through dreams and through storytelling. It goes back to that Hopi saying, ‘The one who tells the stories rules the world.’”

At the end of The Tequila Worm, Sofa returns to her childhood barria to create a small plaza “with orange trees on each corner and plantings of roses, hibiscus, beautiful red and purple bougainvillea, and in Papa’s memory, Mexican jasmine.” In time, she returns to find “families, fresh from Mass, enjoying picnics of tacos and roasted chicken, sitting on blankets of new-mown grass.” The truth is that Canales’s old neighborhood is wrecked with crime, gangs, and overcrowded apartment buildings where neighbors do not necessarily know or help each other at all. Why did she end the book with a happy fiction? “The placito is metaphorical. To change an outlook, you have to be shown something that is positive, that is beautiful,” she says. “We all need a better world right now. America is stuck; it has lost its magic in life and people live life as work. I think we only start dreaming again with myth and spirituality in our lives. Only then can we conjure up a better society.”

—NELL PORTER BROWN

Comings and Goings

Harvard clubs offer a variety of social and intellectual gatherings. Following is a list of University-affiliated speakers appearing at local clubs this winter. For more information, contact the club directly, call the HAA at 617-495-3070, or visit www.haa.harvard.edu.


Harvard@Home

The university’s on-line learning initiative has released one new segment that offers highlights from the student-run “International Relations Week.” The program offers panel discussions and workshops on a range of topics, including “Religion: Is It Being Used to Wage War?”; “Latin America: Can There be a Common Policy?”; and “Integrating China into the World Economic System.” For further details, visit http://at-home.harvard.edu.

Alumni Networks

Crimson Compass, a new on-line alumni career network developed by the HAA to replace Professional Connection, is available for free to all alumni and current students of the University. So far, about 15,000 alumni from a wide range of fields have signed up as advisers; the HAA encourages more alumni to offer mentoring services and asks those who participated in Professional Connection to update their listings. The system is accessible through www.post.harvard.edu (click on “Alumni Services” and then on “Professional Connection” or “Crimson Compass”) or visit www.post.harvard.edu/olc/membersonly/ HAA/networking. Users can type in search criteria and obtain the names of alumni to whom they may send e-mail messages.

Olympic Fever

“Harvard in the Olympics,” an alumni college offered by the HAA and the Harvard Varsity Club, features alumni discussing their Olympic experiences. The day-long event on January 21 is at the Harvard Club of Boston. Panelists include Boston Globe sports writer John Powers ’70; Paralympics ski-racing medalist Bonnie St. John ’86; Olympian Paul Wylie ’90, M.B.A. ’00; former Harvard athletics director Bill Cleary ’56; U.S. Olympic Committee member Paul E. George ’63; head coach of men’s crew Harry Parker; and classics professor Gregory Nagy. For further information and registration, call 617-495-1920 or visit http://post.harvard.edu/olympics.

Walter Seward, LL.B. ’24, turned 109 in October, making him the oldest living—and longest lived—Harvard alumnus known. He was born in Toledo, Ohio, on October 13, 1896, while Grover Cleveland was president. What accounts for his longevity? “I’m still trying to figure that out,” says Seward with characteristic flair. His daughter has attributed his old age to consistent exercise. “Oh yes, I’ve got to do that everyday,” he agrees. “I can’t sit still. If I didn’t exercise, I know I’d become something made of plastic.” Seward, who lives in his own home in West Orange, New Jersey, last visited the law school on August 23, 2004—which Dean Elena Kagan declared Walter Seward Day—to celebrate his then-forthcoming 108th birthday.