STAY-AT-HOME PARENTS
As a student and professor at Harvard for more than 14 years, I am well acquainted with our institution's emphasis on excellence and achievement. But reading “Quantity Time” (March-April, page 68), I just had to laugh. Here is a piece about parents who have given up conventional careers to stay at home to care for their children. And yet the lion's share of the article is devoted to describing the professional accomplishments of these parents, who rise at 4:30 each morning to write books, raise $50,000 for AIDS research, and keep their professional skills burning on the home front. Hats off to my accomplished peers! But really, the subtext of the article is that it is perfectly fine for a Harvard grad to decide between one hour a day with an attentive, loving mom, and 24 hours with a bitterly suicidal mom. “They’ll pick the suicidal wretch every time” is an intellectually dishonest reductio. Describing the options in such dualistic terms is pure sophistry, and an example of what is now a stock postfeminist genre: rationalizations of conflicted, privileged women who can afford to forgo paid work outside the home. There is no evidence to support adverse emotional or intellectual outcomes among children of full-time working mothers. Aside from the hand-wringing, what example are these women setting for their daughters, let alone their sons? And what example is Dennis Findley setting for his sons in defining the goal of developing his architectural practice as the ability to “allow his wife to stay home with the children”?

As a physician who endured 90-hour workweeks for one example of the spotlight thrown on unconventional achievement, see “At Home on the Range” (January-February, page 80) and the letter concerning it on page 6.

AYELET WALDMAN’S assertion, quoted in “Quantity Time,” that “If kids had to decide between one hour a day with an attentive, loving mom, and 24 hours with a bitterly suicidal mom, they’ll pick the suicidal wretch every time” is an intellectually dishonest reductio. Describing the options in such dualistic terms is pure sophistry, and an example of what is now a stock postfeminist genre: rationalizations of conflicted, privileged women who can afford to forgo paid work outside the home. There is no evidence to support adverse emotional or intellectual outcomes among children of full-time working mothers. Aside from the hand-wringing, what example are these women setting for their daughters, let alone their sons? And what example is Dennis Findley setting for his sons in defining the goal of developing his architectural practice as the ability to “allow his wife to stay home with the children”?

As a physician who endured 90-hour workweeks for one example of the spotlight thrown on unconventional achievement, see “At Home on the Range” (January-February, page 80) and the letter concerning it on page 6.

Ayelet Waldman’s assertion, quoted in “Quantity Time,” that “If kids had to decide between one hour a day with an attentive, loving mom, and 24 hours with a bitterly suicidal mom, they’ll pick the suicidal wretch every time” is an intellectually dishonest reductio. Describing the options in such dualistic terms is pure sophistry, and an example of what is now a stock postfeminist genre: rationalizations of conflicted, privileged women who can afford to forgo paid work outside the home. There is no evidence to support adverse emotional or intellectual outcomes among children of full-time working mothers. Aside from the hand-wringing, what example are these women setting for their daughters, let alone their sons? And what example is Dennis Findley setting for his sons in defining the goal of developing his architectural practice as the ability to “allow his wife to stay home with the children”?

As a physician who endured 90-hour workweeks for one example of the spotlight thrown on unconventional achievement, see “At Home on the Range” (January-February, page 80) and the letter concerning it on page 6.

Ayelet Waldman’s assertion, quoted in “Quantity Time,” that “If kids had to decide between one hour a day with an attentive, loving mom, and 24 hours with a bitterly suicidal mom, they’ll pick the suicidal wretch every time” is an intellectually dishonest reductio. Describing the options in such dualistic terms is pure sophistry, and an example of what is now a stock postfeminist genre: rationalizations of conflicted, privileged women who can afford to forgo paid work outside the home. There is no evidence to support adverse emotional or intellectual outcomes among children of full-time working mothers. Aside from the hand-wringing, what example are these women setting for their daughters, let alone their sons? And what example is Dennis Findley setting for his sons in defining the goal of developing his architectural practice as the ability to “allow his wife to stay home with the children”?

As a physician who endured 90-hour workweeks for one example of the spotlight thrown on unconventional achievement, see “At Home on the Range” (January-February, page 80) and the letter concerning it on page 6.

Ayelet Waldman’s assertion, quoted in “Quantity Time,” that “If kids had to decide between one hour a day with an attentive, loving mom, and 24 hours with a bitterly suicidal mom, they’ll pick the suicidal wretch every time” is an intellectually dishonest reductio. Describing the options in such dualistic terms is pure sophistry, and an example of what is now a stock postfeminist genre: rationalizations of conflicted, privileged women who can afford to forgo paid work outside the home. There is no evidence to support adverse emotional or intellectual outcomes among children of full-time working mothers. Aside from the hand-wringing, what example are these women setting for their daughters, let alone their sons? And what example is Dennis Findley setting for his sons in defining the goal of developing his architectural practice as the ability to “allow his wife to stay home with the children”?

As a physician who endured 90-hour workweeks for one example of the spotlight thrown on unconventional achievement, see “At Home on the Range” (January-February, page 80) and the letter concerning it on page 6.

Ayelet Waldman’s assertion, quoted in “Quantity Time,” that “If kids had to decide between one hour a day with an attentive, loving mom, and 24 hours with a bitterly suicidal mom, they’ll pick the suicidal wretch every time” is an intellectually dishonest reductio. Describing the options in such dualistic terms is pure sophistry, and an example of what is now a stock postfeminist genre: rationalizations of conflicted, privileged women who can afford to forgo paid work outside the home. There is no evidence to support adverse emotional or intellectual outcomes among children of full-time working mothers. Aside from the hand-wringing, what example are these women setting for their daughters, let alone their sons? And what example is Dennis Findley setting for his sons in defining the goal of developing his architectural practice as the ability to “allow his wife to stay home with the children”?

As a physician who endured 90-hour workweeks for one example of the spotlight thrown on unconventional achievement, see “At Home on the Range” (January-February, page 80) and the letter concerning it on page 6.

Ayelet Waldman’s assertion, quoted in “Quantity Time,” that “If kids had to decide between one hour a day with an attentive, loving mom, and 24 hours with a bitterly suicidal mom, they’ll pick the suicidal wretch every time” is an intellectually dishonest reductio. Describing the options in such dualistic terms is pure sophistry, and an example of what is now a stock postfeminist genre: rationalizations of conflicted, privileged women who can afford to forgo paid work outside the home. There is no evidence to support adverse emotional or intellectual outcomes among children of full-time working mothers. Aside from the hand-wringing, what example are these women setting for their daughters, let alone their sons? And what example is Dennis Findley setting for his sons in defining the goal of developing his architectural practice as the ability to “allow his wife to stay home with the children”?

As a physician who endured 90-hour workweeks for one example of the spotlight thrown on unconventional achievement, see “At Home on the Range” (January-February, page 80) and the letter concerning it on page 6.
work weeks and pregnancy during residency and later transitioned to an executive position in corporate America while raising two daughters. I know well why half of female executives earning more than $100,000 a year are childless. In a sane world, working 60 to 80 hours per week would be viewed as deviant. However, opting out of the battle to stop this insanity for the sake of those who follow us is not admirable. I continue to be saddened by young women’s willingness to abandon careers when faced with the admittedly daunting challenges of juggling family and work. Many of these women will discover to their sorrow that they are merely one divorce away from financial hardship. I am stunned by parents’ implicit nurturing of the Eisenhowerian attitudes of their sons, who are growing into yet another generation of men who expect someone to pack their lunch. Only when a critical mass of conflicted but also caring, loving, not “bitterly suicidal” mothers is in the highest ranks of corporate America and government will this country’s inhumane attitude toward raising families change.

Marjorie Schulman ’76
New York City

Thank you for featuring Dennis Findley, the alumnus who left his career as an architect to become a full-time father to his sons. He has a lot of company among Harvard graduates. I graduated from the Law School in 1987 and left my job as a corporate litigator to become a full-time father when my daughter was born in 1996. My wife and I have since had two more children, and I couldn’t be happier with my choice. My unusual occupation has drawn attention because I went to Harvard. I suspect that this is because most people assume that fathers stay home only when they cannot keep a job, and the Harvard degree calls that assumption into question. I like to think that those of us grads who have chosen a different path make it easier for others to follow.

Kevin O’Shea, J.D. ’87
Birmingham, Mich.

My initial amusement at Ayelet Waldman’s account of choosing to stay at home with her children turned to outrage at the statement, “What was I going to do? Quilt?” Waldman turned to writing mystery novels to stave off boredom.
While her deathless prose will no doubt entertain generations of avid readers, my quilts will only raise money for AIDS patients, organ donations, and civil rights. One hundred years from now, many of my quilts will endure as a lasting testimony not only to my skill but to the respect given them by those who understand the value of dedication and care. Those that don’t endure will be worn thin by the love of the recipient.

Priscilla Kawakami
Salt Lake City

PROPOSED TAX REFORM

My own experience shows the absurdity of Professor Dale Jorgenson’s proposal to reform the tax system (“Efficient Taxation of Income,” March-April, page 31). I retired a few years ago on income of about half my final salary from the moderate wealth I had accumulated working as an engineer. If I had had to pay 50 percent more in taxes (three times the tax rate times half the amount taxed), I would not have been able to retire.

The fallacy of his argument is his goal “to equalize tax burdens on business and household assets.” He certainly knows that businesses pay no taxes; they merely collect consumption taxes in an indirect form. Any reformation of the tax system that does not treat the world as it is will produce absurdities of one form or another. Real reform must start with the elimination of the corporate tax. If we had only an income tax, we could create a progressive system that most people would find fair, and the paperwork savings would be so large that the term “revenue neutral” would be meaningless.

Sidney Weber ’62
San Jose, Calif.

The double taxation of corporate income, on its face, makes no logical sense, and, theoretically, has adverse economic effects. However, corporations have become increasingly adept at avoiding the corporate income tax, and are estimated to pay only at the rate of 15 percent of their corporate income. The present taxation of the small part of corporate earnings distributed as dividends lends itself to avoidance of the corporate income as well: it converts the bulk of non-distributed earnings, in part, to taxation at the capital-gains rates and, in part, passes tax free in the form of estates. This explains why some corporations use retained income to purchase their own stock.

In the interest of logic, I propose eliminating the corporate tax completely and taxing corporate earnings at personal income-tax rates; that is, as if 100 percent of corporate income were distributed, pro rata, to the shareholders. Corporations would continue to distribute dividends, as at present, and issue shares for the income retained in the corporation. The issued shares would be taxable at the income-tax rate. The complaint that the personal income tax payable would exceed the dividends distributed is readily remedied by shareholders selling a portion of their newly distributed shares.

This reform would be, appropriately, revenue neutral, taking account of the increasing trend in corporate tax avoidance and evasion.

Monroe Burk, M.B.A. ’40
Columbia, Md.

The best tax of all would be on gasoline. Why do Americans think they are entitled to cheap gas? A hefty federal tax at the pump would serve to keep our air clean and cut down on highway deaths. If a good part of it were directed at healthcare we could have a decent workable healthcare system. A national, universal program is inevitable. Why not now?

Simon A. Sayre ’47, M.D.
Ojai, Calif.

RACE IN THE CENSUS

As an African-American woman, I am somewhat disturbed by Nathan Glazer’s assertion that only blacks should be able to identify themselves by race on the census, and that any other racial categorizations are political attempts to gain power for certain ethnic groups (“Censuring the Census,” by Robin Abrahams, March-April, page 12). However unintended, it...
HARKEN QUESTIONS LINGER

I fully concur with Nathan Glazer’s argument that the census form is “ridiculous,” and that the census form is “misleading” Americans about the importance of race.

While serving as a follow-up census enumerator in 2000, I called on a household in Allentown, Pennsylvania, that had neglected to send its short form to the Census Bureau. I met what turned out to be the father mowing the front lawn, asked him the name, sex, and date of birth of each household occupant, and received prompt answers. I then got to the question regarding race. He was ebony black, but I asked him anyway what he considered his race to be. He immediately said, “White.” I glanced at him a moment, then said, “The form has a blank line designated ‘other.’ Why don’t I just write ‘human?’” He nodded; we both grinned broadly, and I drove off to the next household on my list.

James B. Horbins ’52 Bethlehem, Pa.

A FOURTH FOUNDER

I am deeply honored by John de Cuevas’s excellent article on me in the March-April issue (“Societal Doctor,” page 79). There is one omission, however, that I would like to correct. There were four of us, not three, all Harvard faculty members at the time, who founded the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War in June of 1980—Herbert Adams, Jim Muller, and me, as noted, and Bernard Lown. Although it was the organization itself that won the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize, it could be argued that Harvard could legitimately include all four of us in its list of Nobel laureates.

Eric Chivian ’64 M.D. ’68 Boston

REUNION SCHOLARSHIPS

It is unfortunate that college classmates are unable to attend reunions because of financial circumstances (“Letters,” September-October 2002, page 96; January-February, page 12; March-April,
page 9). The Class of 1947 has tried to solve the problem, and we think our plan (in use for our last four reunions) works well. We urge the Harvard Alumni Association to encourage other classes to do what we have done.

Before each reunion we ask classmates and widows to contribute to a “scholarship” fund. This money is held by Richard Wilton ’47, class treasurer, and he responds to classmates and widows who would otherwise be unable to come. Only he knows who has been supported.

The class was heavily fragmented by World War II and has come together in great part through reunions. The scholarship fund is a no-cost, no-brainer way to recognize that classmates and widows are truly welcome at all class events.

Charles D. Thompson ’47
Class secretary
Westwood, Mass.

INTRODUCTION TO RANCHING

Your fine article on the Scott family and their Wyoming ranches (“At Home on the Range,” January-February, page 80) did not mention the family’s role in introducing a generation of Harvard students to ranching and the West. For many years the Scotts hired Harvard undergraduates or recent graduates looking for a break from Cambridge to work on their Two Bar ranch during the spring and summer. I was a city kid—a “townie” from Belmont, Massachusetts, who had never been west of Worcester—when I went to work for the Scotts in 1979. In addition to room, board, and $300 a month, I earned a life-long appreciation of hard work and the great outdoors. After a long stretch in Cambridge, my time on the ranch was a great reminder not to let my schooling interfere with my education.

Stephen P. McCue ’78
Albuquerque

BEGGING THE DEFINITION

Joseph Ellis misuses the term “beg the question” (“The Founders,” March-April, page 21). This is a term with a longstanding and very specific meaning in argumentation and debating, namely “to take for granted the matter in dispute, to assume without proof.” Nowadays, unfortunately, this expression is almost always used indiscriminately to mean “raise the question” or “avoid the question” (the sense in which Ellis uses it).

Dennis Thron, M.D. ’59
Hanover, N.H.

Editor’s note: In an advisory on usage, the Random House Webster’s College Dictionary
recognizes this descent into imprecision: “Beg the question’ is originally a translation of the Latin rhetorical term petitio princii, which means ‘to assume the truth of the very point under discussion.’ For example, to answer the question ‘Can we afford another employee?’ by stating how convenient it would be to have another employee would be begging the question. This expression was then taken to mean ‘avoid the question’ or ‘evoke the issue’ —a natural assumption if one is unfamiliar with the original meaning. The most recent, and now quite common, sense is ‘to raise the question’: His success begs the question: what’s next?”

A PREDICTOR OF SUCCESS
I would like to call your attention to what I think is a misleading and inaccurate misrepresentation of factual evidence in “Faculty Diversity,” by Professors Cathy A. Trower and Richard P. Chait (March-April 2002, page 33) They write: “Who teaches matters. In fact, the most accurate predictor of subsequent success for female undergraduates is the percentage of women among faculty members at their college.” I am very confident that none of the empirical research the authors relied on supports that specific claim.

MARK J. PERRY
Chair, Department of Economics
University of Michigan-Flint
Flint, Mich

Editor’s note: Authors Trower and Chait say that readers may substitute the words “one predictor” for “the most accurate predictor.”

LOVE IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY
In “the originals: Matching Them Up” (“Up Next,” March-April, page 28), you remind readers of Operation Match, the national computer-dating service created by Harvard undergraduates. After the other articles in your “Up Next” section about the challenges young alumni face in finding love, Operation Match—which heyday in the 1960s passed long before all of the alumni in your article were born—seems like a quaint historic relic. For some of us, this history is far more real. My parents met in 1966 through Operation Match. They were attending separate colleges in Philadelphia and had no
mutual friends or contacts, until both of them, along with many of their classmates, decided to fill out the questionnaire. I am the second of their four children, and they have been married for 34 years.

I grew up in a house where the Operation Match form was framed on the wall, with its fateful words: “Dear Mr. Horn: Below are the names of six women with whom you have been found to be most compatible.” My mother’s name is the fifth. This posed several existential questions to the four astute elementary-school students in the house: What if our dad hadn’t filled out the form at all? What if he had married one of the others? What if he had given up after Number Four? Of course, the same kinds of questions exist for any child of a happily married couple. But it’s rare that they are presented as a framed computer printout hanging on the wall.

Seeing that form every day of my childhood, as well as seeing my parents’ happiness, made me think of love and chance in a way very different from most of the young alumni you interviewed in “Up Next.” Most of my peers were stunned when I got engaged before graduation. Except among religious students, it was a rare choice in the class of ’99. But I grew up thinking of love not as something extremely unlikely, as many of the young alumni interviewed implied, but as what the Operation Match form implied it to be: a strong possibility, something for which the computer-generated odds were surprisingly high, as long as you believed that happiness might lie in the numbers life handed to you. Of course, my own love life might easily have turned out differently. But my outlook has always been shaped by that form on the wall, and by what it implied about a world full of possibilities.

Today, services like Operation Match are a dime a dozen. But despite our increasingly busy lives, meeting people isn’t ultimately the hard part. Perceiving the possibility of happiness is.

Dara Horn Schulman ’99
New York City

Editor’s note: “Up Next” is an occasional section of the magazine sent to alumni under 35. Readers of any age may find “The Originals” on the magazine’s website at www.harvard-magazine.com/online/030386.html.