Commencement Confetti
An omnium-gatherum of notes and statistics, vital and otherwise

NEWS BLACKOUTS
Notwithstanding that Harvard is a place of free and open discussion, the class of 1977 declared its reunion symposiums off the record—a precedent so far as anyone can recall. This magazine reveals, however, that twenty-fifth reunioners—numbering among classmates the richest man in the world and some of his associates, one of whom, Microsoft CEO Steven A. Ballmer ’77, of Redmond, Washington, was cochair of the class gift committee—formally considered 13 Weighty Subjects, ranging from biotechnology to the new world order to “How will Wall Street guide our destinies?”

Unwilling to settle only for the symposiums, organizers invited classmates to 17 more-intimate “life dialogues” as well. These explored “creating meaningful community,” “the evolution of our aspirations since graduation,” “transmitting values to the next generation,” and the like. Symposiumist Kevin A. “KAL” Kalbaugh ’77, editorial cartoonist for the Baltimore Sun and the Economist, who spoke on “drawing insight from the news—the creative world of the editorial cartoonist,” did agree to speak, so to speak, for the record, kindly doing for this magazine the drawings at left and on page 67.

For their part, fiftieth reunioners closed their symposiums to people unconnected to the class for fear of insufficient seating. Organizers had expected about 750 classmates and guests to attend the four-day reunion, but 950 signed up.

Barred from all this talk, members of the press wandered the campus aimlessly.

RADCLIFFE HONORS
The Captain Jonathan Fay Prize recognizes the senior who has produced the most outstanding imaginative work or piece of original research in any field. This year the Radcliffe Institute awarded two of the $5,000 prizes, to a woman and (for the first time) a man: history and literature concentrator Andrew Leren Lynn ’02, of Cabot House and Baltimore, for his thesis, “Reading Bartleby,” and chemist Susie Yi Huang ’02, A.M. ’02, of Dunster House and Montgomery Township, New Jersey, chosen for her thesis, “Signal Interferences from Turbulent Spin Dynamics in Solution NMR.”

At the Radcliffe Association’s annual luncheon in Radcliffe Yard on June 7, the weather still unkindly, Institute dean Drew Faust told the guests she found it thrilling “to look out at this vast sea of
STOP THE PRESSES

Just as President Lawrence H. Summers was telling seniors assembled in Memorial Church for their Baccalaureate service that they were “the most impressive, smartest, the best dressed, the nicest, the most honorable, the most extraordinary class to graduate during my tenure as president,” just then, at 2:58 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, a feature story came over the Reuters news wire headlined, “Think Harvard’s elite? Try freezing faces” and thanked the Institute’s crew for staging the event, always challenging but especially so “in a swamp.” The Radcliffe Medal, awarded annually by the Radcliffe Association to an individual whose life and work have had a significant impact on society, went to tennis legend Billie Jean King, who said of the meteorological situation, “It seems like Wimbledon, actually.”

A BRIDGE CROSSED

At Agassiz House on June 2, the Sunday before the annual paroxysm in Tercentenary Theatre, the “Academic Achievement Celebration” of the Harvard Bridge to Learning and Literacy Program saluted the scholarship of cooks, custodians, and maintenance workers. From August through May, program participants get four hours of paid release time each week to learn English, computer skills, or the subjects they need to earn a high-school diploma. Yesenia Quezada, 40, a native of El Salvador and a member of the cleaning staff of the Museum of Natural History, addressed the gathering. “I can say that learning English has changed my life,” she said.

THE FAITHLESS, AT MIT

In a June 7 commencement speech at MIT, World Bank president James D. Wolfensohn, M.B.A. ’59, of Washington, D.C., told a cautionary tale that went like this:

I was in Georgia with a recent graduate in the field of development and agricultural technology. We visited a farmer in a field, and this rather confident young man, getting out of the car, went to the farmer and said to him, “If I can tell you how many sheep are in your field, will you give me one?”

The farmer responded, “Yes, I’ll be glad to.”

My young graduate friend looked around and, with a quick review, said, “There are 873 sheep in your field and they’re healthy.”

The farmer said, “That’s the most amazing thing I have ever seen. You’re correct. Take one.”

My colleague bent down, picked up an animal, and had started walking to the car when the farmer said to him, “Sir,