The multidisciplinary roles assumed by those two Harvard representatives are appropriate to the new office’s aims. With HBS colleagues, Kirby has been developing a series of case studies on the evolution of rising state-owned and private businesses in China (such as Wanxiang Group, now a multibillion-dollar global auto-parts supplier); the cases are used in a course he co-teaches, “Doing Business in China in the Early 21st Century.” The Harvard China Fund itself (www.fas.harvard.edu/~hcf) recently made a second round of grants to support research on subjects ranging from village development to childrearing to the use of medicines; all involve counterparts in China. Harvard participants come from the schools of design, education, medicine, and public health, plus the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. And Light noted that HBS would deploy a staff person affiliated with its Asia Pacific Research Center, in Hong Kong, in the Shanghai office.

Kirby characterized the new physical presences in China as merely “initial steps” toward further advancing Harvard’s ambitious research and teaching missions in the region.

**Rookie Redux**

*by Liz Goodwin ’08*

I realized that college was over when I opened up the large diploma case to show my family the product of four years’ labor and found a succinct note informing me of an unpaid debt to the University. I was still wearing my polyester cap and gown, and had just walked across the stage. I saw a flicker of alarm cross my aunts’ and uncles’ faces, as if they were momentarily wondering if I had even graduated at all. I posed for pictures showcasing the empty diploma case, trying to laugh it off, but spent the next two hours running around campus in my billowing black robe, frantically trying to get the piece of paper that proved I was a graduate.

The levels of bureaucracy I had to surmount in order to pay off the small sum seemed a harbinger of a more complicated, post-college life. Harvard’s implacable and unadvertised stance on the collection of chump change from its graduates already seemed to belong to a different world from the last four years of extendable deadlines. In fact, the letter might as well have said, “Welcome to the real world, kid. No excuses.”

Luckily, I made it back, diploma in hand, in time for the afternoon Commencement speeches. President Faust had just started speaking when I arrived, and though my recent experience did not endear to me her message about the necessity of Harvard’s behemoth endowment, I was already feeling less grouchy.

When J.K. Rowling’s turn to talk came, the people around me shifted in their seats, trying to get a better look at her. Her point was simple: cultivate an active imagination and do not be afraid to fail. I took her words very seriously, as I think that anyone who can write a character as wise as Dumbledore must have a great deal of wisdom herself. So I asked myself if I had the gifts Rowling said are the most important. Imagination? Check. Courage to fail? On that front, I can be something of a wimp. I don’t like to put myself in positions where I look silly or...
inept. I should take more risks, I told myself. I shouldn’t worry about looking stupid. A couple of weeks later, I was in New York City.

They say one thing that compels people to move to New York is the promise of anonymity, a promise that suggests freedom and excitement. I wasn’t there 24 hours before I ran into someone I knew. An acquaintance from Harvard stood downtown with his father, looking at Ground Zero.

After we were introduced, the father asked me where I was living and what I was doing. I said Bedford-Stuyvesant and interning at a newspaper. He laughed: “Your parents must be shocked that you graduated from Harvard and now you’re living in Bed-Stuy with an internship!” I stammered out that my parents have always wanted me to do what makes me happy, but his derisive expression didn’t change, and I didn’t sound convincing.

I excused myself and began walking angrily, turning over what the man had said to me. How could someone already think I was a failure? I worried that now, robbed of the equalizing “student” label, people could look at where I lived and what I did as my identity, and judge me for it. The thought was terrifying.

I was so preoccupied, in fact, that I didn’t notice the gathering rain clouds. I was somewhere in the East Village when it began to pour. My shopping bags became soaked, and one handle broke off. I was about three or four blocks from the subway stop when my flimsy sandals slipped and I fell down, scattering the groceries. I decided then that I would get a cab, justifying the extravagance with my throbbing knee. When I finally hailed one successfully—a desperate process—and told the driver where I lived, he immediately began to yell at me. I have rarely seen a man more angry than this taxi driver when he realized he had to drive me to Brooklyn. He called me names and muttered and swore and finally dropped me off about six blocks from my apartment.

I trudged up the brownstone steps, ignoring cat-calls and struggling with the locks, and finally collapsed in my room, crying.

“Why are people so mean here?” I asked my dad on the phone, aware of how petty I sounded, “Nobody said it’s an easy place to live,” he said.

It is also not an easy place to work. Interning at a small daily newspaper has tapped deep reservoirs of personal incompetence I did not even know I had. I find myself getting lost no matter how detailed my instructions are, or misunderstanding small assignments to disastrous effect. I remind myself of the first-year reporters at the Crimson, the most bashful of whom had a way of being underfoot without being useful.

Once I stood in front of the wrong building for several hours, assiduously gathering comment from New Yorkers about a structure that had absolutely nothing to do with the story I was supposed to help write. A few days later, I arrived 20 minutes late at a stakeout of a closed meeting of the governor and mayor before realizing I had no idea what Mayor Bloomberg looked like. Another time I stood attentively at a press conference, brandishing my tape recorder in front of me without realizing I had not turned it on. In a conversation with a Na-
“Sometimes my daily push to understand my surroundings when I feel so out of my element seems Sisyphean.”

Liz Goodwin ’08, who has completed her Berta Greenwald Ledecky Undergraduate Fellowship with this column, will leave New York in September for a four-month newspaper internship in Costa Rica.

SPORTS

Back on the Field

An injury endangers a striker’s season.

On a hot July afternoon in Harvard Stadium, just three months after surgery, Michael Fucito ’09 took off running at the base of the stands, barely breaking his stride as he kicked a soccer ball to himself against the wall. About three-quarters of the way around the field, he slowed down, and trainer Stacie Barlow motioned him back. He arrived red-faced and dripping with sweat, to tell her that the toughest part of his rehab would be just getting back into shape—as if a doctor hadn’t operated recently on his hip and told him he might miss almost all his senior season.

Barlow asked if Fucito had mentioned that he was way ahead of his rehab schedule. “Months ahead,” he added.

On paper, each of Fucito’s years in crimson has been better than the last. As a freshman, he won the Ivy League Rookie of the Year award; as a sophomore, he tied for the Ivy League scoring championship; and as a junior, second-team all-American honors. He has tallied 23 goals and 19 assists. Along with fellow standout André Akpan (see “Powers of the Pitch,” September-October 2007, page 74), Fucito has led Harvard to one Ivy

ational Hockey League spokesperson, I asked if the “Redhawks” and the “Black Wings” would be playing at Wrigley Field.

At times, I’m able to recount these mix-ups to friends or family as humorous stories. Often even I see them that way. Yet it can be difficult to always narrate to the tune of “Liz’s Wacky Misadventures in New York!” I’m too invested—too conscious of and concerned by my fumbles, and others’ reactions to them—to laugh them off all the time. I don’t want to feel that I’m not doing well, and I don’t want other people to think so, either. As Rowling had intimated, fear of failure is a powerful force.

Things began to look up when a reporter who sits behind me overheard an unsuccessful phone conversation I was having with a source. I had hung up and was staring at my computer screen when he leaned over and said, “You know, you don’t have to tell them you’re an intern.” I carried these words like a banner into battle.

A few days later I was assigned a story about The Waterfalls, a public-art installation that was opening that day. Although the story fell through, and I didn’t feel that I had spent the day barking up a succession of wrong trees, the editor felt bad for me and let me go on a press run of a boat that visited each waterfall in the harbor.

I imagined myself sipping champagne with high-profile journalists, and immediately left for South Street Seaport to catch the boat. Instead of champagne, there were bright blue, frozen-rum drinks in plastic cups, and beer. And instead of a famous journalist, I struck up a conversation with the mother of the boat’s manager. She was from Minnesota, and after 10 minutes of chatting, she tried to set me up with her son, whose two young children, she told me, “really need a mother.”

I grabbed my neon-blue drink and escaped to the top of the boat. The view of downtown and the cool breeze (and perhaps the frozen drink) immediately made me feel more relaxed. The adrenaline that keeps me going at work seeped away, and I felt exhausted, but happy.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” the tour guide began. “Welcome to your tour of the one, the only, New York City Waterfalls!” We pushed off, and the noise of the boat drowned out the conversations of those around me. We soon pulled up to the Statue of Liberty, one of the many tourist attractions I had yet to see. People took out their cameras and snapped shots of it, and we moved in even closer until the sun was completely obscured behind her enormous green head. The boat manager squeezed next to me. “What do you think?” he asked. “Never gets old no matter how many times you see it, right?”

I just smiled, wanting to avoid yet another person’s reaction to my admission of being a foreigner—a newly arrived, not-quite-employed New York rookie.

I am at the bottom of a very large learning curve, and sometimes my daily push to understand my surroundings when I feel so entirely out of my element seems Sisyphean. Yet I remember a time when I felt just the same. As a freshman in college, the cloud of confusion around me would lift occasionally, like a morning fog, and something perhaps quite simple would become clear to me. Those small moments of understanding would be strangely sweet, a very specific feeling that deserted me after I became more versed in my environment. There are benefits to finding yourself at the very bottom of what you must climb, and rewards to throwing yourself into something entirely new: like speeding through the New York Harbor and seeing it all for the very first time.