playground was the norm. “In the U.S. now, these juvenile actions would have resulted in a criminal record,” he adds. “But I was also full of life and was interested in philosophy and ethics and the world. I read literature and studied in school.”

Childhood, he thinks, should be about making mistakes, and about adults helping you learn. Tightening the grip of authority rarely helps. “The British got tough on the Irish—and you got a rebellion. We got tough on the Palestinians and we got a rebellion,” he asserts. “You put someone to the wall and usually they will have to act back.”

Violence and aggression are inherently exciting, he notes, especially to young men. He recalls driving a van-load of Boston kids home once: they saw their enemies out the window and “It was like a battalion reaction—they got all excited and started talking about who they were and what they did, and how they were going to get them,” he reports. “These crews challenge each other like military units. They have their enemies and their friends, their fights, and their girlfriends, and the drugs and the drinking—it’s these same things that excite people all around the world.”

In such an environment, how does nonviolence compete? Gross mentions the case of one 10-year-old in Providence, “VA,” a suspected murderer assigned to the case of one 19-year-old in Providence. VA, who died on September 14, a month shy of his 112th birthday, was the longest-lived Harvard alumnus known to University records. He practiced law into his nineties; for his final visit to the Law School, in 2004, Dean Elena Kagan declared Walter Seward Day in his honor (see “The Oldest Ever?” January-February 2006, page 79, for further details.)

A Record-Breaker Passes

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A Special Notice Regarding Commencement Exercises

Thursday, June 4, 2009

Morning Exercises

To accommodate the increasing number of those wishing to attend Harvard’s Commencement Exercises, the following guidelines are proposed to facilitate admission into Tercentenary Theatre on Commencement Morning:

• Degree candidates will receive a limited number of tickets to Commencement. Parents and guests of degree candidates must have tickets, which they will be required to show at the gates in order to enter Tercentenary Theatre. Seating capacity is limited; however, there is standing room on the Widener steps and at the rear and sides of the Theatre for viewing the exercises.

Note: A ticket allows admission into the Theatre, but does not guarantee a seat. The sale of Commencement tickets is prohibited.

• Alumni/ae attending their major reunions (25th, 35th, 50th) will receive tickets at their reunions. Alumni/ae in classes beyond the 50th may obtain tickets from the Classes and Reunions Office, 124 Mount Auburn Street, sixth floor, Cambridge.

• For alumni/ae from non-major reunion years and their spouses, there is televised viewing of the Morning Exercises in the Science Center and at designated locations in most of the undergraduate Houses and professional schools. These locations provide ample seating, and tickets are not required.

• A very limited supply of tickets will be made available to all other alumni/ae on a first-come, first-served basis through the Harvard Alumni Association, 124 Mount Auburn Street, sixth floor, Cambridge 02138.

Afternoon Exercises

The Harvard Alumni Association’s Annual Meeting convenes in Tercentenary Theatre on Commencement afternoon. All alumni and alumnae, faculty, students, parents, and guests are invited to attend and hear Harvard’s President and the Commencement Speaker deliver their addresses. Tickets for the afternoon ceremony will be available through the Harvard Alumni Association, 124 Mount Auburn Street, sixth floor, Cambridge 02138.

~Jacqueline A. O’Neill, University Marshal

Comings and Goings

University clubs offer a variety of social and intellectual events, including Harvard-affiliated speakers (please see the partial list below). For further information, contact the club directly, call the HAA at 617-495-3070 or 800-654-6494, e-mail clubs@harvard.edu, or visit www.haa.harvard.edu.

On January 12, the Harvard Club of San Diego hosts the Reverend Peter Gomes, Plummer professor of Christian morals, who talks about “Nearly 40 Years On: A View From the Memorial Church.”

On January 29, at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, visiting Harvard professors discuss “What Might We Know: Science in the Next 20 Years.” University provost Steven E. Hyman will moderate the discussion of such topics as stem-cell research, global health, and energy and the environment. Panelists will include professor of surgery and neurology Jeffrey D. Macklis, earth and planetary sciences professor Daniel P. Schrag, and Strong professor of infectious disease Dyann F. Wirth. The event is organized by Kat Taylor ’80 and the Harvard Alumni Association, along with the Harvard clubs of San Francisco and Silicon Valley. (Registration through the HAA is required.)

On February 5, the Harvard Club of Broward County welcomes Timothy Colton, Feldberg professor of government and Russian studies and director of the Russian Research Center, for a discussion on “How to Deal with a Resurgent Russia.” And McKay professor of computer science Harry Lewis talks about “Blown to Bits: Your Life, Liberty, and Happiness after the Digital Explosion” for the Harvard Club of Maryland on February 28.