergrad classes,” she says. “So really, that stuff forms the beginning of the book that I am writing now.”

Current research will also inform her work. During her time at Radcliffe, Skloot met with experts from across the University, connecting with scientists and visiting labs to help her flesh out the book’s key themes.

“Rebecca’s interest in animal-human interaction runs deep, and she is bringing the same rigorous approach to this subject that she applied to Henrietta Lacks’s cells,” says Radcliffe Dean Lizabeth Cohen. “Being a visiting scholar at the Institute gave her the chance to engage in conversation with experts across the University as she takes on a challenging new subject, and allowed our Harvard community to learn from her unique perspective. We hope that her time at Radcliffe will enrich this fascinating new book.”

Though she is deep into her new project, interest in her first book still commands a crowd. Skloot delivered a talk to a packed Knafel Center and met with more than 60 Harvard students on the Radcliffe campus during a lunchtime discussion the following day (see the sidebar on page 20).

With so much attention on her debut, does she ever worry about living up to her runaway success? Not if she stays true to her own sense of wonder and curiosity, she says—the kind of amazement she first felt when her high school biology teacher wrote the name Henrietta Lacks on the chalkboard. That wonder made her want to know more, and the incredible story she uncovered about Lacks made her want to share it with the world.

“I tell myself I just have to keep writing stories that make me feel that way.”

This article, excluding the sidebars, originally appeared in the Harvard Gazette and has been edited for Radcliffe Magazine.
Maryanne Kowaleski, a medieval studies scholar at Fordham University, in the Bronx, is a 2015–2016 Joy Foundation Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute. Her office in Byerly Hall is about two miles from the Atlantic Ocean, as the crow flies. But it is also many centuries removed from the part of the Atlantic that interests Kowaleski the most: coastal England in the heart of the Middle Ages. ¶ It was along that jagged coastline in the 14th and 15th centuries, she says, that the riches of the sea created a unique English maritime subculture that flourished in villages, towns, and manors. It extended from the sea, with fishing and coastal carriage in rude boats, to the shore, where seaweed and shellfish and salt and fish-curing operations thrived. Its products made their way to inland towns where—forensic studies of human bones show—protein from the sea was widespread in the English diet by the 12th century. ¶
Kowaleski’s challenge as a historian is to bring this medieval coastal England into focus so that it can be seen as brightly as the well-documented maritime 17th century and beyond. Little studied today is the Middle Ages subculture of the sea: the farmers who fished, the wives and daughters empowered by a common family enterprise, the boat crews who lived unusually egalitarian lives, and the ever-widening sea voyages that foreshadowed English world trade and naval dominance.

This relative neglect in the scholarly world comes despite “a real explosion of interest in the sea” in the past two decades, Kowaleski told a Radcliffe audience in November (see video on the Radcliffe website). Today’s global interest in oceans is prompted in part by ecological concern for the marine environment in an era of climate change, rising seas, and depletion of fish stocks.

But Kowaleski understands why maritime aspects of the thousand-year Middle Ages (circa 500 to 1500) have often been left out of histories so far: “the paucity of documentary sources,” she explained. “Medievalists simply lack the personal correspondence, government commissions, captains’ logs, and oral histories upon which maritime and environmental historians usually rely.” It was illiterate peasants who fished and who carried goods from shore to shore, she said, and who were pressed into naval service before England had a navy. The lords who oversaw their lives may have been able to read, but they wrote little.

To overcome the hurdle of documentation, Kowaleski employs the clever interdisciplinary tools used by scholars of medieval studies everywhere: streams of suggestive information from art, archaeology, anthropology, environmental studies, geography, literature, and marine biology. Kowalski has even studied didactic medieval sermons and the lives of saints, along with medieval shoreline rituals, prayers, and sea chanties, in search of clues about sea and coastal life. Meanwhile, the Radcliffe experience enriches her interdisciplinary approach, she said one afternoon in her office, and provides a ready audience for testing her ideas on non-specialists.

Of course, beyond the contributions of these eclectic disciplines lies the chief quotidian effort of a scholar of medieval England: hours and days and weeks sequestered in out-of-the-way English archives, poring over medieval custumals (records of local laws), court records, and other documents. To understand these written sources, Kowaleski mastered—very early in her many years in the field—the necessary languages: Latin, Middle English, and Anglo-Norman, a French dialect developed in medieval England. Not least, she also had to learn how to decipher the crabbed, difficult handwriting in those source documents. (She spent two years studying paleography.)

With all her archival work now out of the way, she is using her time at Radcliffe to write, touch up, and test (on audiences) research from a monograph titled Living by the Sea: An Ethnography of Maritime Communities in Medieval England. It will be, said Kowaleski—unlike any other book out there—a re-creation of coastal societies unseen for more than 600 years. She is eager to prove that this distinctive “ecotype” links medieval England to the England of the early modern period and that it still has echoes today, in coastal fishing cultures across the world.
A Long-Ago World’s Forgotten Words

The eclectic interdisciplinary scholarship of Radcliffe fellow Maryanne Kowaleski re-creates life in the long-ago and largely forgotten coastal communities of England during the Middle Ages. Her work also brings back to light 14th- and 15th-century words and phrases from the manorial, maritime, and legal spheres. A sampling:

CHRIST’S DOLE: In some coastal localities, the obligation to give a share of a peasant’s catch to the local church.

CUSTUMAL: A handwritten inventory like document, revised over time, listing the local laws and traditions of a medieval English manor or town.

DEODANDS: Objects washed ashore from medieval shipwrecks and regarded as the property of the Crown or a lord. For coastal peasants, shipwrecks provided a windfall of kegged wine, tin, cloth, and other goods.

EXEMPLA: Moralizing and didactic stories often inserted in medieval sermons. They sometimes contain clues about the details of everyday life, even in the maritime sphere.

EYRE ROLLS: First appearing in the 12th century, these documents, rich in social detail, recorded the business of itinerant medieval courts known as general eyres.

FISH RENTS: In-kind payments to local manors by tenants, variously made with cod, eels, and herring.

FISH TITHES: A portion of profits from fishing paid in money (or fish) to the local parish rector.

In-person fieldwork by anthropologists. You drill down for months at a time. I like that.” Studying medieval England precludes fieldwork of that kind, since time machines are not on store shelves yet. But Kowaleski uses a combination of proxy sources as a substitute for actually being among the villeins (serfs) as they fish from small wooden boats; or among the kinfolk plundering the sites of rich sea wrecks; or among the wives and daughters repairing nets, baiting lines, gutting the catch, and curing fish.

In the absence of parish registers, diaries, and other direct testimonial sources, “the challenge,” Kowaleski told her Radcliffe audience, “is to find measures.” In part, that involves a technique called prosopography—a “collective biography of a sparsely documented historical group for whom individual biographies are impossible.” This technique is her medievalist version of ethnography.

That means using quantitative analysis in some measure. In pursuit of the role of women within maritime communities, for example, Kowaleski uses early 15th-century data from the fishing port of Hythe, on the south coast of Kent: town accounts, court rolls, deeds, hearth taxes, wills, and documents related to port customs and naval impressments.

In the 15th century, Hythe was home to about 650 people, nearly a quarter of whom lived lives directly tied to fishing, according to tax rolls. Kowaleski looked at 205 wills; 28 percent contained “maritime bequests of high-value items such as ships, boat shares, and fishing cabins,” she said at Radcliffe, “as well as fishing gear, nets, hooks, ropes, and other items associated with seafaring and fishing.”

This collective biography of Hythe fishers and mariners sheds light on gender relations in the community: 41 percent of the bequests went to women, “an extraordinarily large percentage,” said Kowaleski. She devotes a chapter of her monograph to the women of coastal communities from the 12th through the 15th centuries. Until now, women have been largely left out of medieval maritime histories. (One recent book on the medieval sea, said Kowaleski, gives women less than two paragraphs; another does not even list women, wives, or widows in the index.)

Women in this coastal niche may have had more agency, she said, but not necessarily more authority. They did more on shore and inherited more upon the death of their husbands, “but that doesn’t make them happier or more powerful” than the wives and daughters in farming or small artisan families, whose work was also essential to the survival of the family. Nor were there female sailors in that era; although ships were given feminine names, women at sea were regarded with suspicion. The few who braved the waves did so as passengers, pilgrims, and—occasionally—prostitutes. “Mythological females of the deep, such as sirens and mermaids, were even perceived as threatening,” Kowaleski added.

Nor should the egalitarian nature of medieval boat crews, where a “shares” system divided risk as well as profits and maintained a spirit of cooperation, be misperceived. These crews did not foreshadow labor movements, she said, and any democratic impulse began to decline by the end of the Middle Ages, when capital-intensive long-distance voyaging became more prevalent, and wages began displacing shares. Maritime laws reflected this economic change by shifting power away from all those onboard to shipmasters and captains.

Despite these caveats, the sea in England, at least, is still “romanticized as essential to the country’s identity,” said Kowaleski. She remarked on the lingering resonance of the coastal communities of the Middle Ages re-created in her book—“a book that offers a medieval distant mirror in which we can also glimpse our modern seas and modern selves.”

Corydon Ireland is a freelance writer.
In his three novels and two collections of short stories, Peter Behrens RI ’16—who holds the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Fellowship at Radcliffe—plumbs his family’s history in Canada, England, Germany, and Ireland. His latest novel, the mostly imagined *Carry Me* (Pantheon, 2016), was partly inspired by his father’s life. What drives Behrens, however, is not what he knows about his family but what he doesn’t know: “The only way I know to learn what I don’t know is through fiction,” he said during an interview in his Radcliffe office. ¶ Billy Lange, the narrator of *Carry Me*, tells the story of his love affair with Karin, daughter of the German-Jewish Baron von Weinbrenner. The story follows Karin and Billy from the Isle of Wight in 1914 to Frankfurt in the Nazi era. As children, they share a fascination with the Wild West novels of Karl May—Einstein’s favorite author, and Hitler’s, too. Karin and Billy flee Germany for the United States and a version of May’s mythic landscape, looking for “caustic sunlight and dry desert heat to burn the drag of history from our wings,” as Billy says. ¶ Like Behrens’s earlier novels, *Carry Me* is rich
with historical detail. Behrens, who lives in Brooklin, Maine, much of the year, said the research he did during a fortuitous six-month fellowship from the Dutch Foundation for Literature allowed him to visit Germany several times during his stay in Amsterdam. He and his wife, Basha Burwell, and their son, Henry, traveled together. “Knowing that the three of us would be in Europe allowed me to begin conceptualizing the book,” Behrens said. “I began writing before we left, but a large part of it was outlined and shaped while we were in Europe. I couldn’t have written the book without knowing what the air is like in Frankfurt, what the light looks like in Frankfurt, what the river sounds like in Frankfurt.”

Once there, Behrens combined imagination, history, and reality, but not for the first time.

He set his first novel, The Law of Dreams (Random House, 2007), for which he won Canada’s prestigious Governor General’s Literary Award, during the famine in Ireland. “My family’s story in North America started with someone crawling ashore off a coffin ship,” he said. His second novel, The O’Briens, is based on his mother’s family, of the same name. “There’s a complex relationship between the very fictional family in that novel and my real family,” Behrens said.

Historical issues were the stuff of family conversations when Behrens was growing up in Montreal, with his Irish/English/German grandmother and father fiercely debating whose fault it was that Hitler came to power. It’s not surprising that Behrens studied history when he went to Concordia University, in Montreal, in 1971, or that he studied international relations as a postgraduate at McGill University.

During his 20s, eager to

escape the comfortable but confining middle-class existence of his family in Montreal, Behrens traveled west to Alberta, Canada, where he worked as a ranch hand, and south to Texas, where he and a group of friends ran river trips down the Rio Grande in Big Bend. Behrens fell in love with Texas then and years later held a Lannan Residency Fellowship in Marfa and bought a house there, where he and his family now spend part of the year.

Some of the short stories from his 20s—published in Night Driving (Macmillan of Canada, 1987) and reprinted with additional stories in Traveling Light (House of Anansi, 2013)—are about young men working on ranches and driving through vast landscapes.

Behrens took his first course in writing as an undergraduate at Concordia, when the writer Clark Blaise invited him to join an MFA class he was teaching. Years later, when he was in his early 30s, Behrens received a Stegner Fellowship at Stanford University, where fellows participate in the weekly MFA workshop but are not students. Wallace Stegner, who founded Stanford’s writing program and whom Behrens met while he was there, was an important influence. “His great book about growing up in this entirely neglected landscape in the Canadian West, Wolf Willow [subtitled A History, a Story, and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier; Viking, 1962], which is set in southwestern Saskatchewan, allowed me to begin conceptualizing the book,” Behrens said. “I began writing before we left, but a large part of it was outlined and shaped while we were in Europe. I couldn’t have written the book without knowing what the air is like in Frankfurt, what the light looks like in Frankfurt, what the river sounds like in Frankfurt.”

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During his 20s, eager to
form and these fairly rigorous rules about how feature screenplays work,” he said. “But there aren’t any rules in writing fiction. You’re trying to encourage students’ developing style and voice.” He has taught fiction at Colorado College since 2012.

Working in his Radcliffe office, between those of the journalist Michael Pollan RI ’16, the Suzanne Young Murray Fellow, and the neurosurgeon Ann-Christine Duhaime RI ’16, Behrens feels as though he’s getting smarter—just being at the Institute. “Maybe it’s like a cold,” he said. “The smart virus. I hope I catch it.”

His current project is a novel tentatively titled “Bad Girl.” Behrens describes it as a novel “about transgender coming of age during the era known in Quebec as the Quiet Revolution, from 1959 to 1970.” One theme of the novel (and the excerpt from it that appears below) is the temerity of authors who dare to use their families as source material. “I had to turn a critical eye on myself as someone who naively thought he could use someone else’s interior life,” Behrens said. “This monstrous notion of using your voiceless family in this way.” But, he said, “isn’t that what writers usually do?”

That’s what Behrens is doing at Radcliffe. He intends to hire student researchers, through the Research Partners program, to help him explore gay and transgender issues as he develops a character in “Bad Girl” based on his late sister.

A typical Radcliffe day for Behrens is filled with family and work. When his wife, an art director, is away from Cambridge on assignment, Behrens makes breakfast for their son before accompanying him to school—both of them riding their bicycles—and then hurries to his Institute office to start writing. “My process is—write. I usually don’t know what I know until I write. Then, of course, I rewrite, rewrite, rewrite.”

“The whole world conspires to keep you from writing,” Behrens said, “so being at the Radcliffe Institute is wonderful and rare. It’s hugely broadening for all of us. Even the distractions. When things get really rowdy on my floor at Byerly Hall, it usually means people are out in the hallway discussing the nature of the universe, the wiring of our brains, or what makes an algorithm an algorithm.”

Dark As the Grave Wherein She Is Laid

BY PETER BEHRENS

In our family we all were—are—storytellers. Consider the illusions we were weaned on. Frankie’s paragon of a father. Billy’s gracious ancient regime upbringing. Consider yourself, bro, sitting there at Harvard with a Radcliffe ancien regime upbringing. Consider yourself, consider the illusions we were weaned on.

In our family we all are—are—storytellers. We told ourselves but what was that? We told ourselves that was how we felt about the sisterhood for a long time. But okay, I admit, those are unsightly truths, weren’t we? Maybe I should put cards on the table. But we—you, me, I was in awe of her outlaw tendencies; she was my best sweater from Bullock’s in Los Angeles. Ogilvy’s. Deb encouraged me. She’d lifted her voiceless family in this way. I was once at the point of stealing a Harris tweed sportcoat from the menswear dept. at Ogilvy’s. Deb encouraged me. She’d lifted her best sweater from Bullock’s in Los Angeles. She certainly had a passion for goods, and I was in awe of her outlaw tendencies; she was Billy the Kid come to Montreal as a blonde Californian. The sportcoat was to be a present to her dad on his fortieth birthday. Coming out of Southern California he didn’t own a Harris tweed jacket and Deb had observed they were just about de rigueur in our quadrant of Montreal. That was what we told ourselves but what I imagined was me in that jacket, soft and structured, suavely masculine, handsome. Me in a three-button Harris tweed, Debbie lissome on my arm. She was supposed to hang back, keeping an eye out for anyone looking like a store detective, not that we had a clue what a store detective looked like. She said she was perfectly willing to do the dirty work—only if she got caught she’d be deported. Her parents too. Her father would lose his job at the Royal Bank. Whereas if I got caught, they might yell at me for a bit, but then Billy would make them let me go.

We went straight from school. Me in tunic, blouse and blazer. She changed into jeans so that we wouldn’t look like a team. I got the jacket off the rack and sauntered for the escalator with it hung over my arm. Super casual. It was before electronic tagging, bar-coding, computerized everything. The idea was we’d get away with it by doing everything in plain sight. If they stopped me, I was an innocent Convent lassie—“Oh dear I thought I was supposed to pay downstairs.”

I rode the escalators to the main floor without anyone yelling “Stop! Thief!” but I couldn’t bring myself to go out through the revolving doors. I mean, I kept trying. I’d do a circuit of the floor then head for the St Catherine Street exit only to turn back at the last moment like a pony shying a jump. Debbie shadowed me an aisle or two away, looking daggers whenever we made eye contact. I toured again past the handbags, the Italian shoes, and the Chanel No. 5. But I couldn’t make myself enter those revolving doors.

I finally took the up escalator and left the sportcoat in a stall in the second floor ladies’ room. Debbie was furious. I told her that it just wasn’t feeling right, my sixth-sense Irisfy was picking up danger signals and maybe it meant we were being watched. She got all freaked out.

It wasn’t true I had any sixth sense; I was just scared. I was a Convent girl, I’m sure guilt was written all over my face. So I probably would have been busted. And maybe that would have been a good thing. Forced a crisis. Put cards on the table. But we—you, me, Lil—were always protecting the parents from unsightly truths, weren’t we? Maybe I should have been willing to put Billy and Frankie through some stuff. But I wasn’t.

Deb had a meltdown on the bus going up Côte des Neiges and said she thought her father was dying of cancer. Which he wasn’t. His disease was blackjack and high-stakes poker. He was losing big in Vegas. Which no one knew at the time.

Your piece suggests something I hadn’t twigged on. There were traits Deb and our sister Lil had in common. Debbie was from away, and Lily wasn’t; Lily was my sister, and Debbie wasn’t; Debbie was smart as a whip, academically, and Lily struggled in school. But that was mostly because she was so unhappy there, and that was mostly because of me. Those two willowy blonde lasses had no time for each other but they each had possession of themselves, something which eluded me the entire time I was at the Convent and for years afterwards. And their mutual disregard was mostly a product of my jealousy and sharp bits of untruth I sprinkled between them like crumbs of safety-glass sparkling on the pavement after a wreck.

As we got older I tried to make amends but I don’t believe you noticed. Lily did, though. And I practised more malfeasance on her than you. Lil had it in her to forgive. You’re still angry. Over Debbie Meigs, and what else?

And now you’ve worked up a repressed gay and/or untransitioned transsexual narrative and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness and embedded your fucked-up girl-boy character in a family conditioned by a thousand years of Irish Catholicism and the nastiness

[EXCERPTED FROM “BAD GIRL,” A NOVEL IN PROGRESS]
Chronicle of a Well-Intentioned Failure

AMERICA’S PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM has attracted ambitious reformers since Horace Mann earned a national reputation by instituting a standard curriculum in the Massachusetts common schools in the 1830s. The programs Mann introduced were widely imitated, making Massachusetts the first instance of a “proof point” in education reform, to borrow a favorite phrase of the “venture philanthropists” lured by Newark’s charismatic mayor Cory Booker to invest in a wholesale restructuring of the city’s foundering school system almost two centuries later. Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg ’07 was the most lavish contributor, donating $100 million to an effort that Booker claimed would send literacy rates skyrocketing in five years and establish Newark as the proving ground for a style of private-public partnership that could be replicated in failing urban schools across the nation.

Education reform has also attracted some of our most talented writers, but it’s been a long time since a book has come close to matching classics such as Jonathan Kozol’s Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools (Houghton Mifflin, 1967) and Tracy Kidder’s Among Schoolchildren (Houghton Mifflin, 1989), impassioned chronicles of teachers coping with nearly insurmountable challenges inside classrooms and from inept or downright malicious bureaucracies. In her compact yet comprehensive account of Booker’s largely bungled bonanza, Dale Russakoff gives us a classic for the 21st century, a narrative that, despite its devastating message, portrays all its characters sympathetically. As Russakoff writes in conclusion: “That almost everyone on all sides was well-intentioned made the failures as well as the successes . . . that much more important to wrestle with.”

Russakoff, a veteran Washington Post reporter, writes as convincingly about the headliners who broke the news of Zuckerberg’s gift on Oprah as about a handful of idealistic elementary school teachers and their students at the struggling Avon Avenue School or the straight-talking principal of Central High, Ras Baraka, son of the activist poet Amiri Baraka, who would rise to replace Booker as mayor.

The days when top-down change of the magnitude Horace Mann envisioned could be accomplished, or a national political reputation made on public education, are long gone. Teachers and pupils sink or swim in the tides of reform, while well-meaning reformers get schooled in complex realities. Yet Russakoff’s unflagging attention is a model of the kind of care that may one day save our schools and win “the prize.” Without it, as one Central High student wrote, “Hope—that’s one thing I don’t have.”
“no longer on the cultural cusp.” Emily Bingham’s *Irrepressible* takes its place on the small shelf of heartfelt family biographies that are also smart histories, along with *The White Blackbird: A Life of the Painter Margarett Sargent by Her Granddaughter* by Honor Moore ’67, *The Nature of Sacrifice: A Biography of Charles Russell Lowell, Jr., 1835–1864* by Carol Bundy, and *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Biography of Julia Ward Howe* by Deborah Pickman Clifford ’57.

**Bastards of the Reagan Era**
By Reginald Dwayne Betts RI ’12

Reginald Dwayne Betts opens his new book of poetry with a pair of odes to his young sons, Micah and Miles, the second child named after trumpeter Miles Davis—“after the sound that comes from all/ the hurt & want that leads a man/ to turn his back to the world.” But the force and fury that propel this remarkable volume derive from Betts’s experience of the world turning its back on him, as it has on so many black men of his generation. In 1996, then a 16-year-old honors student, Betts was sentenced as an armed carjacking: “To be tough. To be trouble,” he says. “To say that I was a 16-year-old honors student, as it has on so many black men from Betts’s experience of the world, that ‘history lets the blamed go blameless,’ and ‘the bodies that roll off the block/ & into the prisons and into the ground,/ keep rolling,’ follow the book’s nine-part title poem, set in prison. Grim, unsparring, yet studded with brilliant wordplay, revelation, and revolution, “Bastards of the Reagan Era” delivers a stark message: “I could tell you I changed/ But history will haunt us all.”

**The Secret Chord: A Novel**
By Geraldine Brooks RI ’06
Viking, 302 pp.

Geraldine Brooks takes her title for this new novel, based on the life of the biblical King David, from the opening lines of Leonard Cohen’s popular ballad “Hallelujah”: “Now I’ve heard there was a secret chord/ that David played, and it pleased the lord. . . .” Like Cohen’s ironic hymn, *The Secret Chord* raises questions about our hero’s motivations, considering closely the nature and worth of his heroic acts. But the novel form allows Brooks greater room to maneuver, to turn the story of the bards-warrior-king into a full-scale epic that succeeds in making some of the oldest tales in the Western tradition seem strange, wonderful, and new.

Brooks chooses the courtier prophet Nathan to tell the story, as he probably did in the famous “lost book of Nathan,” devising a scenario in which the aging King David orders the scribe to set down his life story after interviewing surviving family members and wives. Nathan’s encounters with these witnesses bring tensions that heighten the drama of the often brutal and always emotionally powerful scenes recounted. “Do they need, I wonder, to know what came before?” David’s mother asks when Nathan takes her testimony. It is a question that, with each of her historically informed novels, Brooks answers with a resounding yes.

**The Pawnbroker’s Daughter: A Memoir**
By Maxine Kumin ’46, AM ’48, RI ’63
W. W. Norton, 162 pp.

*The Pawnbroker’s Daughter* is a true writer’s memoir, one that charts the development of both a distinguished career and of a distinctive vision. Kumin takes us into her confidence, into her kitchen, but not to shock us with revelations of domestic strife, as other writers of her generation might have. Instead, we find Kumin sitting at the breakfast table scribbling rhymes for the middle-brow poetry contests that got her started in her vocation. Though selective, this honesty from a poet who went on to win the Pulitzer Prize is breathtaking in its own way.

We can be grateful that, before her death in 2014, Kumin took the time to set down memories of a life that began between the two great wars, commenced its literary flowering in the midst of antivat protest, and left us with timeless wisdom, succinctly expressed:

Poetry
makes nothing happen. It survives
in the valley of its saying.

**The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State**
By Lisa McGirr AM ’07, RI ’13

No one disputes that Prohibition, “the boldest effort to remake private behavior in the nation’s history,” in Lisa McGirr’s estimation, failed in its aim. The 18th Amendment, which banned the production, transport, and sale of alcohol throughout the United States, is the only amendment to have been repealed—and in just 13 years’ time. Historians tend to dismiss the episode as an aberration with little consequence, while novelists romanticize speakeasy culture and the rum-running gangsters who kept liquor flowing covertly through the “dry” Roaring 20s.

McGirr has written a bold new history of Prohibition that establishes its central role in the reconfigured Democratic Party that brought FDR to the presidency with the support of the poor ethnic and racial minorities that had been disproportionately targeted in enforcement efforts, even as the Prohibitionists’ alarmist crackdowns set the stage for the rise of the “federal penal state” we suffer under today. McGirr’s account may skip the romance, but the narrative is no less urgent for its insistence on a full accounting.
Aspiring Sculpture Lands in the Yard
A PIECE OF PUBLIC ART FINDS A LASTING HOME AT RADCLIFFE

SEPTEMBER 2015
Koshland installation exemplifies intellectual curiosity

There’s a new face in Radcliffe Yard, ready to greet visitors as they pass Fay House. A prominent sculpture, Aspiring, by alumna Phlyssa Koshland ’71, was installed in September.

Koshland originally conceived of the sculpture as an expression of scientific inquiry. But it has come to mean more, she told the crowd at the sculpture’s unveiling this fall: “Aspiring seeks to represent intellectual curiosity but also physical and mental striving—seeing a goal, taking risks to achieve it, working hard, and having a ‘never say die’ mentality.”

Koshland met Dean Liz-abeth Cohen at a Radcliffe on the Road program in London in 2013 and shared some photos of her sculpture pieces. Dean Cohen says she was “smitten immediately.” So began Aspiring’s journey to the Radcliffe Institute.

Aspiring’s new home at Radcliffe is far different from the campus Koshland remembers from her undergraduate days. Phlyp, as she was known by her college friends, arrived in Cambridge in 1967, when the first wave of student protests were just beginning at Harvard. Her time at Radcliffe College was chaotic, and she lost touch with her alma mater over the years. But when Radcliffe evolved into an institute for advanced study, Koshland was drawn to its new multidisciplinary mission.

Perhaps that’s because Koshland herself is multidisciplinary. She grew up in a family of scientists. Her mother, Marian Koshland, was an immunologist and molecular biologist who held academic appointments at institutions such as Harvard Medical School and the University of California, Berkeley. Her father, Daniel E. Koshland Jr., was a biochemist who, among other things, contributed to the Manhattan Project, modernized UC Berkeley’s biology departments, and edited Science magazine for a decade. Two of Koshland’s four siblings followed in their parents’ footsteps, but Koshland chose a different path. She is now a successful sculptor working primarily in studios in Sydney, Australia, and Paris, France, but her art draws on her science roots. She says the motion suggested in many of her sculptures is inspired by the movement of molecules.

At Aspiring’s ribbon-cutting ceremony, Dean Cohen underscored why the piece is a perfect fit for the Radcliffe Institute. “Its grace and beauty speak for themselves,” she said, “and its commitment to aspiration is one we deeply share.”

Danielle Griggs

Top: Aspiring in its new home; bottom right: Koshland on a visit to Fay House; bottom left: Koshland and Dean Cohen on a site visit to scout installation locations in the fall of 2014 and at the ribbon cutting for Aspiring in September.
The Natural Inspiration behind Aizenberg’s Work

PITCHER PLANTS, BUTTERFLIES, AND SEA SPONGES HELP SOLVE BIG PROBLEMS

Harvard Alumni Association cohosted the event. Aizenberg was the first appointee to Radcliffe’s Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professorship, which allowed her to spend two years at the Radcliffe Institute. Recruited in 2007 from Bell Laboratories, she launched an ambitious research program at Harvard’s John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, where she now oversees a laboratory of 50 researchers.

Those researchers are architects, biologists, chemists, designers, mathematicians, medical doctors, and physicists—all of whom work together.

In New York, Aizenberg described how she and her colleagues stole a clever slippery surface structure from nature and developed a bioinspired nonstick material called SLIPS—slippery liquid-infused porous surfaces—to fight a variety of problems, including at least 19,000 deaths a year that are caused by hospital-acquired infections and other diseases that occur when bacteria, fungi, and viruses accumulate on surfaces.

This new technology was inspired by the pitcher plant, which produces a watery layer on its leaves that prevents insects from escaping when they fall down its pitcher-shaped sides. Similarly, fish are able to swim smoothly because of the mucous coating on their scales, and our eyeballs move easily owing to the liquid layer that surrounds them.

“There’s nothing sticks to a slippery surface,” Aizenberg said when she explained how the SLIPS technology works. A slippery interface can be applied to a catheter, for example, so that it repels bacteria and viruses.

Aizenberg described another interdisciplinary project her lab has worked on called WICK—wetting in color kit—which was inspired by two unrelated organisms: echinoderms and butterflies. At Bell Labs, she started researching a close relative of the starfish—the brittle star—that changes color. “They change color in an interesting way,” she said, “just like your transition sunglasses.” During the day, they open their lenses to let in light, and during the day, they cover them with a black pigment. In a related study, Aizenberg’s lab investigated butterflies and their ability to repel water—slippery surface structure from nature and developed a bioinspired nonstick material called SLIPS—slippery liquid-infused porous surfaces—to fight a variety of problems, including at least 19,000 deaths a year that are caused by hospital-acquired infections and other diseases that occur when bacteria, fungi, and viruses accumulate on surfaces.

Below left: Susan Wallach ’68, JD ’71 and Jane Borthwick ’76, MBA ’84. Right: Richard Moore ’71, Barbara Moore ’71, and Dick Cashin ’75, MBA ’85
unless it contains alcohol. Nature didn’t design them to repel alcohol.

“There’s no organism that combines these two ideas,” Aizenberg said—liquids infiltrating a structure and changing color and optical properties at the same time. “But we’ve married them. By combining chemistry, optics, physics, and design, we make a structure that’s similar to the beautiful butterfly in its color. We then imbue it with chemical information that you don’t see.” A liquid added to this structure changes its color, just as the brittle star does. A message is revealed that varies according to which liquid you use. “This can be applied for the detection of liquids, used in antitampering applications, and used just for fun,” Aizenberg said. “You can encrypt messages of any kind.” She now has a large grant from the United States Department of Transportation to show how this technology could detect the quality of extracted oil and thus avoid explosions on trains carrying it from oil wells.

Start-up companies are exploring both technologies—SLIPS and WICK—for their commercial potential.

Sea sponges are yet another creature from nature that Aizenberg’s lab investigates. “We are not very good at designing materials that can do many things,” she said. But nature creates many structures with multiple functions. “For example, sea sponges that sit deep in the ocean are protected by a strong skeleton made of glass, but the skeleton also has excellent fiber-optical properties that act as beacons in the sea, so a lot of creatures are attracted to them.” They are nature’s illuminated houses for shrimp that live inside them, fully protected, in a material that’s an interesting combination of strength, fiber optics, and symbiosis.

The sponges are built of crossed squares (rare in nature), multibeams, and laminated glass. “Altogether, it is the strongest glass that exists,” Aizenberg said. “We cannot yet make glass that strong.” She and her colleagues are trying to understand these structures so that they can create materials that mimic them. In this effort, they’re working with people from the Graduate School of Design.

In closing, Aizenberg said she hoped to build a dream house inspired by nature that is made of strong glass, as sponges are, but has the ability to repel moisture and bacteria, as the pitcher plant does, while also being beautiful and colorful, as butterflies are.

The importance of beauty is something she said she learned at the Radcliffe Institute, where she started working with the Harvard Graduate School of Design and interacted with fellows who were artists. “As engineers, we can come up with the best solution in the world,” she said, “but we need to understand that if it’s not aesthetically pleasing, we should not make it.”

The rapt audience found to the origins and future of Radcliffe

Catherine (Kate) A. Gellert ’93 hosted a reception for recent Harvard College graduates at her home in New York City. Gellert, along with her cohosts Michael D. Patterson ’97 and M. Amelia Muller ’11, invited alumnae/i to learn about Radcliffe as Harvard’s institute for advanced study. Guests connected with one another over cocktails and hors d’oeuvres and heard from I. Glenn Cohen JD ’03, RI ’13, an expert on the intersection of law, medicine, and ethics, about his work at the Institute.

Gellert told the crowd that she originally became involved with Radcliffe through her mother, who was a graduate of the Harvard-Radcliffe Program in Business Administration before Harvard Business School began admitting women.

“My mother says she owes every opportunity that came her way, including meeting my dad and having me, to Radcliffe,” Gellert said. Since learning about Radcliffe from her mother, Gellert has become a passionate advocate for its current mission.

Muller, who came to know the Radcliffe Institute as an undergraduate when she took a class at the Schlesinger Library, introduced Cohen as the evening’s main speaker.

Cohen, a professor of law and faculty director of the Petrie-Flom Center for Health
Maryellie Kulukundis Johnson ’57 and Rupert H. Johnson Jr. hosted a reception honoring Radcliffe at their Hillsborough, California, home. Friends and fellows from the San Francisco Bay Area celebrated with cocktails and conversation under a lavish tent decorated with selections from the Johnsons’ Japanese screen collection.

Dean Lizabeth Cohen and Yukio Lippit, the Johnson-Kulukundis Family Faculty Director of the Arts at Radcliffe and a professor of the history of art and architecture at Harvard, shared news of Radcliffe’s recent programming in the arts, including *teamLab at Radcliffe: What a Loving and Beautiful World*, the inaugural exhibition in the Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery at the Radcliffe Institute. Guests were also entertained with music from the Kroktails, a group of alumni from the oldest a cappella group at Harvard, the Krokodiloes.

Danielle Griggs

Bay Area Gathering Brings Art to the Fore

**JAPANESE SCREENS AND MUSIC SET THE TONE**

**NOVEMBER 2015**

Guests learn about and celebrate recent Radcliffe arts programming

Kulukundis Family Faculty Director of the Arts at Radcliffe and a professor of the history of art and architecture at Harvard, shared news of Radcliffe’s recent programming in the arts, including *teamLab at Radcliffe: What a Loving and Beautiful World*, the inaugural exhibition in the Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery at the Radcliffe Institute. Guests were also entertained with music from the Kroktails, a group of alumni from the oldest a cappella group at Harvard, the Krokodiloes.

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Law Policy, Biotechnology, and Bioethics at Harvard Law School, described Harvard as an atom cloud, made up of electrons moving at high velocity, in which faculty members who might benefit from one another’s work collide only randomly. “What the Radcliffe Institute does is lower the temperature and slow down our state,” he said, allowing for connections across departments and disciplines.

Cohen mentioned some of his favorite moments from his year as a Radcliffe fellow: sharing an office corridor with a novelist writing about sex workers, a historian writing about Benjamin Disraeli, and an experimental theater director; discussing parallels between the laws of the universe and the laws of morality with an astrophysicist; and learning from an anthropologist about the Mapuche tribe in Chile, which treats legal texts as holy. He also gave a brief glimpse into some of his current research, which ranges from work on medical ethics and the globalization of health care (his focus at Radcliffe) to the moral and legal ethics of cutting-edge reproductive technology to the long-term effects of professional football on athletes and the ethical responsibilities doctors, teams, and the public have to affected players.

Patterson closed the evening by summing up the Institute in three words: young, dynamic, and entrepreneurial. “At Harvard, so many great things have been done over time, but there are still great things to be done,” he said. “And I think Radcliffe in many ways is at the point of that spirit.”

Danielle Griggs
Sliver of a Full Moon: An Evening of Performance and Politics

A panel discussion follows a powerful reenactment of the historic congressional reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, which restored the authority of tribal governments—except those in Alaska—to prosecute non-Native abusers who assault and abuse Native women on tribal lands.

“Our girls have struggled with sexual and domestic violence—not once but repeatedly. My question for Congress is and always has been, ‘Why did you not protect me?’”—Sliver of a Full Moon

Women in Biotech

In this symposium, scientists, industry and venture-capital leaders, and academics gather to explore the divide between the large number of women who pursue advanced degrees in related scientific fields and their representation in leadership positions in biotech firms.

Can African Women Redefine Liberation for All?

Mamphela Aletta Ramphele BI ’89, of South Africa, has been a student activist, a medical doctor, a community development activist, a researcher, a university executive, and a global public servant. Now an active citizen in both the public and private sectors, she asks whether—and how—African women can redefine freedom for the benefit of all. Presented as the 2015–2016 Maurine and Robert Rothschild Lecture.
Two Systems

The Frieda L. Miller Fellow at Radcliffe, Sarah Howe RI ’16 presents her new sequence of poems, in which she explores the historical encounter between China and the West.

Frenzied

Maybe holding back is just another kind of need. I am a blue plum in the half-light.

You are a tiger who eats his own paws.

The day we married all the trees trembled as if they were mad — be kind to me, you said.

—Sarah Howe

From Loop of Jade (Chatto & Windus, 2015)

The Neurobiology of Sustainable Behavior

Ann-Christine Duhaime RI ’16 considers how inherent brain drive and reward systems may influence behaviors affecting the environment.

Prospects for a Vaccine and Cure for HIV

Molecular science has revolutionized the approach to vaccine and drug development. Dan Barouch, a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and the director of the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, describes the current state of the HIV epidemic and the prospects for developing a vaccine or a cure for this disease.
Honor Roll

Janet Echelman '87 is one of 13 area residents singled out by the Boston Globe Magazine in its 2015 Bostonians of the Year list, saying “No artist in the Boston area is working with greater ambition, on a grander scale, and with more impressive results.” Her aerial sculpture 1.8 London is now on display above Oxford Circus, in the titular city.

The American Philosophical Association recently announced that Building Better Beings: A Theory of Moral Responsibility

Honored at the White House

The philosopher and novelist REBECCA NEWBERGER GOLDSTEIN RI '07 was one of 10 recipients of the 2014 National Humanities Medal, an award conferred by President Barack Obama JD '91 last fall. She was honored “for bringing philosophy into conversation with culture,” read the White House citation. “In scholarship, Dr. Goldstein has elucidated the ideas of Spinoza and Gödel, while in fiction, she deploys wit and drama to help us understand the great human conflict between thought and feeling.” ¶ A former MacArthur Fellowship recipient, Goldstein recently finished an appointment as a visiting professor at London’s New College of the Humanities and has just joined the faculty of New York University, also as a visiting professor. Her most recent book is Plato at the Googleplex: Why Philosophy Won’t Go Away (Pantheon, 2014), which Kirkus Reviews called “a witty, inventive, genre-bending work.”
From Polio Ward to the Hall of Fame

Tenley Albright ’57, MD ’61 has led quite the accomplished life. After recovering from childhood polio, she began to ice skate competitively, eventually dropping out of Radcliffe College to pursue her demanding training schedule. This move eventually paid off: she won a gold medal, the first American to do so, at the 1956 Olympics in Cortina d’Ampezzo, Italy. Sports Illustrated placed her on its list of “100 Greatest Female Athletes.”

After completing premed classes, Albright was admitted to Harvard Medical School without an undergraduate diploma—one of only five women in her class. She followed in her father’s footsteps and became a surgeon, practicing at New England Baptist Hospital and New England Deaconess Hospital. After her retirement from practice, Albright founded the MIT Collaborative Initiatives. In addition to directing this nonprofit—which brings together experts in many disciplines to focus on solving deeply rooted societal issues using a systems-based approach—she is a faculty member at Harvard Medical School.

This past October, Albright was among the 10 honorees inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame, celebrated for her significant contributions to athletics and science.

[Oxford University Press, 2016] by Manuel Vargas RI ’09, a professor of philosophy and law at San Francisco State University, is the winner of its 2015 Book Prize. The book, on which Vargas worked while at Radcliffe, defends commonsense convictions about free will and agency, drawing on recent debates in social psychology and illuminating the relationship between moral philosophy and legal practice.

Sarah Howe RI ’16 won the Poetry Book Society’s 2015 T S Eliot Prize for Loop of Jade (Chatto & Windus, 2015), the first debut collection to win the award. “She brings new possibilities to British poetry,” the judges said. Howe is the 2015–2016 Hayden Herrera RI ’09, an honorary doctorate in theology, recognized distinguished poetic achievement. Howe’s collections of poetry include The Kingdom of Ordinary Time (W. W. Norton, 2009), which was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize; What the Living Do (1998); and The Good Thief (Persea, 1988), selected by Margaret Atwood AM ’62 for the 1987 National Poetry Series.

Last year, Universtät Bern awarded Bernadette J. Brooten PhD ’82, BI ’90 an honorary doctorate in theology, recognizing her groundbreaking research on Jewish and Christian women in antiquity, on the history of sexuality, and on slavery. Brooten is the Robert and Myra Kraft and Jacob Hiat Professor of Christian Studies at Brandeis University, where she also founded and directs the Feminist Sexual Ethics Project.

Inklings


One entry by a Radcliffe Fellow proved itself a literary standout: The Sympathizer, a novel by Viet Thanh Nguyen RI ’09 and winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the 2015
case for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize; What the Living Do (1998); and The Good Thief (Persea, 1988), selected by Margaret Atwood AM ’62 for the 1987 National Poetry Series.

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Bibliophiles, a regular feature in the Boston Globe, recently featured the novelist Claire Messud RI ’05. In the Q and A, the author and Harvard senior lecturer mentions that she enjoyed Nguyen’s The Sympathizer, calling it “beautifully written and meaty,” before recommending some bathroom reading and revealing the books that made it onto her syllabi.

In a Boston Globe op-ed, “Seeing Dark Matter as the Key to the Universe—and Human Empathy,” the theoretical physicist Lisa Randall ’84, PhD ’87, RI ’03 considered her research subject as a metaphor for race, saying, “Recognizing the limitations of our senses and the subjectivity of our experiences is the only route to transcending them.” She recently published Dark Matter and the Dinosaurs: The Astounding Interconnectedness of the Universe (Ecco, 2015), and in November, she appeared as a guest on the NPR news quiz Wait Wait…Don’t Tell Me in the segment “Not My Job,” where Randall answered questions about phys ed.


The Academy of American Poets awarded Marie Howe BI ’90 its 2015 Academy of American Poets Fellowship, a prize that recognizes distinguished poetic achievement. Howe’s collections of poetry include The Kingdom of Ordinary Time (W. W. Norton, 2009), which was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize; What the Living Do (1998); and The Good Thief (Persea, 1988), selected by Margaret Atwood AM ’62 for the 1987 National Poetry Series.

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Mary Karr BI ’91 was interviewed by Ana Marie Cox for the New York Times Magazine. In “Mary Karr Thinks You Shouldn’t Google Yourself,” the author talks about memoir, social media, and what she won’t discuss in an interview.

Frances Kissling RI ’08 critiqued the mercy of Pope Francis toward women in an article titled “The False Compassion of Pope Francis,” which appeared in the Nation. “The church, at its best, is not about punishment,” she argued. “But unfortunately, when it comes to women and sex, the church is rarely at its best.”

In a New York Times opinion piece titled “Drawing the Line between Civil and Religious Rights,” the legal expert Linda Greenhouse ’68 considered the tension inherent in the First Amendment: “The amendment prohibits the ‘establishment’ of religion while also protecting ‘the free exercise thereof.’”

Gazmend Kapllani RI ’13 is among several international authors who recently contributed to Grant’s their reactions to Europe’s current refugee crisis. Kapllani, a writer who is on the faculty at Emerson College, submitted two short essays, “A Short European Memory” and “All Quiet on the Railway Front.”

A paper recently published in the American Chemical Society journal Biochemistry, coauthored by David Christianson ’83, AM ’85, PhD ’87, RI ’16, was named an ACS Editors’ Choice—one of only a handful of papers from the journal to be selected each year in recognition of their broad public interest. “Biochemical and Structural Characterization of HDAC8 Mutants Associated with Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Spectrum Disorders” shows the use of experimental and computational protein structure analysis to understand aberrant enzyme function in the congenital birth defect Cornelia de Lange syndrome, along with how to repair it.

“Unforced Error,” a new poem by Meghan O’Rourke RI ’15, was published in the New Yorker. Audio of the author reading the work is available at www.newyorker.com.


The Boston Review recently published “Reading to My Father,” a poem by Jorie Graham BI ’83. The Whiting Awards calls it an “enchanting and aching new poem about the loss of a parent.”

Ploughshares recently released “Dead Zone” by Tova Reich RI ’12 as part of its digital-first series of individual long stories and essays, Ploughshares Solos, available on www.pshares.org. Reich takes the reader on a rollicking trip through the Holy Land in search of an unspoiled place to rest.

In a Q and A for the New York Times Sunday Book Review, the renowned writer Ursula K. Le Guin ’51 admitted, “At the moment, I tend to avoid fiction about dysfunctional urban middle-class people written in the present tense. This makes it hard to find a new novel, sometimes.” Le Guin is most recently the author of Steering the Craft: A Twenty-First Century Guide to Sailing the Sea of Story (Mariner Books, 2015) and Late in the Day: Poems 2010–2014 (PM Press, 2015).

Jennifer Lerner AM ’07, RI ’14, a professor of public policy and management at Harvard Kennedy School, is one of five leading academics in the field of biobehavioral science who coauthored “The Interaction of Testosterone and Cortisol Is Associated with Attained Status in Male Executives,” which appeared in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. The study showed that body chemistry can influence power and professional status.

Siddhartha Deb RI ’10 has been a regular contributor to the New York Times Bookends column in the Sunday Book Review in the past few months. He has debated the finer points of such questions as “Is

Plumbing the Occult

Alex Mar ’98 has made a splash with her first book, Witches of America (Sarah Crichton Books, 2015). The New York Times, which included the literary effort in its year-end list of notable books, called it “a seeker’s memoir told through a quilted veil: a collection of strong, journalistic profiles of several fascinating American practitioners of the occult.” The book also received reviews from ELLE, the Huffington Post, NPR, the Washington Post, and other publications. Kirkus Reviews concluded that Witches is “an enchanting and addictive report shedding much-needed light on a spiritualistic community obfuscated by historical misinterpretation and pop-culture derision.”

This exploration of paganism grew out of Mar’s 2010 documentary film American Mystic, which features three members of fringe religions. Her friendship with Morpheus, the Wiccan priestess who appears in the film, inspired Mar to undertake further research. She blended that research with memoir to produce a work of cultural history.
legitimate satire necessarily directed at the powerful? “How does an author’s reputation shape your response to a book?” and “Why get an MFA?”

This past summer, the Economist ran a story about gender inequality in China’s housing laws that included the work of the sociologist **Leta Hong Fincher ’90**. Hong Fincher is the author of *Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China* (Zed Books, 2014), of which the LA Review of Books says, “A powerful—and provocative—argument that China’s female shortage, far from empowering women, has actually resulted in a situation where urban women’s rights are increasingly imperiled.”

**Margaret Morganroth Gullette ’62, PhD ’75, BI ’87**, an age critic, wrote the lead chapter, “Aged by Culture,” in the new *Handbook of Cultural Gerontology* (Routledge, 2015). Her blog post “Caitlyn Jenner: The Messages in the Image,” appeared on SilverCentury.org, where she has often been a contributor. She also wrote “Why I Hesitated about ‘An Act Relative to Death with Dignity’ and Then Voted For It” for the journal *Feminism & Psychology* (February, 2015). Her work will next appear in the book *The Big Move* (Indiana University Press, 2016)—about moving into retirement communities, nursing homes, and continuing-care homes.

In “Whose Side Are You On?” which appeared in the *New York Times* Sunday Book Review, **Maile Meloy ’94** responded to critics who question her suitability, as someone who is not a parent, for writing children’s books. “Having had a childhood, I think my qualifications are pretty good,” she said.

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**Shelf Life**

In her memoir *Dreaming of Lions: My Life in the Wild Places* (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2016), **Elizabeth Marshall Thomas ’54, BI ’78** recounts her life observing creatures and cultures from Africa to New England.

**Itai Yanai RI ’15** has published *The Society of Genes* (Harvard University Press, 2015), which he cowrote with Martin Lercher during his Radcliffe fellowship. “The writing is engaging and clear, providing ample introductory material to ensure that the interested lay reader will be swept along by both the science and the evolutionary story,” said *Publishers Weekly*.

*Unspeakable Things* (Knopf, 2015), a new novel from **Kathleen Spivack BI ’71**, uses magical realism to tell the tale of a handful of Holocaust survivors in New York City. In a starred review, *Booklist* said, “It is a macabre fairy tale of monstrous fascinations, horrific exploitations, and desperate strategies of survival.”

**Andrew Wender Cohen RI ’06** has published *Contraband: Smuggling and the Birth of the American Century* (W. W. Norton, 2015), begun during his fellowship year. *Library Journal* says of the book, “Widely researched and lucidly written, these episodes of rogues and their government-appointed opponents will enchant nonspecialists, while the larger issues of power and enterprise in America will attract academics.” Cohen is an associate professor of history at Syracuse University’s Maxwell School.

**Marta Weiss ’96** has a new book out, *Julia Margaret Cameron: Photographs to Electrify You with Delight and Startle the World* (Mack, 2015). Cameron is considered a pioneering portraitist and the most important woman photographer of the 19th century. The book accompanies an exhibition at London’s Victoria and Albert Museum, up through February 21.

*Spinning Mambo into Salsa: Caribbean Dance in Global Commerce* (Oxford University Press, 2015) is a new history by **Juliet McMains ’94**. McMains, an associate professor at the University of Washington, based the book on more than 100 oral history interviews, archival research, and ethnographic observation.

**Mary Karr BI ’91** has published *The Art of Memoir* (Harper, 2015), in which, said *Publishers Weekly*, she “lends her characteristic trueness and ‘you-ness’ to the subject of writing memoirs, wisely (and quite often humorously) guiding readers in their understanding and experience of the art.”

*Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age* (Penguin Press, 2015), the latest from the MIT professor **Sherry Turkle ’69, AM ’73, PhD ’76**, examines the cultural effects of digital communication. In a *New York Times* book review, Jonathan Franzen said, “The appeal of *Reclaiming Conversation* lies in its evocation of a time, not so long ago, when conversation and privacy and nuanced debate weren’t boutique luxuries.”


In *The Heart Goes Last* (Non A. Talese/ Doubleday, 2015), **Margaret Atwood AM ’62** suggests a dystopian future in which citizens willingly reside in prisons, seeing it as a way of achieving a version of the American Dream. The *New York Times* Sunday Book Review said, “Margaret Atwood . . . has become something nearly as fantastical as one of her storytelling subjects: a living legend who continues to remain fresh and innovative on the page.” In an article titled “A Novelist Unafraid of a Digital Deep Dive,” Atwood said the idea for the novel—which began as a digital serial—came to her while reading about for-profit prisons.

**Dale Peterson RI ’14** has published *Where Have All the Animals Gone? My Travels with K quantify Allmann* (Bauhan Publishing, 2015). In this memoir, the writer and natural historian teams up with Ammann, a photojournalist, to look into conservation issues across Africa—including bush meat, the ivory trade, and the collapse of the continent’s wild animal populations.

**Lily Tuck ’60** has published an unorthodox memoir titled *The Double Life of Liliane* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2015). The book, says *Publishers Weekly*, “blends history,
biology, memoir, and fiction in this gleefully chaotic meta-narrative, which closely parallels the author’s own life.”

*Our Side of the River: A Memoir* (White River Press, 2015) by Alan Emmet ’50, RS ’77, describes growing up at an old summer place along the St. Croix River among four generations of a family with deep roots in Minnesota’s past.

Peggy Guggenheim: *The Shock of the Modern* (Yale University Press, 2015) is the latest book from Francine Prose ’68, AM ’69. The *Wall Street Journal* says Prose “has compiled a useful scissors-and-paste montage of a monstre sacré who, as much as anyone, inserted the ‘modern’ in art history.”


*Reclaiming Rose: A Suite of Poems* (Finishing Line Press, 2015) is the latest collection from Florence Ladd BI ’71. The poems honor her great-grandmother, the titular Rose, who lived in slavery for most of her life.

Lisa Saltzman AM ’91, PhD ’94, RI ’03 has published *Daguerreotypes: Fugitive Subjects, Contemporary Objects* (University of Chicago Press, 2015), which looks at the impact of the idea of the photograph in contemporary art. Saltzman is the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Professor in the Humanities and a professor in and chair of the history of art department at Bryn Mawr College.

In *When Movements Anchor Parties: Electoral Alignments in American History* (Princeton University Press, 2015), Daniel Schlozman ’03, RG0F ’09, PhD ’11, explores the relationships among social movements, interest groups, and political parties in America from the Civil War to today. Schlozman, now an assistant professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University, worked on his dissertation—which became this book—during his year as a Radcliffe graduate fellow.

Marjorie Press Lindblom ’71 is a coeditor of *Courtrooms of the Second Circuit: Their Architecture, History, and Stories* (Acanthus Press, 2015). The *New York Times* called out the publication in an article titled “Coffee Table Books about New York,” saying, “The book lavishly depicts the illustrious halls of justice (the majestic exteriors sometimes seen on the opening credits of television shows, the stately interiors rarely, if at all) where the body of laws are adjudicated.”

Linda M. Blum BI ’97, who teaches sociology at Northeastern University, has published *Raising Generation Rx: Mothering Kids with Invisible Disabilities in an Age of Inequality* (NYU Press, 2015). *Kirkus Reviews* praised it as a “valuable contribution to the national dialogue on health care and education, told through the voices of the mothers whose children’s futures should be of concern to all of us.”

In *Forging Trust Communities: How Technology Changes Politics* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), Irene S. Wu ’91 uses 20 historical case studies—from China, Qatar, the United Kingdom, and Southeast Asia—to document the world history of citizens and leaders exercising political power through communications technology. Wu is a senior analyst at the Federal Communications Commission and teaches at Georgetown University.

Reuven Snir RI ’10 has published *Who Needs Arab-Jewish Identity? Interpellation, Exclusion, and Inessential Solidarities* (Brill, 2015), on which he worked during his fellowship year. He presents a new approach to the study of Arab-Jewish identity and the subjectivities of Arabized Jews. Snir is the dean of humanities at Haifa University.

Ruth Seligman ’48, HRPBA ’50 recounts the past 65 years of her life in *Stumbling Through Life: From Brookline, Mass. (USA), to Ramat Gan (Israel)—by Chance, a Surprisingly Successful Journey* (self-published, 2014).

Cecile Kuznitz ’89 has published *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), the first history of the original center for Yiddish scholarship. Using newly recovered documents that were believed destroyed by...
In ship program. 2016) during her semesters in the fellow-
ship program. In When We Are No More: How Digital Memory Is Shaping Our Future (Bloomsbury Press, 2016), Abby Smith Rumsey ’74, PhD ’87 examines the history of memory—from cuneiform tablets to computer chips—and explains why data storage is not memory.

Georgia: A Novel of Georgia O’Keeffe (Random House, 2016) is a new work of historical fiction by Dawn Tripp ’90. The novel is based on the story of the iconic painter’s life, including her quest to find her voice and her relationship with the photographer Alfred Stieglitz.

On Stage and Screen

Peter Galison ’77, AM ’77, PhD ’83, RI ’10, the Joseph Pellegrino University Professor and a professor in the history of science and physics, teamed up with his Harvard colleague Robb Moss AM ’13, the chair of the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies, to codirect Containment (2015). The documentary, which has screened at international festivals, explores the troubled far-distant future of nuclear waste, asking what we can do now to secure the planet 10,000 years from now.

Chevalier (2015), an absurdist comedy by Athina Rachel Tsangari RI ’16, took the top honor at the BFI London Film Festival, where it won for best film. Indiewire said of the film, “Chevalier offers further proof of Tsangari’s status as one of the most innovative chroniclers of human behavior working today.”

Ben Rivers RI ’15 curated a film series this past fall at the Harvard Film Archive. A Matter of Life and Death, or The Filmmaker’s Nightmare featured 18 films—both fictional and documentary—that, said Rivers, “show the darker side of filmmaking and its repercussions.”

Beasts of No Nation (2015)—Netflix’s first original film, based on the book by Uzodinma Iweala ’04, RI ’12—debuted at the Venice Film Festival. The film, starring Idris Elba as Iweala’s ruthless West African warlord, earned rave reviews.

A film by Jan Krawitz RI ’87, Perfect Strangers (2013), which tells the story of an altruistic kidney donor, was awarded best feature documentary at the Atlanta International Documentary Film Festival and received audience awards at the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival and the Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival. The film had previously enjoyed a national broadcast on the World Channel series America ReFramed in April and has screened at universities around the country.

Art Aware

Abigail DeVille RI ’15 recently traveled to Paris to install a new art exhibition, titled America, at Michel Rein. The solo exhibition, which included site-specific creations made from architectural or domestic waste, was DeVille’s second at the gallery.

Gallery TPW, in Toronto, hosted Bystanders, a new exhibition by David Levine AM ’05, RI ’13. The artist also gave a talk at the gallery, in which he spoke about “hiding in plain sight through the trifocal lens of body-swapping sci-fi movies, 70s performance art, and the cult of method acting,” and took part in a conversation titled “Stop Acting.”

The work of Jessica Ferguson ’71 was featured in shows across the country in the second half of last year: Absence & Presence, at the Student Center at Curry College, in Milton, Massachusetts; Depth of Field, at Art Intersection, in Gilbert, Arizona; and Alchemical Ensemble: New Visions in Historic Documentary Processes, at the Sidney Larson Gallery at Columbia College, in Columbia, Missouri.
This past fall, the installation artist Sarah Sze RI '06 enjoyed her first US solo gallery show in five years. The exhibition, at the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, in New York City, showcased a new body of work: both sculpture and installation.

Anne Seelbach BI '90 taught two-weekend watercolor classes this past summer at the Victor D'Amico Institute of Art/The Art Barge in Amagansett, New York. Using landscape and still life as motivation, the classes focused on technique.

Grace Notes

Steven Kazuo Takasugi RI '16 presented the US premiere of his composition cycle Sideshow (2009–2015), for amplified octet and electronics and inspired by the Coney Island of the early 20th century, at the Knafel Center in late November. “Ultimately, Sideshow was music theater,” said a Boston Globe review of the performance. “Visual elements... were as essential to the experience as the sonic. Like the sideshows that inspired it, this piece probably has to be seen to be believed.” Video of the Radcliffe concert is available on our website. After its Cambridge debut, the Talea Ensemble took the show to New York and Los Angeles.

Metafagote (2015), a solo piece for bassoon by composer Felipe Lara RI '16, was included in the International Contemporary Ensemble’s first concert of its season. The event was reviewed in the New York Times, where the reviewer credited bassoonist Rebekah Heller’s playing of Lara’s piece with rearranging his “understanding of an instrument rarely in the spotlight, ever the orchestra’s bridesmaid.”

Tamar Diesendruck BI ’99, RI ’13 took part in a concert of new music by faculty members at the Berklee School of Music, where she presented a piece for viola, performed by Ashleigh Gordon.

Public Life

Late last year, Ann Blair ’84, BI ’99, RI...
Sandra Citi RI ’05 was promoted to associate professor of cell biology in the Department of Cell Biology at the University of Geneva, in Switzerland.

Jane Borthwick ’76, MBA ’84 has been elected president of the board of directors of ArtTable, a national non-profit dedicated to advancing women’s leadership in the visual arts. She is the managing director of Ronald Varney Fine Art Advisors, where she focuses on the management of diverse and specialized collections.

As part of TEDxWWU, Joseph E. Trimble RI ’01 gave a talk, “Culture and Leadership,” based on his book with Jean Lau Chin, Diversity and Leadership (SAGE Publications, 2014). The authors propose bringing together research on leadership and diversity to advance a more global-minded society, and the resulting talk is available at www.ted.com and www.youtube.com. Trimble is a distinguished university professor and a professor of psychology at Western Washington University.

Although he has relocated to South Dakota, Ben Miller RI ’15 traveled back east for the International Lilac Society’s New England Fall Festival at Hooksett Library, in New Hampshire. There, his “Team Lilac”—which includes his former Radcliffe Research Partners—performed in celebration of the fragrant flower. Back in Sioux Falls, Miller continues to work on his Mural Speaks! project, for which he hopes to translate William Carlos Williams’s “The Red Wheelbarrow” into each of the 143 languages currently spoken in Sioux Falls homes. He put out a call in a recent blog post for Ecotone magazine: “Any translator interested in participating, please e-mail me at muralspeaks@gmail.com!”

It’s a mutual appreciation between the poet Sarah Howe RI ’16 and the physicist Stephen Hawking: For National Poetry Day in the United Kingdom, Howe—who has written about the enduring connection between science and poetry—composed a poem, “Relativity,” inspired by and dedicated to Hawking. When he heard about her efforts, he invited her to read for him, and then he recorded his own version of the poem using his voice processor. Howe’s most recent collection, Loop of Jade (Chatto & Windus, 2015) was named by the Booker Prize winner A. S. Byatt as one of the books of the year in New Statesman.

Elizabeth Alexander RI ’08, a poet, essayist, and memoirist, has joined the Ford Foundation as its director of creativity and free expression. As such, she “shapes and directs Ford’s grant making in arts, media, and culture, a cornerstone of our work in the US and around the world,” says the foundation.

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Have you done something extraordinary? SHARE IT! E-mail us at magazine@radcliffe.harvard.edu.

The Schlesinger Library recently hosted Rosa (Rosie) Gumataotao Rios ’87, the treasurer of the United States, for a roundtable discussion of US currency along with a special viewing of items from the library collections related to currency.

ECCE, the New York– and Boston-based new music group founded by the composer John Aylward RI ’12, is enjoying a season-long residency at Le Laboratoire Cambridge, a cutting-edge technology and design studio. A Boston Globe article said a desire to “reimagine the salon” was Aylward’s motivation to collaborate with the venue: “By inviting audiences to not only listen to music, but to experience it in the sensorially rich context of the exhibits at ‘Le Lab’ (as it’s known), Aylward is trying to recreate an intensely communal encounter for our own time.”
Unbrided Enthusiasm

Using his background in computational biology, Robert Huber—the 2015–2016 Helen Putnam Fellow at Radcliffe and a professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Bowling Green State University—studies the neurochemicals behind complex behaviors associated with aggression and drug addiction. This year, he’s exploring the role of serotonin in fruit fly aggression, which could shed light on the connection between higher-order behavioral decisions and neural functioning.

Who are your heroes? I am honored to share a gene pool with individuals who transcend their immediate impulses and follow a path of reason. It amazed me when Nelson Mandela stepped out of the prison that had robbed him of a large portion of his life—and yet he did not give in to justified feelings of fury and revenge. Instead, his kindness, dedication, and sense of responsibility created the center around which a whole new nation was born.

What is your most treasured possession? The fossils and stamps I collected as a kid.

What inspires you? The opportunity to work with individuals like Professor Ed Kravitz (Harvard Medical School), who never tires of dedicating every fiber of his existence to figuring out how life works.

Were your life to become a motion picture, who would portray you? Sir Patrick Stewart would be the obvious choice (although he’d have to wear a wig).

Where in the world would you like to spend a month? Galápagos Islands, Antarctic, Amazon, Okavango Delta—how many choices do I get?

What is your fantasy career? Having musical talents and sharing them would be great. Alas . . .

What aspect of your work do you most enjoy? The greatest perk of my job as an academic mentor is the chance to interact with young, motivated students on a daily basis.

Why do you study such a small animal, the fruit fly? A number of distinct advantages make the fruit fly a great model for the study of fundamental life processes. Our ability to manipulate the organism’s genome offers experimental avenues for exploring how things work and what goes wrong in disease. Thanks to evolution, humans generally share with all life forms the way genetic material contributes to diverse traits, how physiological processes are organized in cells, and how those assemblages confer their magic onto the whole organism. Very few of those functions have originated since the emergence of humans, and we thus share a surprising number of our inner workings with large swaths of the evolutionary ancestry. In flies, I explore the neural and neurochemical mechanisms of motivation, the role of brain chemicals in behavioral coordination, and the causes and consequences of cognitive deficits.

What can animal behavior tell us about ourselves? Throughout human history, we have been eager to find explanations for the interesting things creatures do—whether they be prey, predators, pets, or smaller siblings. We can’t help but be drawn in by the behavior’s inherent relevance to our own biological roots, and I think I am not unique in my desire to know how human characteristics are ingrained and shaped by our evolutionary heritage. To what degree are laughter, joy, sadness, fear, compassion, language, and wanting to be popular traits that are unique to us? I’d like to explore whether fruit flies can tell us something about these.
TEAMLAB AT RADCLIFFE: WHAT A LOVING AND BEAUTIFUL WORLD

ENDNOTE

Opening Exhibition Extended

*teamLab at Radcliffe: What a Loving and Beautiful World* opened in fall 2015, the first exhibition in the new Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery in Byerly Hall. Yukio Lippitt, the Johnson-Kulukundis Family Faculty Director of the Arts at the Radcliffe Institute and a professor of history of art and architecture at Harvard, engaged teamLab, a consortium of artists, engineers, and computer scientists based in Japan, to create this installation for Radcliffe. Sebastian Smee, the Pulitzer Prize–winning art critic for the *Boston Globe*, described the multimedia exhibition as “immersive, interactive, and genuinely entrancing.” It was so successful that Radcliffe extended it for a month.
On Radcliffe Day, May 27, 2016, we will award the Radcliffe Medal to

JANET L. YELLEN
Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System

The day will feature a conversation between Yellen and the Harvard professor of economics Gregory Mankiw, with context provided by Yellen’s predecessor, Ben S. Bernanke ’75, and a panel discussion, “Building an Economy for Prosperity and Equality.”

Learn more about Radcliffe Day, including information about the panelists:
www.radcliffe.harvard.edu