Commencement Voices
The Harvard Alumni Association’s guest speaker on Commencement afternoon, June 9, will be actor John A. Lithgow ’67 (Third Rock from the Sun on television, M. Butterfly on Broadway), a former member of the Board of Overseers, a campus regular as grand marshal for and champion of Arts First each May, and father of College graduates Ian ’04 and Phoebe ’04. The Phi Beta Kappa orator for the literary exercises on June 7 will be John M. Deutch, Institute Professor and former provost at MIT, a former deputy defense secretary and Director of Central Intelligence, who will speak about Iraq.

Bounced from the B-School
Hackers gained access to the admissions files of Harvard Business School and peer institutions at Duke, MIT, and Stanford, among others, in early March, before the official March 30 notification date. On March 7, Dean Kim B. Clark termed such behavior “unethical at best—a serious breach of trust that cannot be countered by rationalization.” The affected applicants, numbering as many as 119 people, “have failed” the school’s test of “the highest standards of integrity, sound judgment, and a strong moral compass” among members of its community. Clark said, and were denied admission. MIT, Duke, and Carnegie Mellon also rejected any early, unauthorized users of the site. Dartmouth’s Tuck School and Stanford said they would evaluate cases individually.

Applications Avalanche
Applications for admission to the College class of 2009 totaled 22,796, some 15 percent more than a year ago. Dean of admissions and financial aid William R. Fitzsimmons attributed the surge in part to the financial-aid initiative launched in February 2004; it eliminated or reduced the parental contribution to undergraduate costs for families with incomes under $60,000 (see “Upping the Aid Ante,” below). Undergraduate recruiters were hired to get the word out to targeted communities. Of the 2,074 admitted applicants, 360 are from families qualifying for the new aid package—22 percent more than the 294 from that income group admitted last year. The size and composition of the applicant pool also reflect the demographics of the U.S. high-school population, and a peculiarity of this admissions season. Last year, Yale and Stanford moved from binding early admissions to the less-restrictive early-action process Harvard uses; that encouraged more students to apply to those schools. This year, with each institution competing on the same basis, Harvard rebounded with an unusually large increase in applicants.

Divestiture Debate
Disturbed by reports that the University endowment had acquired shares in PetroChina—which has pursued oil-drilling rights in Sudan during the brutal war on civilians in Darfur—two College seniors launched a “senior gift plus” campaign (www.seniorgiftplus). Matthew Mahan and Brandon Terry urged classmates to put their traditional class gift into an escrow account, which would be passed to the Harvard College Fund this October, a year after the Crimson first reported on the investment, if the University’s social-responsibility process results in divestiture. Failing that, the funds would be donated to the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, based at the Kennedy School of Government. Critics of the escrow campaign then launched the satirical “senior gift plus plus” campaign (www.seniorgiftplusplus.com), which explained how to “hijack an institution dedicated to raising money for financial aid and the University’s current area of greatest need.” On April 4, the Corporation announced that University holdings of PetroChina stock would be divested at the recommendation of its Committee on Shareholder Responsibility.

Upping the Aid Ante
A year after the College eliminated parental contributions toward the cost of a Harvard
education for students whose families earn less than $40,000 per year, Yale announced it would do the same for families with income under $45,000. Yale is also cloning Harvard’s low-cost loan program for graduate and professional students. But the Elis beat the Crimson to the punch by extending financial aid to students for qualifying summer study abroad and international internships; Yale will cover program costs and the $2,250 students are expected to earn during the summer months to support their education. (For a discussion of accommodating low-income students in elite colleges and universities, see page 48.)

**Tuition Tally: $40,000-Plus**
The term bill for tuition, room, board, and fees at the College in the 2005-2006 academic year will be $41,675, increasing 4.5 percent, or $1,795, over this year’s total of $39,880. In the three prior academic years, the term-bill hikes were 4.9 percent, 5.5 percent, and 5.15 percent, respectively. The cost of an undergraduate year crossed the $40,000 threshold in 1997-1998, when it reached $30,080. In announcing the boost, Faculty of Arts and Sciences dean William C. Kirby said the College would increase undergraduate scholarships by 5.2 percent, to $84.6 million next year.

**Nota Bene**
**Money maven.** The University has retained PrinceGoldsmith LLC, a New York-based search firm, to identify candidates to succeed Jack R. Meyer, M.B.A. ’69, as the president and chief executive officer of Harvard Management Company. Meyer, who oversaw endowment and other investments for 15 years, announced in January that he would leave to start a private firm.

**Premier poet.** The eleventh Harvard Arts Medal will be conferred on poet Maxine W. Kumin ’46, A.M. ’48, on May 7, during the annual Arts First weekend. The day before, Kumin, a Pulitzer Prize winner, will participate in a public conversation at Barker Center at 4 p.m., moderated by Boylston professor of rhetoric and oratory Jorie Graham.

**Grades grow again.** Following the discussion of grade inflation and compression within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard College dean Benedict H. Gross released data for the 2003-2004 academic year. The mean grade was 3.42—up from 3.41 in the prior year, and apparently a new high mean score. From the academic years 1999 to 2001, the mean was 3.41; it declined to 3.39 in the next year and then resumed climbing to the current level. A and A- grades accounted for 48.3 percent of the total awarded, slightly below the proportion in the prior peak years.

**Cash flow.** For the year ended June 30, 2004, the $540 million in contributions Harvard received (off $5 million from the prior year) was the highest among colleges and universities, which in the aggregate took in $24.4 billion. The data come from a survey by the Council for Aid to Education, a unit of RAND Corporation. Number two Stanford’s total was $524 million.

**Crimson silk road.** Cellist Yo-Yo Ma ’76, D.Mus. ’91, will bring his Silk Road Project to Harvard and the Rhode Island School of Design. The program will establish offices in Cambridge and Providence, and conduct regular residencies, featuring performances, open rehearsals, and creative workshops. The Harvard program, based in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, aims to develop interdisciplinary work in the arts, history, literature, and music of the ancient Silk Road nations. (The artist was profiled in “Yo-Yo Ma’s Journeys,” March-April 2000, page 42.)

**Miscellany.** Muslim-law expert Baber Johansen will join Harvard Divinity School in July as professor of Islamic religious studies; he has held posts in leading European universities and visiting professorships at Princeton, Harvard, and Brown...Paul F. Glenn, J.D. ’55, founder of the private Glenn Foundation for Medical Research, has given $5 million to Harvard Medical School to launch a laboratory and hire new faculty members devoted...