At 88, Dick Bolles ’50 could be forgiven for slowing down. But the author of What Color Is Your Parachute?—the perennially bestselling how-to guide for job-hunters that’s been updated annually since 1975—still maintains a healthy schedule of luncheon appointments and speaking engagements, and attends conferences around the country.

Meanwhile, the production of What Color Is Your Parachute? remains a largely Bollesian enterprise. Chewing secretaries, he spends two to three hours every day poring over newspapers and scouring the Internet, doing research. In the evenings, he says, he and his wife watch foreign detective mysteries, but after she goes to bed around 11, Bolles stays up for another three to four hours. “That’s when I love to write,” he explains. “Everything’s so quiet, and I never have any appointments.”

After Harvard, Bolles moved to New York to study at General Theological Seminary. As an ordained Episcopal minister, he first served in New Jersey, but eventually took a job in San Francisco. When he was laid off because of a budget crisis, he was offered another job, as “a kind of roving ambassador” to the campus ministries and chaplains of 10 Christian denominations in the nine western states. “And it turned out, they were all being let go,” he recalls. “So I said, I’ll travel around, I’ll see what I can find out, why don’t you figure out what you can do to help us,” he said, “Why don’t you figure out what you can do to help us,” he recalls. “So I said, I’ll travel around, I’ll see what I can find out, and I’ll summarize my findings for you—and that was the first edition of What Color Is Your Parachute?”

The book, originally self-published, was quickly picked up by the fledgling Ten Speed Press, and began to sell steadily. Some of its continuing popularity may derive from the sense of empathy permeating the text. Bolles has not only been jobless, he’s faced other tragedies, including the assassination of his brother, investigative journalist Don Bolles, and the death of a son in surgery. “I’m a man of prayer,” he says, “and I delight in reading. When you fill your memory with hymns, with poetry, with stories, you get a sensitivity to your soul that doesn’t vanish, that doesn’t get beaten down over the years.”

What Color Is Your Parachute? has also faced challenges over the years, including the rise of the Internet—which Bolles has countered by updating the book more frequently and creating the website jobhuntersbible.com, an online hub for the book where he writes frequent blog posts. He maintains that only the outward form of the job hunt has changed: perusing classifieds in the daily paper has given way to browsing websites like monster.com and careerbuilder.com.

“I just keep chugging away,” he reports, giving matters of legacy and longevity short shrift. Writing and refining a book for 40 years amasses many things—money, followers, a reputation—but none so important, to Bolles, as responsibility. As he puts it, “I’m trying not to betray the faith that people put in me.”

—BAILEY TRELA

special access for U.S. government surveillance is an inherently bad idea.” It was covered in an October 11 New York Times article by Nicole Perlroth and David Sanger ’82, headlined “Obama Won’t Seek Door to Encrypted User Data,” that quoted Neumann twice.


The Harvard/Radcliffe Class of 1956 Fourth Tuesday Monthly Lunch Table meetings at the Harvard Club of New York City resume on January 26 and run through June 28 before going on summer hiatus; for details, contact Bob Ballard (robert.f.ballard@comcast.net) or Thor Thors (thorsjr@yahoo.com). The Harvard Club of Boston First Tuesday luncheons resume on January 5 and run through June 7; contact Ken Rossano (krossano@hotmail.com) for details. Non-club members are always welcome.

In Derailed by Bankruptcy: Life after the Reading Railroad, Howard H. Lewis, L.B. ’62, recounts his experience as the Reading Railroad’s primary lawyer during its legendary bankruptcy case: five years of litigation and court battles before he led the firm to settle for three times the original government offer. Lewis has practiced law for more than 50 years.

On October 10, the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College celebrated Peggy Means McIntosh, Ph.D. ’67, for her lifetime of work focusing on social change. The celebration included a two-hour “Conversation with Peggy and Friends,” followed by cocktails and dinner. The Centers honored McIntosh for her many years of work focusing on social equity and equality for girls and women, recognizing that their lives are shaped not only by their sex and gender, but also by race, ethnicity, culture, social and economic status, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, age, education, geography, “and a host of other factors.” Evy Janover Halpert, A.M. ’58, and Polly Budlong Cronin attended the celebration, as did several hundred women and men who have worked with McIntosh around the world to share her vision.

Secretaries: James L. Joslin, 145 Forest St., Wellesley Hills, Mass. 02481, jljoslin@comcast.net; and Airlie Cameron Lennon, 33 Gramatan Court, Bronxville, N.Y. 10708, acj@columbia.edu. Class website: www.harvard57.org.