HARVARD: THE BURDEN
Addressing seniors on Class Day, Today cohost Matt Lauer, an Ohio University alumnus, linked himself to Harvard through colleagues Jim Bell '89, the show’s executive producer, and Jeff Zucker '86, president of NBC Universal. Yet Lauer warned the alumni-to-be not to hire him in the future: “Stay out of my way—I’m sick and tired of working for Harvard graduates.” On the other hand, honorand Steven Chu told his afternoon audience that his new degree “means more to me than you might imagine. You see, I was the academic failure of my family. Both my brothers have Harvard degrees”: older brother Gilbert, M.D. ’80, and younger sibling Morgan, J.D. ’76. Of their mother, he said, “Now, as the last brother with a degree from Harvard, maybe, at last, she will be pleased”—all the more so as Morgan’s election as an Overseer was announced just before Steven spoke.

MATTHIESSEN MEMORIALIZED
At the Harvard Gay & Lesbian Caucus annual dinner on June 4, Overseer Mitchell L. Adams ’66, M.B.A. ’69, announced the caucus’s $1.5 million gift to endow the F.O. Matthiessen visiting professorship of gender and sexuality, perhaps the first of its kind in the country. Named for the late literature professor—a gay man who leapt to his death in 1950—the position will bring scholars to campus for a semester to teach in the fields of sexuality or sexual minorities.

UNDER THE WIRE(S)
In an era of austerity, there were Commencement economies: the dinner celebration for honorands in Annenberg Hall on June 3, for instance, featured chicken, versus tenderloin last year, and the long-stemmed peonies of yore have given way to blossoms floating in shallow bud vases. But infrastructure needs are still being funded, at least for now. The swooping, cable-stayed tent over the platform alongside Memorial Church (shown at right) was new this year, replacing worn-out fabric from the 1996 edition; and the broadcast booth, stage left, from which the telecast of the events is narrated, was a new, safer, metal model.

RETHINKING THE WORLD OF WORK
One year after President Drew Faust’s Baccalaureate speech addressed students’ concerns over the seemingly endless stream of classmates heading for Wall Street, the market has corrected. The annual Crimson senior survey showed that, among those graduates entering the workforce, 20 percent were heading for finance and consulting—down from 47 percent in 2007 and 39 percent in 2008.

MME. JUSTICE. Less than three months after the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study (RIAS) presented the second woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, L ’59, at a conference (see “A Walk through History with Justice Ginsburg,” May-June, page 51), RIAS conferred its Radcliffe Institute Medal on the pioneer, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, at its annual luncheon on June 5. Dean Barbara J. Grosz reviewed the justice’s career through its current chapter—educating teachers and students about civic life through http://ourcourts.org—whereupon O’Connor said, “She could have just introduced me as an unemployed cowgirl.” O’Connor delivered a peppery history of women’s rising prominence within the legal profession (they were once regarded as too “pure” to perform the “morally flexible” tasks required, she said), and a stirring case for the elimination of gendered classifications within the law.
GOING GREEN
The Class of 1984, which introduced community service to its fifth-reunion plans, this year went green, banning bottled water, using washable or compostable food-service items, and busing on biodiesel-fueled vehicles. Class members also arranged a “green-up” cleanup with the Charles River Conservancy and help from the Phillips Brooks House Association. After the celebration, attendees were to receive an accounting of their aggregate travel to Cambridge, and instructions on how to offset the resulting carbon costs during the ensuing year. Across campus, the University recycling operation, in cooperation with Crimson Catering, Dining Services, and other caterers, continued to offer recycling at all outdoor catered events, and introduced composting at 13 of the largest ones.

FREQUENT FLIERS
Al Gore ’69, L.L.D. ’94, packed Tercentenary Theatre last October 22, keynoting the University’s sustainability celebration. He made a low-key return to campus on May 30, the Saturday before Commencement, for a private fortieth-reunion event, where he told humorous stories about his public life and also underscored the urgency of the global-warming challenge. General David H. Petraeus, Commander, U.S. Central Command, who visited the Harvard Kennedy School on April 21 to discuss the strategy he pursued in Iraq, was the guest speaker at Harvard’s Reserve Officers’ Training Corps commissioning ceremony on June 3. He praised the cadets’ preparation and shared five “critical admonitions for effective leadership.” President Drew Faust, who hailed his commitment to “the ideal of the soldier-scholar,” announced that the University will participate in the Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program, matching funds with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to pay tuition for military veterans to study at Harvard.

SILENT KISSERS
Welcoming classmates to a gathering in Sanders Theatre, fiftieth-reunion chairman John Spooner ’59 noted, “We are the last of the so-called Silent Generation,” but also pointed out that they changed with the times: “More guys have kissed me in the past day and a half than since the last time I was in France.”

KEEPING IN TOUCH: 2009 VS. 1959
During the College seniors’ Class Day on June 3, Darren He ’09, the class webmaster, exhorted classmates to stay in touch—whether by “G-chat, Facebook, e-mail, or Skype.” Employing a more up-close-and-personal approach, fiftieth-reunion class-gift co-chair Richard Reilly ’59, speaking in Sanders Theatre, plugged Harvard’s need for nonrestricted donations and warned, “There are 122 people attending this reunion who haven’t given yet...We’ll all be looking for you!”

BY THE NUMBERS
The University awarded 6,777 degrees and 81 certificates, including 1,562 degrees in the College, 519 Ph.D.s, 886 M.B.A.s, 567 J.D.s, and 175 M.D.s. The Extension School, entering its centennial year, conferred 605 of the degrees and certificates.

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