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CONTENTS

60 Who Is . . . Sayeed Choudhury

16 Jackpot Fantasies

FRONT

06 Message
07 Contributors
09 Note
10 Dialogue

ALUMNI

68 Giving Close to Her Heart
70 Colleagues Automated Anthropology
72 Friends for Life Cultivating a Dream
73 Notebook Even Lawyers Can Love Their Jobs
74 Alumni Association Do Try This at Home
75 Class Notes
79 In Memoriam
80 Afterwords Collegiality

DEPARTMENTS

12 Idea Quadruple Duty
14 Artifact Sky-High Archaeology
16 Forefront Jackpot Fantasies
26 Evidence Testing, Testing
58 Text Sights Unseen
60 Who Is . . . Sayeed Choudhury
62 Campus Making the (Up)grade
67 Golomb’s Gambits Completions
Denis Wirtz believes that to understand cancer, biologists need to think outside the Petri dish.

Palliative care addresses what curative treatment may not—pain, anxiety, fear, and the reluctance to talk about dying.

There’s a power struggle for control over the message conveyed by the cigarette packs that line the walls of the world’s convenience stores.
There are ghosts in my office.

They do not emanate from the monumental desk that, according to tradition, belonged to Johns Hopkins himself.

Rather, they emerge in other, less obvious places. They are there in conversations about how we navigate our dependence on federal research funding. They are there in our discussions of how we, one of the most decentralized universities, have become known for entrepreneurial, cross-disciplinary programs like Biomedical Engineering. They inform our relationships with our neighbors in East Baltimore and the communities surrounding Homewood.

On countless occasions, on topics large and small, so many of our conversations are rooted in the university’s past.

To borrow the words of famed historian and Johns Hopkins PhD Frederick Jackson Turner, history “is ever becoming—never completed.”

As the beneficiary of so many achievements planned for and executed, so many challenges confronted and overcome, I find myself asking: How did we get here?

We can begin to glean the answer from any number of sources, from the early histories of the university to chronicles of our individual schools. But it is striking that we do not have a history of the university that knits together the experiences of our many divisions and illuminates how we, as an institution, were shaped by the dramatic changes of the last 138 years.

The absence of this analysis is a lacuna, one we are working to fill through a new project exploring the history of Johns Hopkins. The centerpiece will be a book, but the effort will also involve new ways to integrate our history into university life. In the coming months, we’ll launch a series of student-curated digital exhibits delving into the Johns Hopkins student experience, and we’ll work to build our collection of oral and video histories from members of our community. These efforts will come together on a new website, which will be a virtual home for the project, and a place where you can share stories and pictures of your time at Johns Hopkins. I hope you’ll take a minute to visit the site at jhu.md/jhuhistory.

This history is personal. I live with it, work with it, and am shaped by it every day. Like so many of you, I am proud to be a part of it.

But this effort is not for us alone. We created the American research university model. A history of Johns Hopkins that maps how our university was framed from its beginning and has evolved over time will resonate with institutions of higher learning throughout the country and around the globe.

So I look forward not to exorcising the ghosts that gather around my desk but rather to seeing them more clearly as we look to our future.
Contributors

Harry Campbell ("Jackpot Fantasies," illustration, p. 16) has produced work for national and international publications, including The New York Times, Time, The Wall Street Journal, and many others. He has a degree from MICA and lives in Baltimore.

Lisa Watts ("Jackpot Fantasies," p. 16) is a freelance writer, editor, and nonprofit communications manager living in Greensboro, North Carolina. Her anthology, Good Roots: Writers Reflect on Growing Up in Ohio, includes an essay by Johns Hopkins Magazine Associate Editor Dale Keiger.

Margaret Buranen ("Dealt an ACE," p. 18) writes for National Geographic Traveler, American Forests, Michigan Today, Carolina Country, and other publications. A graduate of the University of Kentucky, Buranen holds an MA in English from Indiana University.

Christopher Bonanos ("A Good Life, With Mistakes," p. 20), A&S ’90, is the author of Instant: The Story of Polaroid and an editor at New York, where he focuses on the magazine’s culture coverage. He lives in New York City with his wife and son.

Mark Smith ("What Hurts the Most," illustration, p. 36) has created art for newspapers, magazines, books, and advertising campaigns around the world. His work has also won international recognition from the New York Society of Illustrators, the Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles, American Illustration, 3x3 Magazine, the V&A Illustration Awards, and more.

Will Kirk ("Pack Mentality," photography, p. 52), A&S ’99, has been working for Johns Hopkins University since his graduation. His photographs have also appeared in The Baltimore Sun, The Washington Post, Entertainment Weekly, and others.

On the cover
Over the course of six years, Anand Pandian spent time with the crews behind 17 Tamil film projects. The associate professor in the Department of Anthropology is writing a book on his experiences immersed in the chaotic, uncertain world of the filmmaking industry. A photograph from his travels appears on this issue’s cover and depicts Russian belly dancers hired for a three-day shoot in Dubai.
I don’t remember the name of the nurse who helped my family through my grandfather’s death.

But I thought of her as I read “What Hurts the Most” (page 36), Andrea Appleton’s feature about palliative care—the medical specialty that seeks to help patients and their families cope with the pain, fear, and other suffering that can accompany illness, especially terminal illness.

My grandfather, who was 84 and one of my favorite people in the world, broke his neck in a fall. Unlike most of the patients in Andrea’s story, his end came quickly. He lived only nine days, which was mercifully short. I had little capacity for dealing with such profound sadness, and could not imagine saying goodbye to him. Those were perhaps the worst nine days of my life. A bright spot was one of his nurses, who was calm and straightforward and just cheerful enough, with Pop and with the rest of us. Hers was a steady and comforting presence, and we all felt such relief and gratitude when she was on duty. She made a point of being there when we took my grandfather off life support. She hugged us all and cried with us and opened the window as he died so his soul could leave the room.

None of us called it palliative care. But we all deeply understood how invaluable it was to have a kind and honest guide during those difficult days.
Risk Management
I read Elizabeth Evitts Dickinson’s story [“Guns Kill Cops,” Fall] on doctoral candidate David Swedler’s research into how and why police officers die on the job. In the 1980s, while training as a student and resident at the [Bloomberg] School of Public Health, I attended the first World Injury Conference in Stockholm. Swedish police officers demonstrated to delegates the Kevlar helmets they donned prior to exiting their patrol cars when stopping a vehicle or in various situations where they were at potential risk of violence. Back in Baltimore, I was concerned by the frequently bare-headed officers responding to calls in high-risk neighborhoods around the school, as well as the associated death reports in the media. I wrote to The Baltimore Sun at the time, about 25 years ago, recommending that police in the United States consider Sweden’s example in the use of helmets by police. It is good to learn that Swedler’s recent research might help to make this a reality.

Peter Barss, SPH ’86, ’91 (ScD)
Vancouver, Canada

Editor’s note: We may have been a little too artistic with last issue’s Artifact. The photograph in question is the university's new Undergraduate Teaching Laboratories, a 105,000-square-foot facility that hosts undergraduate labs and faculty in the departments of Chemistry, Biology, Biophysics, and Psychological and Brain Sciences; and the undergraduate Neuroscience program. The image depicts the concave glass facade of the building, which acts almost like a kaleidoscope, reflecting the trees, plants, and sculptures outside the building. Here’s another (less abstract) look at the building.

A Firm Belief
I am sorry to see that Johns Hopkins Magazine has published “Empty Nest” [about Michael George, SAIS ’03, and Chad Lord’s experience trying to adopt a baby] [Fall]. Children need a father and a mother to grow normally and happily. This is nature and my firm belief. (I am a father and I have a wife.) Let Mr. George and Mr. Lord do what they want with their lives, but we do not need to hear of them in your magazine.

Ranieri Tallarigo, SAIS Bologna ’57
New York, New York

Cheap Shot?
I read with interest the letter of Vance A. Brahsky in your Fall issue [Dialogue]. He was dismayed that you printed a submission “mocking those Christians that support creationism theory and those on the right of the political spectrum who support former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin and Congresswoman Michele Bachmann.” He thought this was a “cheap shot” and advised your magazine to keep its focus fair and balanced.

As for fairness, your magazine did print Mr. Brahsky’s letter, though I doubt this assuaged his dismay very much. What’s wrong with mocking Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann? Those [two] should embarrass the right as well as revolt the left.

Daniel Switky, A&S ’57, Med ’61, HS ’61–’62
San Mateo, California

Reflecting on the Abstract
OK. I give up. What is it? [Artifact, Fall]

Bob Nobles, A&S ’67 (MLA)
Baltimore, Maryland

The Hub, Johns Hopkins’ online news network, recently turned 1. Top five magazine stories by visits (in thousands):

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There’s a massive waste disposal problem in the hospitals of developing nations. Hospitals—and maternity wards in particular—produce waste, like used gauze and plastic packaging, that should be incinerated, but that’s a costly and unrealistic option for many hospitals. Instead, the waste often ends up in landfills, where it puts people at risk of infections like sepsis, HIV, and hepatitis.

Harshad Sanghvi is the medical director and vice president of innovations for Jhpiego, a nonprofit affiliated with Johns Hopkins that is dedicated to improving the health of women and families in developing countries. He says there’s a way to safely and cost-effectively dispose of this medical waste, and he’s organizing a harambe—the Swahili term for the pulling together of the community—to make it happen.

Context
When the Saving Lives at Birth grant competition asked for proposals earlier this year on ways to reduce infant and maternal mortality in the hospitals of developing countries, the team at Jhpiego, led by Sanghvi, saw the opportunity to partner with an organization that was already making waves with a revolutionary four-in-one contraption.

The Community Cooker—an incinerator that uses discarded motor oil and water to burn garbage at temperatures exceeding 800 degrees Celsius—had already been successfully implemented in a few Kenyan slums to deal with the overflow of trash that lined the streets. But the contraption does more than safely burn waste without emitting toxins. The heat generated in the process can be used to boil water for baths or hand washing, to cook food, and to provide heat to buildings.

The cooker is the brainchild of the Community Cooker Foundation, a nonprofit set up by Jim Archer, one of Kenya’s leading architects.

Jhpiego proposed placing the cooker in a clinical setting, where it could dispose of germ-ridden medical waste, as well as provide hot, clean water to doctors and patients.

“This is an innovation that’s adaptable to the demands of a health care facility and the community,” says Boniface Maket, director of Jhpiego in Kenya. “And it’s empowering to the community to be able to see that their trash can have an impact—that it can save mothers.”

Data
The Community Cooker could have a drastic impact on the spread of infections in hospitals. Fifteen percent of maternal deaths and 25 percent of neonatal deaths are due to sepsis and other infections, according to the World Health Organization.
Kenya, the maternal mortality rate is 360 per 100,000 live births (compared to 21 per 100,000 in the U.S.), and 49 out of 1,000 infants die before their first birthday (compared to six out of 1,000 in the U.S.).

With a roughly $15,000 price tag, the cooker is a low-cost, low-tech solution to a widespread problem.

Upshot
The team at Jhpiego is working with the Community Cooker Foundation, a hospital outside Nairobi, and the community to implement this technology in a health care setting. Although the idea went to the finals of the grant competition, it did not win. The team must now secure $250,000 to build the cooker, train workers to use it, and tweak the technology for hospitals (they’re currently in preliminary talks with one donor). Among the necessary modifications: Engineers must find a way to ensure the cooker consistently burns at 1,000 degrees Celsius in order to safely incinerate medical waste. Researchers are also looking into ways they could save the energy for later use.

Conclusion
The Community Cooker “can really change lives,” says Janice Muthui, foundation manager for the Community Cooker Foundation. “As a waste energy technology, this fits in with any setting you have—urban, rural, whatever—as long as you have a steady fuel of rubbish and a community who is willing to try it.”

The *harambe* doesn’t end once the Community Cooker goes into the first hospital, Sanghvi says. If successful, the model could be scaled up to other hospitals in Kenya to provide low-cost, low-tech health solutions that would drastically reduce the spread of infection.

Not bad for a product that runs on trash and used motor oil.
ARTIFACT
SKY-HIGH ARCHAEOLOGY  Michael Harrower and Ben Zaitchick of the Krieger School use satellites to study archaeological histories. Here, a Worldview-2 satellite image of an oasis near Yanqul, Oman, has been laid over a topographic image from Japan’s Advanced Land Observing Satellite. In this image, various wavelengths of light are selected to highlight things not visible to the naked eye—the type and health of modern vegetation, shown in shades of orange, and variability of ground surface texture and composition, shown in shades of blue, green, and gray. These details of the modern landscape inform hypotheses and models on the locations and productivity of irrigated agriculture in the ancient past. Dale Keiger
CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Jackpot Fantasies
Lisa Watts

To be a good husband, father, and employee, Hyeong Min Kim knows what’s expected. He needs to work hard and provide for his family. But every so often Kim’s thoughts drift to guitars—Gibson guitars, the ones that cost about $5,000 each. “I’d own 100 guitars if I could,” says Kim, an assistant professor of marketing at the Carey Business School. “If I won the lottery, I’d walk into a Guitar Center store and clear the place out.”

Jackpot fantasies fuel more than Kim’s daydreams. His newest research looks at how playing the lottery changes the way consumers think and act. He found that the mere act of buying a lottery ticket—even when the buyer knows the chance of winning is one in a few million—triggers more materialistic thinking and can make someone throw prudence out the window. “Self-control failure means choosing an immediate reward over a larger, longer-term reward,” Kim says. “When people have a chance at a large windfall, say $1 million in lottery winnings, they tend to choose immediate gratification.”

To study consumers’ thinking, Kim designed four experiments. He brought groups of 50 to 150 New Yorkers into a room to talk about lotteries and shopping. With the first group, he set bowls of M&Ms in the individual cubicles for snacking while participants answered questions about lotteries. In two other groups, Kim quizzed the participants about consumer preferences: Imagine you are shopping for something, he told them, and the store offers you either a $10 instant coupon toward the item or a mail-in rebate for a $20 discount—which would you prefer? He asked the last group to write down specific products or brands they would buy or places they would travel to if they won a lottery jackpot. All four groups had something in common—at the start of the experiments, Kim randomly selected half of the people in each group to receive a lottery ticket, for jackpots ranging from $25,000 to $1 million.

What he found, across all four groups, was less self-control among the lottery ticket holders. They reached for more M&Ms than did those without tickets. They preferred the $10 coupon to the $20 rebate. They would rather buy something (immediate gratification) than take a trip (delayed gratification) if they won the jackpot.

Why does buying a lottery ticket weaken willpower? Typically people suppress fantasies about big-ticket items, Kim says, because they know the dangers of impulse buying and excessive debt. But buying a lottery ticket, no matter how great the odds against winning, seems to stir materialistic thinking—what social scientists call low-level construal. Marketing research has shown that thinking about the tangible details of things—the color of a new car, how the keyboard of a new laptop computer would feel—reduces self-control. Kim says his study shows that playing the lottery can flick on that same mental switch. “Say you’re longing for a red BMW sports car. If you bought a $1 lottery ticket, you’d probably tend to think about the concrete details of that car: the colors, how it feels, how it looks.” With these features in mind, self-control wanes.
In one of his experiments, Kim also measured participants' materialistic tendencies by using a standard extrinsic-values orientation scale. People who scored low in extrinsic values (that is, not so tied to expensive possessions) wrote thoughts about using a lottery windfall to help their elderly parents or other people in need. “If you give a lottery ticket to a nonmaterialistic person, say a priest or a monk, he likely will not show self-control failure.” Asked if this work draws on Buddhist teachings from his native South Korea, Kim laughs. “I’m Catholic,” he says, but adds that prayer and meditation in any form lead people away from low-level construal. “To maintain your self-control, you have to live in a higher place, not dwelling on little things. Materialistic things look great but they don’t last. You can’t extract happiness from extrinsic things.”

Kim’s lottery study, appearing in the December 2013 *Journal of Consumer Research*, builds on his research interests in self-control, materialism, and sales promotion. His work was not intended as a critique of lotteries, he says, but as an illustration of societal behavior. “A few times a year, the lottery craze sweeps our country. Last year the jackpot got up to something like $600 million, and Americans spent around $2 billion on Powerball tickets. Probably the overall level of self-control across the country went down quite a bit then.”

Kim sheepishly admits that he buys a lottery ticket a few times a year for those large jackpots, with visions of guitars dancing in his head. He designed his lottery research study after his two teenagers pointed out how impatient he’d become at those times—“not on purpose, but because thoughts about the jackpot invaded whatever I was doing with them.” His next study? “I’m curious about how not winning the lottery might influence behavior. Ninety-nine point nine percent of us don’t win.”

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**DEMENTIA CARE**

**Calming Influence**

*Kelly Brooks*

After decades of dementia research, Laura Gitlin was still frustrated—and her dementia patients were still agitated. The nurse and researcher was at Philadelphia’s Thomas Jefferson University in 2009, working with a team of occupational therapists to create and test structured daily routines for dementia patients and their caregivers. The idea was to keep everyday activities such as waking, eating, grooming, and taking meds consistent and scheduled.

It helped. The patients got physically healthier, and their caregivers felt less burdened, too. Yet the routines didn’t help with the patients’ behavioral symptoms, which are among the hallmarks of the disease. Most common is agitation, which can manifest as pacing, walking aimlessly, rejecting care, seeming anxious, or repeating words and phrases. Physical or verbal aggression, apathy, depression, or even psychoses can occur, too, all of which can be emotionally exhausting and physically dangerous.
The OT staff tested cognitive and motor skills—and scheduled an hourlong interview with each patient’s family. They then designed three activities per patient. Some played cards; others made beaded necklaces. Many played indoor golf. One patient’s wife bought him a table hockey game, and another sang along to barbershop quartet music. Over three weeks and 10 activity sessions, the patients, family, and staff all saw and documented positive behavioral changes.

Why does it work? The activities “gave them a sense of dignity and purpose and meaning,” theorizes Gitlin. She’s still analyzing data, but the anecdotal evidence was enough that Lakeside Medical Unit is making TAP part of its daily dementia care routine.

GITLIN'S PIONEERING WORK has become a part of routine care at Lakeside Medical Unit, a 33-bed short-stay unit for dementia patients who exhibit behaviors of extreme apathy, irritability, or agitation. For example, one patient was often found lying on the floor; another could never be coaxed out of bed. Their caregivers could reduce their “on-duty” time by five hours per day.

With funding from the National Institute on Aging, Gitlin launched a pilot study to discover whether TAP would work for patients and their in-home family caregivers. Occupational therapists worked with 60 dementia patients to recommend specific activities and train their families. After four months, the patients were less agitated, more engaged, and seemed to enjoy their activities. Another bonus: Their caregivers could reduce their “on-duty” time by five hours per day.

After demonstrating that TAP could help at-home dementia patients, Gitlin wondered: Could it work for inpatients as well? Her first inpatient study launched in September 2012 at Johns Hopkins Bayview’s Lakeside Medical Unit, a 33-bed short-stay unit for dementia patients whose behavior has become unmanageable for their usual caretakers. Twenty dementia patients were chosen for the TAP study; they all exhibited behaviors of extreme apathy, irritability, aggression, or agitation.

For both patients and caregivers, the usual treatment is pharmaceutical, but cholinesterase inhibitors, which may slow disease progression for some patients, only work for a short time and come with side effects like nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting.

Now a professor of community-public health in the School of Nursing, Gitlin is studying a new anti-agitation treatment: the Tailored Activity Program, or TAP. As in her previous studies, this program’s occupational therapists prescribe a routine of activities for patient and caregiver to do together. The difference now is that the therapists design activities tailored to the patients’ abilities, needs, and interests—activities the patients will enjoy, like games, music, and crafts. The goal is to use activity, rather than drugs, to keep patients calmer, safer, and more engaged.

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MEDICINE

Dealt an ACE

Margaret Buranen

Journalist Donna Jackson Nakazawa often found herself lying on the stair landing of her house, resting to regain enough strength to climb upstairs. For years, Nakazawa had been plagued by illnesses: Guillain-Barré syndrome that left her temporarily paralyzed (twice), thyroiditis, nerve damage, severe eczema, dangerously low red and white blood cell counts, and more. Then Nakazawa got lucky. She was referred to Anastasia Rowland-Seymour, a Johns Hopkins internist and assistant professor of internal medicine at the School of Medicine. Rowland-Seymour asked a question no doctor had asked Nakazawa: Had she suffered unusual emotional or physical trauma as a child?

Such trauma, termed adverse childhood experiences, or ACE, includes emotional or physical neglect or abuse; contact sexual abuse; living with someone who was mentally ill, incarcerated, or abused alcohol and/or drugs; living with a mother who was treated violently; and losing a biological parent. Studies published in journals like Circulation and Archives of Internal Medicine correlate ACE with higher adult incidences of heart disease, fibromyalgia, lupus and other autoimmune diseases, alcoholism, cancer, and suicide. How childhood trauma impacts adults’ health on a cellular level is still unknown; for now, what researchers have is the correlation and the realization of how children’s immature immune systems can be vulnerable to damage that will affect them as adults.

Once she has established the particulars of an ACE patient’s illness, Rowland-Seymour treats the physical symptoms through standard medical protocols, but she also recommends therapies such as meditation, yoga, and acupuncture. These therapies ease the ongoing stress that triggers excess cortisol and other inflammatory hormones that keep the immune system malfunctioning. Rowland-Seymour relies on lab tests and patients’ own accounts to determine which therapies seem to be working best.

Her biggest challenge, she says, is “taking the time required to set up the relationship so it’s comfortable for patients to delve into their experiences and see they have some ability to change. A patient feels safe, feels heard, so [then] he can look closely at those experiences.”

Nakazawa’s answer to Rowland-Seymour’s profound question was yes:
RETROSPECTIVE.

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Her father had unexpectedly died after surgery when she was 12. The loss devastated her mother and fractured her family. As detailed in her book, *The Last Best Cure: My Quest to Awaken the Healing Parts of My Brain and Get Back My Body, My Joy, and My Life* (Hudson Street Press, 2013), under Rowland-Seymour’s care Nakazawa embarked on a yearlong effort to regain the health that tragedy had taken from her. Improvement was gradual, but after a year, tests showed her stress biomarkers significantly lowered and her red and white blood cell counts in the normal range for the first time in a decade. And she had regained vitality—she no longer needed the stair landing for rest.

4

**MEMOIR**

**A Good Life, With Mistakes**

Christopher Bonanos

We are set to meet on Monday morning, Daniel Menaker and I, and he suggests that I come to his apartment, because the coffee is better there than at the place down the street. But Menaker, A&S ’65 (MA), disclaims any pretensions of connoisseurship soon after I arrive. “I’m not a foodie—I’m waging a nano-war against kale,” he says, marveling at the obsessiveness given to ingredients these days. About coffee: “I always said, give me whatever nasty potion was available. But now it’s like all Upper West Side things—slightly gourmet. To me, it seems like a strange life.”

A strange life, maybe, but also a pretty good one, even with a few tragic moments, and it’s recounted in *My Mistake* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013). Menaker’s memoir captures a pair of lost worlds: the old lefty Greenwich Village, where he grew up in the 1940s and 1950s, and the byzantine kingdom of *The New Yorker*, where he worked for 26 years, mostly during the peculiar editorship of
Those mistakes gradually became interactions, and bad career moves. Iffy judgment, ill-conceived social meme, almost a punctuation mark, as he recounts various moments of his short stories and helping with the magazine’s fiction editor, who helped ease him out of purgatory, publishing a mentor in William Maxwell, the panned out, and Menaker soon found a job.” He tried to do so, but nothing panned out, and Menaker soon found a job at HarperCollins, he stayed till 2007.


The book recounts what a lot of publishing people would consider a golden career, but Menaker’s was not a life led effortlessly. Along the way there were panic attacks and episodes of despair. Underneath it all lay pernicious guilt over the death of his brother, which occurred after an injury that Menaker had, indirectly and inadvertently, helped cause. (Psychoanalysis helped a lot, he says, though he stopped therapy many years ago, once self-examination became “a habit of mind.”) And then, a few years ago, came an especially nasty surprise: A lung cancer diagnosis led to surgery and chemotherapy and, eventually and fortunately, remission. “Everything is different,” he says, about what the experience changed in him.

Yet some of that old stuff from the academy did actually linger as he managed his illness. “I wish everyone had to concentrate on poetry as much as I did,” he says, adding that it was “against my will at first. I was a semi-athlete, and I was always eschewing academic pride. It doesn’t save lives, but it does give your life a richer context. And I wouldn’t be talking about this if it weren’t for the cancer diagnosis, which is of course in some ways awful and frightening, but also renewed my interest in bigger answers, questions of faith. Poetry is a real solace.” Much more than kale. Or coffee. We finish, and I head to the office to write, buzzing.

William Shawn. Although the book paints its author as a slightly aloof figure, armoring himself with ironic detachment, Menaker is friendly and easy to talk to. One of his five earlier books is about the art of conversation, so I guess I shouldn’t be surprised.

Between those two stretches of Menaker’s life, downtown and uptown, there was his time as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins, which he recalls with respect if not exactly pleasure. He’d learned to read poetry, he says, in his undergraduate years at Swarthmore. “But Earl Wasserman”—who taught at Hopkins from 1948 to 1973—“was fabulous, and mean, and impatient . . . and taught me again. That’s made a difference in my life.” There was also the less impressive American literature specialist Charles Anderson, who was “a wonderful teacher but required you to buy the books he’d written, which was so venal!”

More coffee? More coffee, please. It really is pretty good.

So it was back to New York, where, in 1969, he landed at The New Yorker, working first as a fact checker, then a copy editor. William Shawn was never exactly a fan: When Menaker had been at the magazine perhaps five years, a top editor pulled him aside to say, “We’re not going to make you leave, but we do want you to find another job.” He tried to do so, but nothing panned out, and Menaker soon found a mentor in William Maxwell, the magazine’s fiction editor, who helped ease him out of purgatory, publishing his short stories and helping with the interoffice politics. Throughout the book, “my mistake” is a recurring meme, almost a punctuation mark, as he recounts various moments of iffy judgment, ill-conceived social interactions, and bad career moves. Those mistakes gradually became less frequent, and Menaker ultimately stayed at the magazine for 26 years, editing the likes of Alice Munro (very happily) and Pauline Kael (less so). In 1995, he moved on to the book world as executive editor-in-chief at Random House, and, apart from a brief interregnum during which he went over to HarperCollins, he stayed till 2007.


The book recounts what a lot of publishing people would consider a golden career, but Menaker’s was not a life led effortlessly. Along the way there were panic attacks and episodes of despair. Underneath it all lay pernicious guilt over the death of his brother, which occurred after an injury that Menaker had, indirectly and inadvertently, helped cause. (Psychoanalysis helped a lot, he says, though he stopped therapy many years ago, once self-examination became “a habit of mind.”) And then, a few years ago, came an especially nasty surprise: A lung cancer diagnosis led to surgery and chemotherapy and, eventually and fortunately, remission. “Everything is different,” he says, about what the experience changed in him.

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5

BIOLOGY

Retinal Combat
Greg Rienzi
When biologist Samer Hattar describes the development of eyes in newborn mice, he speaks of a microscopic death match. He is not being metaphorical. In the eyes’ early stages of development, thousands of photosensitive cells fight for optimal position on the retina, and the combat is mortal—nearly 60 percent die in what amounts to a cellular struggle for survival. But this carnage is necessary because it results in the surviving cells forming an orderly mosaic across the retina’s surface. This mosaic is essential to proper reception of the light signals that allow the mouse’s brain to manage its circadian clock. Because human eyes contain the same neurons, known as intrinsically photosensitive retinal ganglion cells (ipRGCs), Hattar believes a similar death battle occurs in the eyes of human fetuses at about the 30-week mark in gestation.

“This is remarkable because it shows that cell death is not a passive process but an active one involved in setting up circuits in the nervous system,” says Hattar.

A research team led by Hattar, who is an associate professor of biology in the Krieger School, initially set out to do an experiment that would help them understand jet lag. Jet lag occurs when the body’s internal circadian clock goes out of sync with the external solar day. In the eye, ipRGCs, along with the more familiar rods and cones, detect the irradiance patterns of light and dark that regulate the body’s clock, a process called...
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circadian photoentrainment. Hattar knew that ipRGCs are produced in excess at the very earliest stages of eye development, before so many of them die as the retina develops. So if he blocked the normal cell death process, he could increase the number of ipRGCs that survive, resulting in the retina having greater light sensitivity. Because light information from the environment is necessary for shifting the internal biological clock, Hattar explains, “this should allow, we thought, the animal to be more sensitive to lower light levels and hence have better ability to adjust to jet lag.”

Hattar’s team studied mice that had been genetically modified to remove the Bax protein, a factor essential for cell death. This blocked the “death battle” and created the desired surplus of ipRGCs. But it also resulted in the cells forming clumps on the retina instead of the normal, orderly mosaic. This clumping, to the researchers’ surprise, seemed to have no effect on regulating the mice’s circadian clocks. But in another cohort of mice, the team knocked out both the Bax proteins and a photoreceptive protein called melanopsin, which also plays a role in photoentrainment. Those mice slept during both day and night, indicating their eyes had been made incapable of setting their circadian clocks.

From these results, the scientists concluded that the abnormal clumping of ipRGCs had impaired the rods and cones’ ability to regulate the circadian clock, an effect that had been masked in the experiment until the melanopsin was knocked out. So the orderly mosaic of ipRGCs produced by the “death battle” is essential to the eye’s ability to keep the body’s clock in sync with the day/night cycle, because without the mosaic, the rods and cones’ input to ipRGCs does not function properly.
Hattar believes the team’s study not only revealed more about the eye, but it will help scientists better understand how neural circuits are formed. A greater understanding of this circuit formation, he says, could be applied to any neurological function, perhaps leading to breakthroughs in treating neurological diseases including autism, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and psychiatric disorders where neural circuits influence behavior.

Soldiers’ Music

Bret McCabe

About a minute into Jake Runestad’s new composition, the soldier’s story Dreams of the Fallen, a solo piano line rushes from the haunting hum of an orchestra’s worried woodwinds and strings, as if trying to flee. The pianist runs through clusters of notes, like a man darting from one hiding place to the next, until the strings settle into a reassuring melody and the piano becomes less frazzled. The orchestra seems to counsel calm before the next, until the strings settle into a dreamlike experience. I think of great tension; there are these conflicting emotions and, by the end, the orchestra is the sonic landscape that describes the place and experience,” he says. “So at times, there are these moments of great tension; there are these moments where I’ve tried to evoke a dreamlike experience. I think of the [solo] pianist as a character, as someone who is experiencing all of this, and the orchestra is the sonic landscape that describes the place or a feeling. And the choir is at times commentary and at times the inner voice of the pianist.”

The result is music that has both just such real, rough human emotion. I knew that I wanted to base [the piece] on his work.”

The composer turned to a different writer for his composition’s structure. Matterhorn, the 2010 debut novel of Vietnam War veteran Karl Marlantes, is a grueling account of a single company fighting near the Laotian border in 1969. Marlantes followed that novel up with the nonfiction What It Is Like to Go to War, in which he candidly explores how combat changes a person and what a soldier needs upon returning home. Reading Marlantes prompted Runestad to spend more time investigating the re-entry process. “What I kept finding through all of these resources was two main things that soldiers need when they return—the first one being some sort of ceremony or a rite of passage to transition from the war experience back home, a sense of closure. The other is a sense of community.”

Runestad gave Dreams a three-part structure, like a rite, and then deliberately avoided the bugles and martial drums and march time typically associated with martial music. “My goal was to evoke a sense of place and experience,” he says. “So at times, there are these moments of great tension; there are these moments where I’ve tried to evoke a dreamlike experience. I think of the [solo] pianist as a character, as someone who is experiencing all of this, and the orchestra is the sonic landscape that describes the place or a feeling. And the choir is at times commentary and at times the inner voice of the pianist.”

The result is music that has both shifting ambient moods and narrative drive. It moves through a number of conflicting emotions and, by the composition’s end, the contrast between piano and orchestra is less harsh than in the beginning. That’s

Chorus of New Orleans, Runestad wanted to focus on the broader experience of today’s soldiers, from deployment through combat and the return home. He has produced an intimate addition to classical war music.

“I had been reading a lot of news articles about soldiers coming home and really struggling to assimilate back into everyday life,” Runestad says. In 2009, the National Institutes of Health called post-traumatic stress disorder a growing epidemic among veterans; the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that PTSD affects 11 percent of veterans returning from Afghanistan and 20 percent of those returning from Iraq. Runestad felt that he had seen little of the full narrative arc, from civilian to soldier and back to ordinary life. He wanted to tell that complete story. That first led him to read poetry about war and soldiering, since his commission as composer required a choral element. He read Horace, whose Ode 3.2 contains the line “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori,” which roughly translates to “It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.” He read Walt Whitman’s Civil War poems. He read Wilfred Owen, the World War I British soldier whose experiences in the trenches led him to deem “dulce et decorum” the “old lie.” Runestad realized that how war is culturally framed and perceived has changed, and that he needed poetry that understood contemporary combat.

He found what he was looking for in the writings of Brian Turner, an Iraqi War veteran. The imagery in his 2005 collection Here, Bullet—the titular poem opens, “If a body is what you want,/ then here is bone and gristle and flesh”—seared itself into Runestad’s mind. “It has this immediate communication and powerful language,” he says. “It’s
The Bug and the Gaze

Bret McCabe

Franz Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* is a staple of high school reading lists, partly in thanks to its memorable opening line about Gregor Samsa waking from horrible dreams to find himself transformed into a bug. But Kafka didn’t say Samsa turned into a bug. In German, Kafka wrote *Ungeziefer*, which means “vermin” or, more accurately, “unclean beast not suited for sacrifice.” In English, Gregor becomes a bug, the entire meaning altered in translation.

“Today I had to translate three Kafka sentences because they haven’t been translated [before] and I’m agonizing over it,” says Nils F. Schott, expressing the anxiety a scholar feels when taking an author’s work from his or her native language and putting it into another. When students and scholars read the English translations of these three Kafka sentences, they’ll be reading Schott’s interpretation of Kafka. No pressure there. “For another publication, I’ve translated some sentences from letters by [Gustave] Flaubert and, yeah, that’s a little out of my comfort zone. I mean, absolutely, this [translation project] is vocabulary that I’m familiar with, these are lines of argumentation that I’m familiar with, lines of reasoning that I’m familiar with. No problem. But somebody like Flaubert, where every sound counts? That’s something quite different.”

Schott, A&S ’10 (PhD), is speaking by Skype from Paris, where he is a visiting assistant professor of English at Trinity College’s Trinity-in-Paris program. When not teaching, he continues tightening up his dissertation for book publication. What he spends most of his time doing, though, are translations of academic writing, from German or French into English and vice versa, which require their own project-specific research. Translators are unsung but crucial workers in academia, guiding ideas across language barriers. It’s work that Schott enjoys and takes quite seriously. He chiefly translates what he calls “applications of 20th-century philosophy,” a field where the ideas and terminology of key thinkers and writers become set vocabularies in different languages.

Take Michel Foucault, whose use of “le regard” in his 1963 book *Naissance de la clinique: Une archéologie du regard* not to suggest that *Dreams of the Fallen* claims a soldier’s story is tidily resolved once he’s reacclimated to home. The snippet of Turner’s poetry that concludes the piece articulates the composition’s open-ended coda: “And I keep telling myself that if I walk far enough/ or long enough someday I’ll come out the other side.”
medical became “gaze” when Alan Sheridan translated it in 1973 as Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception. In a footnote, Sheridan explains how the English word choice doesn’t have the same connotations as it does in French. While imprecise, “gaze” became the term used to express Foucault’s ideas about power relationships when discussing the French thinker in English. And as other Foucault texts were translated into English by Sheridan (The History of Sexuality) and other translators—Richard Howard (Madness and Civilization), Jean Khalfa and Jonathan Murphy (History of Madness)—Foucault’s unique French vocabulary was turned into a set idiom for discussing Foucault in English.

“You might disagree with the translations, but the vocabulary is more or less set,” Schott says. “Those are set phrases now and you just work with it.”

When he came to Johns Hopkins for graduate school in 2003, he arrived at the same time as a few European professors who hadn’t published much in English. Schott was hired to translate their texts. “Eventually, I got my first offer for doing a book translation, and ever since then, they keep coming,” he says.

And frequently, the translation informs his own work in unexpected ways. “There are so many times that I’ll say, Yes, I’m going to do the book, because it doesn’t pay well but I can use the money,” he says. “And then I’ll start it and [think], ‘Oh my God, this is completely useless and it’s never going to be useful in any way, shape, or form whatsoever.’ Two months later, it’s the basis for an entire lecture that I’m giving because it turns out that the poet whom I’m discussing had a mutual friend who inspired a particular poem with the author whose book I have just translated.”

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—Ann V. Kirchner, Business Manager
Nearly 80 percent of U.S. trauma centers that treat predominantly minority patients have higher-than-expected death rates. Meanwhile, people of all races treated at hospitals with mostly white patients are 40 percent less likely to die. Researchers suggest the disparity may arise from a shortage of resources at the high-mortality centers, which serve a disproportionately high population of uninsured patients.

African-Americans with chronic kidney disease are at greater risk for end-stage renal disease compared to white Americans because of variants in the APOL1 gene. Approximately 10 percent of African-Americans carry the variants, which speed up the progression of kidney disease.
WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN’T

Comparison of standard CT scans with limited, low-radiation CT scans from 50 children who have hydrocephalus, excessive fluid on the brain, found that the safer, low-radiation scans were as clear and accurate. Children are especially susceptible to damage from radiation, and hydrocephalic children require periodic scans to ensure the safety of shunts that drain fluid from the brain.

From 2000 to 2010, prescription of potentially addictive opioid pain medications nearly doubled. A study of ambulatory patients seeking relief from non-cancer pain, however, found no improvement in their treatment. At the same time that opioid use soared, prescription of safer, nonaddictive analgesics such as ibuprofen flattened or declined.

DANGER LURKS

Scientists know that dormant HIV can hide in immune system T cells. But the amount of latent HIV proviruses lurking in infected cells may be 60 times greater than previously thought. Even after anti-retroviral drug therapy halts viral replication, the reservoir of dormant HIV remains, with potential to be reactivated.

In a study population of 446,000 residents of Pennsylvania, approximately 11 percent of soft-tissue infections and infections with the drug-resistant pathogen MRSA were associated with proximity to factory pig farms and fields fertilized with pig manure. Livestock raised on factory farms are routinely fed antibiotics, and those animals produce manure that contains antibiotic-resistant bacteria and resistance genes.

Most women under age 60 are at far less risk for coronary artery disease than men. But not if they have Type 2 diabetes, which quadruples their risk compared to nondiabetics. Other cardiovascular risk factors like obesity, high blood pressure, and smoking seemed not to apply to the women in the study.

COMMON COURTESY UNCOMMON

Physicians in their first year of residency need better manners. There are five recommended behaviors for courteous interactions with patients—introducing yourself, sitting down to talk, etc.—and only 4 percent of interns in a study performed all five. Only 40 percent introduced themselves, and a mere 9 percent sat down to talk.
Into the 3rd dimension

Cancer biologists think outside the Petri dish.
Galen of Pergamos

was a physician with a practice in second-century Rome. Among his clientele was the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Galen was also a prolific scribbler, so we know a lot about his ideas regarding disease, including his theory of cancer. Cancer, he wrote, was caused by “black bile” that flowed through the body; when it became trapped somewhere, it formed a malignant tumor.

He was wrong about black bile, though it is one hell of a good metaphor. But he was strikingly close to the mark with the flow theory. There are cancers, such as glioblastomas in the brain, in which the primary tumor can be deadly. But for most cancers, the original tumor does not pose the mortal peril. In more than 90 percent of cancers, what kills is metastasis. Cancer cells have a terrifying ability to move through the body and form new tumors in the bones, in the lymph nodes, in the lungs, in the liver and other internal organs. If a physician finds your tumor before the cancer has spread, you may survive. If the tumor has metastasized, cancer will probably kill you. Medicine still cannot do much to counter the flow of black bile.

What if that is, in part, because a substantial portion of cancer cell biology and cancer drug testing has been reliant on a ubiquitous piece of lab equipment?
German bacteriologist and military physician Julius Richard Petri invented the Petri dish in 1887. Unless it was invented two years before that by a Slovene, Emanuel Klein, or by a pair of Romanian microbiologists, André Cornil and Victor Babes. Unless it was invented a year before that—we're back to 1884 now—by English researcher Percy Faraday Frankland. Whatever its provenance, the two-piece flat cylindrical glassware (now frequently polystyrene ware) has been used by scientists for decades to culture and study cells of all kinds, including cancer cells.

Denis Wirtz is a professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering in the Whiting School and director of the Wirtz Lab in the Physical Sciences–Oncology Center. He has dedicated the past few years to developing methods of studying cancer cells in three-dimensional environments. In a Petri dish, cells are cultured on a substrate so thin as to be two-dimensional. Wirtz believes that this 2-D microworld-in-a-dish so distorts the cells and cell behavior as to cast doubt on a significant portion of critical cancer biology. He and his research team have been working with 3-D matrices that more resemble human tissue, growing cancer cells in them and observing how those cells move about. The difference has been so dramatic to Wirtz that when he talks about it, he becomes an evangelist for cell biology in three dimensions. To figure out metastasis, he says, scientists must work in 3-D. And it would be a good idea to take hundreds of drugs that were deemed failures after testing them on cells in a dish and test them again in three dimensions. Wirtz thinks pharmaceutical companies may have missed medicines that will work because of their reliance on Herr Petri's invention.

In journal articles, cancer researchers refer to “the metastatic cascade.” It is a remarkable process. At the disease’s point of origin, cancer cells proliferate and clump, creating the primary tumor and forming blood vessels to nourish themselves in a process called vascularization. Before long, malignant cells begin to detach from the original tumor and move through the surrounding tissue until they run into a blood vessel. Able to deform themselves, they squeeze between the endothelial cells that form the blood vessel’s wall and enter the bloodstream (this is known as intravasation). As the heart pumps the blood, it pumps the cancer cells as well to other parts of the body. The cells tumble and bump into the blood vessel’s walls, and when that happens some of them adhere and push between the endothelial cells once again and exit the bloodstream (extravasation). Now they are inside a lung, or the liver, or some other organ. Malignancies constantly shed cells by the millions, and almost all of them die before they can do more harm. But enough survive the rough ride through the blood to lodge somewhere new and begin the explosive proliferation characteristic of cancer.

Crucial to understanding this process is figuring out cell motility—how cells move. For many years now, researchers have studied motility usually by growing cancer cells in a Petri dish and observing how they move about. When cultured on a substrate in a dish, cancer cells typically flatten and move in a slow, seemingly random fashion by pulling themselves along by their leading edges. They also form strong attachments, called focal adhesions, to the floor of the dish. These adhesions consist of proteins that aggregate on the bottom of the cell. Up to a few years ago, that was the picture scientists had of how cancer cells move.

In 2010, Stephanie Fraley, then a doctoral student in Wirtz’s lab, was studying motility, but not in a Petri dish. She had become curious about the possibly distorting effects of the planar environment of the dish. What would happen if she placed cancer cells in something that more resembled human tissue? From a fibrosarcoma cell line called HT-1080, she took cells and inserted them in a gel prepared from collagen I, the protein that forms most connective tissue in the human body. The gel, formed in a cylindrical well, was only a few millimeters thick, but that was enough to constitute a three-dimensional environment for something as tiny as a cancer cell. Then Fraley watched what happened.

What she saw was startling. For one thing, the cells were no longer flat. They were more spherical, with long protrusions at each end that had not been observed in a dish. The proteins
that correlate with the metastatic potential of cancer cells and, in a dish, were located mostly on the bottom of the cell, now were diffuse throughout the cell. Focal adhesions barely existed. The cells did not crawl along in the laborious, erratic fashion observed in two dimensions, but moved rapidly through the 3-D environment by first extending protrusions fore and aft and anchoring them in the collagen matrix, then contracting like springs and releasing one protrusion to snap the cell in the opposite direction.

Fraley’s work suggested that much of how cells behaved in a Petri dish was an artifact of the 2-D environment. The cells moved as they did not because that’s how motility works in cancer cells but because the cells were in a dish. Put them in a 3-D environment and everything changed. To Wirtz, the implications were staggering. If cells in a 3-D matrix similar to cancer’s actual environment behave so differently from cells grown in a dish, then much of what scientists thought they knew about motility, which is central to metastasis, had to be reconsidered.

For decades, various cell biologists had been thinking about experiments using various extracellular matrices, or ECMs, because cancer cells move through the human body’s connective tissue, which is an ECM. As far back as 1980, a paper by three UCSF Medical Center researchers in the journal Cell noted that tumor cells “are more likely to resemble their in vivo counterparts when maintained on an extracellular matrix than on plastic.” A National Institutes of Health investigator, Kenneth M. Yamada, published an influential paper 21 years later in Science titled “Taking Cell-Matrix Adhesions to the Third Dimension.” It became the most-cited paper to date by Yamada, whom Google Scholar ranks second among all cell biologists in research citations. Wirtz, too, had been pondering the implications of working in three dimensions. Fraley’s results convinced him that 3-D was going to be transformative for cancer research. “Stephanie’s paper was the trick,” he says. “There was no turning back. You forget that in research sometimes the reason you are doing things [a certain way] is for convenience, not because it faithfully reproduces what we already know from studying cancer in vivo.” Scientists know how to work in a dish. Electron microscopy and other important research tools work well only in a dish. Vital sources of research dollars, like the National Institutes of Health, fund studies of cells in a dish. Pharmaceutical companies have developed sophisticated automated processes that screen cancer drugs by testing them on malignant cells—in a dish.

The Petri dish has influenced the fundamental direction of much cancer research, in Wirtz’s view. Because the two-dimensional environment of the dish lends itself much more to studying cancer cells’ explosive proliferation than motility, that’s what scientists have studied. Wirtz argues that the result has been a diversion from the vital study of how cancer cells migrate. Roger Kamm, another oft-cited researcher and a professor of biological and mechanical engineering at MIT, says, “I agree, and would go a little further. It’s not only migration that matters, but all steps in metastasis: epithelial-mesenchymal transition [vital to enabling cancer cell invasion], intravasation, extravasation. And all of these involve studies that cannot be done by standard cell culture techniques. The bottom line is that we now have excellent methods for controlling primary tumors, but have precious little knowledge about how to prevent cancer cells from spreading to remote sites.”

“Ninety-five percent of funding from the National Cancer Institute is about tumor shrinkage,” Wirtz says. “Why? Because we can see it! Because then everyone is happy! Pharmaceutical companies are happy, they’re selling stuff. The scientists are happy, they’re publishing, they’re getting funding. The patients are happy, for a while, until it doesn’t work.”

Wirtz adds, “We’ve obsessed about proliferation. The first statement in any textbook about cancer is that cancer is a disease of high proliferation. I say this is completely wrong! Completely wrong! We are discovering that often the very cells that successfully metastasize are those that proliferate the least. We’re not trained to think about metastasis because it’s harder. We have blinders to the point where we don’t even think about blinders.”
Wirtz is slender, boyish in appearance, bespectacled. When he gets excited, his accented English becomes emphatic and he uses his hands a lot. He has formidable instant command of detail when talking about his work, but says he is entirely reliant on his assistant, Tracy Smith, to keep him on schedule and tell him where he needs to go. His office and lab are in Croft Hall on the Homewood campus, and one day as he walked to a meeting for which he was already late, he had to ask for directions to Gilman Hall. Teased about this, he held up his hands and said, “I’ve only been here 18 years! How am I to know?”

He works in cancer cell biology but is not a biologist. “I’ve yet to take my first course in biology,” he says. His background is in physics, which he studied as an undergraduate at the Free University of Brussels. He says he picked that course of study because he thought physics afforded the best opportunity for graduate study in California, where he wanted to live for a while. “I figured I’d do that for a couple of years and then go back to Belgium and be a nuclear physicist, or something like that. I had no intent to stay in the U.S. or apply physics to biology. None of it.” He did indeed make it to California when he went to Stanford for a doctorate in classical physics. His PhD adviser, Gerald Fuller, steered him toward study of the long molecules known as polymers. Looking for polymers to investigate, he veered toward biology. “DNA, to me, was a polymer,” he says. “The laminate that makes up the nucleus was a bunch of polymers. I thought, ‘Wow, there are polymers everywhere! I’m going to have a fantastic time!’”

He studied physics at Stanford within the chemical engineering department because the university’s physics department was more oriented toward classical physics. When he found a job at Johns Hopkins, it was in chemical and biomolecular engineering. This provided a path into cancer biophysics and connections to Johns Hopkins oncologists, pathologists, and cancer cell biologists who, he says, put him on to the right questions to ask. “There’s a beautiful back-and-forth between biology and physics,” Wirtz says, though 10 years ago he could not have predicted that because physicists had been reluctant to dive into the complexity of cells. “They think there’s beauty in simplicity and bringing phenomena down to fundamental interactions and universal behavior.” Cells vary in such complex ways, universal behavior is hard to discern. To a biologist, there’s beauty in complexity; physicists took a different view, Wirtz says. “We hate the alphabet soup of proteins. We hate this diversity of cells. I don’t, I love it, but most engineers and physicists tend to be kind of pushed away from it. It’s too bad because physicists and engineers are the best trained to handle complexity and extract what really matters.”

Wirtz looks at cancer metastasis as a mechanistic process involving forces that engineers and physicists are well-equipped to study. For example, the extracellular matrix that cancer cells inhabit subjects them to confinement forces, especially as the cells proliferate and become more densely packed in the tumor. When cancer cells force their way through the walls of blood vessels to enter the bloodstream, that subjects them to more compression forces, as does the reverse process of the cells pushing out of the blood vessels into other organs or tissues. During their migration through the circulatory and lymph systems, the cells are subject to shear forces. All of that can be studied as physics and engineering. “Ask biologists what are the units of force, and they haven’t a clue,” Wirtz says. “They know what a force is of course, but they don’t know how to measure it.” Enter the physicists. Wirtz recalls attending meetings of the American Society for Cell Biology 10 or 15 years ago and finding two or three physicists like himself. Now when he attends he finds several hundred, he says, and more and more biologists who are learning physics.

Wirtz Lab currently has a dozen doctoral students and seven postdocs; among them are electrical engineers, biophysicists, biologists, and a physician. Wirtz has turned the focus of the lab entirely toward the study of cancer cells in 3-D, with what he describes as dramatic results. For example, when a tumor grows in a human body, the tissue around it tends to stiffen. Often this stiffening is what the fingers detect
Wirtz looks at cancer metastasis as a mechanistic process involving forces that engineers and physicists are well-equipped to study.
when someone first finds a lump that turns out to be a malignancy. “Cells in 2-D dishes tend to migrate toward stiffer surfaces,” Wirtz observes. “The cells have a sense of touch called mechanosensing, and cells on flat surfaces love to go from soft, pliant surfaces to a stiff surface. That’s called durotaxis.” But that poses a paradox: If cancer cells prefer stiffer surfaces, and tumors stiffen the tissue around them, why do the cells migrate to softer tissue in the body to form new tumors? Why don’t they stay in the stiff collagen capsule that is home? When Wirtz observed migration in three dimensions, cancer cells did the opposite of what they do in a dish: “Cells will tend to go to the softer part of a 3-D gel from the stiffer part. So what we had learned in 2-D does not translate in the 3-D case. Differences in stiffness might indeed promote metastasis by promoting cell migration, but a 2-D experiment will never show that.”

Much of the Wirtz Lab’s research in the last few years has been figuring out how to do its research. “Life is hard in 3-D,” Wirtz says. “Every measurement that we take for granted in 2-D, like how to measure the protein content of a cell, or protein activity, or protein localization, the shape of cells, cell motility—all of those become so much harder, if not impossible.” Conventional electron microscopy becomes impossible in three dimensions. To achieve high magnification and high resolution, you have to work at very short distances of under 1 millimeter. Comparable three-dimensional microscopy will require a lens that does not yet exist. With current technology, researchers can’t even locate the nucleus or mitochondria in 3-D. “It’s just a moving blob of light, basically,” Wirtz says. “We don’t have the subcellular resolution that we have come to take for granted in 2-D.”

He is especially interested in how malignant cells create and exploit pathways out of the original tumor site and through the body to secondary sites. The tissue matrix in which a tumor begins to form may feel soft and pliant to the touch, but at the cellular level it’s dense, and this density inhibits the proliferation and motility of cancer cells. But those cells somehow effect structural changes in the collagen. Ordinarily, within collagen are fibers that are evenly distributed with no favored orientation—they are every which way. Cancer cells aggregate the fibers and orient them into thick strands that Wirtz calls “freeways from the tumor to the blood vessels.” To travel these freeways, the malignant cells must still get through the dense collagen matrix. So they secrete enzymes that have no effect on the fibers but digest the surrounding collagen, clearing the way. It’s as if the cancer cells were hiking through a jungle, and to follow the path at their feet, they hack through the dense jungle growth. All of this needs to be studied in three dimensions, Wirtz says, because none of it happens when cells are grown in a Petri dish.

When the topic moves to drug screening in 2-D environments, he says, “Before drugs are tested in clinical trials, the way pharmaceutical companies identify new compounds is to develop thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of compounds, and then subject cancer cells to them in dishes to see how proliferation is affected. But that’s presuming the 2-D case is somewhat relevant to cell proliferation in 3-D.” This brings him to the example of paclitaxel, a chemotherapy drug marketed as Taxol. Tested on cells in dishes, it was found to have little effect on motility, but some ability to inhibit cell division when applied in high doses. So it has been used to treat ovarian, breast, and lung cancers for 50 years. Test paclitaxel on cells in a 3-D matrix, Wirtz says, and you get much-different results. In 3-D, the drug has little effect on tumor growth but does inhibit migration. These results, Wirtz argues, suggest that the drug should be rethought. Stop using high dosages in an often futile attempt to stop growth of the primary tumor, and start using more targeted dosages to inhibit metastasis while the primary tumor is attacked by better weapons.

Wirtz says, “When you do a conventional drug screen, you end up with maybe 10 candidate drugs that are really the big killers of cancer cells in 2-D. All right. Then you move on into years of development not only to produce this in large quantities but do clinical trials in mice, blah blah blah.” Next are hugely expensive human trials. “Then eventually most of the drugs fail. So there is all that lost development cost, based on that very first promising 2-D
A 2-D screen that, perhaps, could not produce meaningful results because the dish imposes so many changes on cell morphology and behavior. Conversely, a bad outcome in a 2-D experiment could lead to rejection of a drug that actually might be found to halt metastasis when tested on cancer in three dimensions. Wirtz believes many drugs abandoned after failed Petri dish tests should be revived and tested again in 3-D matrices. There might already be something out there that can stop a prostate or breast tumor from exploding throughout the body.

Wirtz is moving full speed ahead on his conviction that three-dimensional matrices are essential to cancer cell biology. He is not alone in this conviction. Donald E. Ingber of the Wyss Institute at Harvard wrote in the journal *Trends in Cell Biology* that 3-D microenvironments still require validation but “could have profound effects on drug discovery and environmental toxicology testing.” (Ingber has been working on a marriage of microbiology and microtechnology to produce more sophisticated matrices he calls organs-on-chips.) Kenneth Yamada continues to work on and extol the value of 3-D matrices. At Johns Hopkins, a number of researchers are engaged with Wirtz on various research collaborations. Winston Timp, an assistant professor of biomedical engineering in the Whiting School, says, “It is vastly underestimated how important this is, especially when it comes to motility. A 3-D microenvironment lets us bridge this gap between information we have from 2-D and the animal or human model. The more we can do in an *in vitro* environment faster and more effectively, the more we’ll be able to get to better drugs to help human health, better screening that identifies diseases, and more information for plumbing the unknown in biology.”

Various researchers point out how much more complicated the science becomes when you add the third dimension. “The beauty of the Petri dish is that it is a reductionist approach,” Timp says. “It’s easy to do and you get results which make sense. When you move stuff to three dimensions, everything becomes a lot more complicated.” Technology and protocols relied on for many years no longer work well. The number of variables that need to be controlled for in 3-D scales up fast. And while some commercially available 3-D matrices now in use greatly improve on the dish, they remain a long way from replicating the remarkable complexity of actual human tissue (though some research groups are getting closer, Timp says). Stephanie Fraley, now a postdoctoral research fellow in the School of Medicine, further cautions that collagen gels and other experimental matrices may create artifacts of their own that distort observations and research results. And a model will always just be a model. As John Isaacs, a professor of oncology and cancer biology in the School of Medicine, says, “I have always lived by the belief that ‘a model is a lie which can tell you a lot about the truth.’”

Timp, for one, isn’t ready to toss out every Petri dish in the lab. “It makes sense to do the easiest experiment you can that will give you the information you want,” he says. “So sometimes there’s value in doing things in 2-D first. That said, validation in a 3-D environment is still a vital confirmation that the 2-D experiment is real.” Then he laughs and adds, “You have to avoid the tendency to do the shiniest experiment. Because 3-D is cool, there’s no question about it. It’s incredibly cool.”

Scientists commonly face a fundamental dilemma that Wirtz cites in talking about cancer cell biology: There is what can be measured, but then there is what should be measured. Andrew J. Ewald, an assistant professor of cell biology and oncology in the School of Medicine, says, “I think Dr. Wirtz is exactly right when he says that scientists do what they can get funding to do, and that enough biology is turning out differently in 3-D tissues than in 2-D Petri dishes [to indicate] we have to revisit a large fraction of our existing conclusions. The challenge for funding is that this often means proposing to retest existing models and hypotheses, something study sections [that review grant applications] are loath to do.”

Wirtz says, “I am not in the business of wanting to prove people wrong. We are not in the business of dismantling knowledge. But here we are, years into it, discovering again and again how many things we took for granted.”

Dale Keiger, A&S ’11 (MLA), is the magazine’s associate editor.
What Hurts the Most

Palliative care addresses what curative treatment may not—pain, anxiety, fear, and the reluctance to talk about dying.

Daniel Siegel’s headaches first struck during martial arts practice. A second-degree black belt at kung fu and a straight-A student at Yale University, Siegel was a gregarious sophomore of keen intellect, the kind of kid whose teachers kept his assignments years after he’d moved on. By spring break, the headaches had become painful and persistent enough to warrant a visit to the doctor. The MRI diagnosis arrived as Siegel was studying for finals: He had a malignant brain tumor. His parents still struggle to comprehend it. “How can somebody like that get brain cancer at the age of 20?” says Everett Siegel, Daniel’s father. “This doesn’t happen. It happens in the news and you feel sorry for somebody. Until it happens to you.”

Siegel’s family was uniquely well situated to confront his illness. Both parents work for Johns Hopkins Medicine. His mother, Janet Berg, is an instructor in Community-Public Health at the School of Nursing, and his father is a psychiatrist and assistant professor at the School of Medicine. They knew how to navigate the medical system and had personal relationships with many of the people in it, including neurosurgeons and oncologists. “We knew people, we knew how to get what we wanted, and people cared,” Berg says. Daniel was also an intensely proactive patient. Declaring “humor, optimism, and...
While modern medicine has extended lives far beyond what was once thought possible, the field has not attended so well to the quality of those lives.

dignity” his guiding principles, he spent hours combing through listservs and academic journals, looking for new brain cancer treatments and corresponding with researchers and clinicians in Europe, Canada, and the West Coast. Over the course of his illness, the family sought opinions from experts at institutions besides Johns Hopkins, including the National Institutes of Health, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Duke Cancer Institute, and Children’s National Medical Center. Whenever possible, they sought outpatient treatment, to minimize Daniel’s time in the hospital.

But by the fall of 2010, it was clear that Daniel’s cancer was unstoppable. After several promising rounds of treatment, the disease returned with a vengeance. The family decided the treatments were causing needless suffering and turned their efforts toward making the best of Daniel’s last days. He had prepared a will and an advance directive; now he focused on saying goodbye to his many visitors. With the help of home hospice, Berg used her nursing skills to care for him, and his older sister, Leigh, tracked his myriad medications with an Excel spreadsheet. They retained their sense of humor even then. Everett recounts one typical conversation: “I was talking to [Daniel] and he said, ‘I want to be remembered.’ And I said, ‘Dan, I’ll always remember you, till the day I die.’ And he said, ‘What happens when you go senile?’” Siegel laughs. “That was just Dan.”

Hospice helped manage Siegel’s pain and provided a hospital bed so he could be downstairs in the family room. As the hour of his death drew near, Berg drew on her professional experience to help her family cope. For more than a decade prior to her son’s diagnosis, she had taught a course at the School of Nursing titled Dying and Death: Personal and Professional Perspectives.

On November 27, 2010, Daniel Siegel died at home, surrounded by family. His early death will forever be the defining tragedy of his loved ones’ lives. But his parents take comfort from the foundation they formed in his honor and the fact that throughout his illness they managed to honor their son’s wishes, maintaining humor, optimism, and—perhaps above all—dignity.

Should a serious condition like brain cancer strike, anyone might hope for the emotional and logistical support Siegel and his family had, if not the eventual outcome. But the Siegels had advantages few can claim: a close-knit family and community, deep familiarity with the medical system, personal connections within that system, financial stability, nursing expertise, even a background in end-of-life matters. As a result, their experience was very much the exception.

Some 90 million Americans currently have serious and life-threatening illnesses, according to the Center to Advance Palliative Care, and that number is expected to more than double over the next 25 years as the baby boomers age. While modern medicine has extended lives far beyond what was once thought possible, the field has not attended so well to the quality of those lives. For a host of cultural and financial reasons, the default approach of the medical system has become the aggressive treatment of disease, sometimes at the expense of the patient. Chronic illness and its treatment come with side effects ranging from anxiety and family discord to delirium, nausea, and pain, problems that studies indicate are often not adequately addressed. For example, a panel of experts convened by the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine recently released a damning report on cancer care in the United States. Calling it a “system in crisis,” the researchers found that care is frequently fragmented, treatment is often not based on the latest research, and patients do not routinely receive help in managing their symptoms and the side effects of treatment. Surveys show that the vast majority of Americans would prefer to die at home, as Daniel Siegel did, yet less than a third do. Most of us end our lives in a hospital or nursing home, and a fifth of us breathe our last in intensive care, often after a series of traumatic, futile procedures.

Palliative care is a relatively new field of medicine designed to counter these trends. The goal is to make every patient and family’s experience of serious illness—regardless of whether they survive—more like Siegel’s, one in which the multidimensional nature of suffering is recognized and addressed. Palliative care nurses and physicians undergo special training in managing symptoms, but the key to their approach is an emphasis on communication with and among the patient, family, and medical team. A variety of individuals make up a typical palliative care team, including
doctors, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, and chaplains. Palliative care can be part of the entire trajectory of a patient’s illness, even while he is still receiving curative treatment. Hospice, with which palliative care is often confused, is meant specifically for those with a terminal condition who are no longer undergoing such treatment. (The Medicare hospice benefit—which only kicks in during the last six months of a patient’s life and does not pay for curative treatment—has made the distinction important.)

Palliative care became an official medical specialty in 2006. Just over a decade ago, very few American hospitals had programs. Now, 66 percent of those with more than 50 beds do; for large hospitals that figure is more than 85 percent, and a number of academic medical centers devote extensive programming and research to it.

Johns Hopkins was not an early adopter. Terry Langbaum, chief administrative officer at the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center and an early champion for palliative care, says that for many years, Johns Hopkins was “sort of nipping at the edges” of a palliative care program. Small, primarily nurse-run programs existed in isolated pockets, including within the Cancer Center, the Children’s Center, and the Department of Medicine. “Even though we were very pleased with what those few people were doing, we knew that was not what this type of institution should be calling a palliative care program,” Langbaum says.

It took a decade of persuasion on the part of Langbaum and other advocates, but in 2011, Johns Hopkins Medicine took a big leap forward by bringing on its first director of palliative care, Thomas Smith, now also a professor in the School of Medicine. One of the most renowned palliative care doctors in the country, Smith previously ran a program at the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center. Board certified in internal medicine and medical oncology as well as hospice, he has a gentle, diplomatic manner and the drive of a long-distance runner, which he is. If anyone is likely to make palliative care the norm at Johns Hopkins, it is Smith. But that’s a challenge that makes the 50-mile trail run in the Blue Ridge Mountains he recently completed seem like a Turkey Trot. As he and other palliative care professionals minister to individual patients with a wide range of problems, they also are grappling with a system in which providers are rewarded more for aggressive treatment. And then there’s that other, much more formidable beast: our culture’s strong reluctance to talk about death.

Marburg 3, Johns Hopkins’ new inpatient palliative care unit, initially feels more like a hotel than a place for the sick. With its hardwood floors, comfortable private suites, and waiters in uniform, the ward is a world away from the hectic intensive care unit, from which some patients are transferred. Marburg 3, which opened in March, only has six beds, but Smith hopes to double that number in the next year or two. The team also visits patients throughout the hospital, conducting 1,000-plus consults a year. And some of these are with patients who, though seriously ill, are nowhere near the end of life. For example, the team holds preparedness planning meetings with many patients receiving ventricular assist devices, mechanical pumps that support heart function (generally in people awaiting heart transplants).

A recent workday began at 8:30 a.m. in a small kitchen off the nurses station. On this particular morning, Smith, the attending palliative care physician, was joined by the chaplain, several nurses, a fellow, and a resident. He passed around a chart. On it were listed the patients in each room, their medical histories, medications, care plans, and problems ranging from thrush to “refusing OOB”—refusing to get out of bed. The discussion that ensued was a rapid-fire exchange peppered with the jargon of medical conditions and pharmaceuticals. Interspersed was talk of other matters, the messy, human sort no drug can cure, such as family members unable to agree on the path forward.

“It’s hard,” Smith said. “When you get families where everybody’s not on the same page, the default in most of U.S. health care is to leave them where they are, invest as little time and effort and angst personally as you can, let them deal with it, and when she dies, she dies. I think it would be wonderful if we got them to some shared moments together to say, ‘I love you. I forgive you.’”

Down the hall, an unflappable woman in her 70s with advanced pancreatic cancer welcomed the team into her room. She sat in a reclining chair
next to her bed, her hair in a neat bun. She lifted her hospital gown and pointed to a tube protruding from an incision on her abdomen. “Oh boy, they pulled out a lot of fluid yesterday,” she said.

“Yes, I think it was 11 quarts of fluid,” Smith said. “We took some of the pressure off your stomach so you’re not 13 months pregnant all the time.” He knelt by her chair and patted her hand. “What bothers you the most?” he asked. There followed what by many physicians’ time-strapped standards may seem a rambling conversation. Smith asked about nausea, bowel troubles, anxiety, and other symptoms. He learned that the patient’s great-grandson was coming to visit soon, and that she hoped to be out of the hospital by then. There were long moments of companionable silence. After one such pause, Smith asked, “Have you talked with your cancer doctors about what’s likely to happen in the future?”

“I don’t know what they’re saying,” the woman said. “Some I can understand and some I don’t.”

“Mm-hmm,” Smith replied. “And what’s your understanding right now?”

“As long as my two daughters hear what’s going on,” she said. “If the doctors tell me something, I like them to be here so they can know, too.” Smith nodded, promised to get a nurse to bring the pain and nausea medication she had requested, and the conversation drew to a close. Once out of earshot, he said the patient likely had a month or two to live, at most. “I was just sort of nibbling around the edges to find out how much she wanted to know,” he said. “And she wanted her daughters to be there. I really don’t want to bludgeon people with information they don’t want.”

Doctors, nurses, and members of religious orders have been attending to their patients’ physical, emotional, and spiritual comfort for hundreds of years. Even now, many people who have never heard the term “palliative care” nevertheless provide it. But over the last few decades, new pressures—including life-extending medical advances and ever more precise degrees of specialization—have helped fuel the need for a formal discipline.

The field has its roots in hospice, which first came to this country from Europe in 1974. Not long after, some doctors and nurses began talking about moving the tenets of hospice upstream to patients who were very ill but not on death’s door. Smith was part of what he calls the “lunatic fringe” in oncology that promoted palliative care in those early days. “We said, why should you have to wait till the last couple of weeks of life to have your pain and depression and shortness of breath and existential angst addressed?”

By the late 1980s, several pioneering institutions, like the Cleveland Clinic, had started palliative care programs. The field gained steam over ensuing decades and is now, at least conceptually, nearly mainstream. A critical juncture came in 2010, when The New England Journal of Medicine published a study by Massachusetts General Hospital oncologist Jennifer Temel. The study showed that terminal lung cancer patients who received palliative care alongside curative treatment had a better quality of life and lived nearly three months longer than those who received no palliative care. This is despite the fact that they were less likely to opt for aggressive end-of-life care. Given the results of this study and others, the American Society of Clinical Oncology recently recommended that all patients with metastatic cancer receive palliative care early in the course of treatment. A number of studies also indicate that palliative care may help curb expenses. Twenty-five percent of Medicare payments go to patients in their last year of life, and patients who receive palliative care appear more likely to receive hospice referrals and spend less time in intensive care.

In the context of this gathering momentum, Johns Hopkins has committed more fully to palliative care, beyond the hiring of a director. For the last few years, a cross-departmental Nurse Palliative Care Committee has helped spread the gospel on an organizational level. In the education realm, the fellowship program recently received funds to expand; a two-day course on palliative care for all Johns Hopkins nurses is now offered twice a year, and all medical students spend four days concentrating on palliative care and end-of-life issues. Last summer, Patricia Davidson, a researcher in chronic cardiovascular disease and palliative care, became the School of Nursing’s dean-designate. She says she considers palliative care “a core competency” and plans to adjust the curriculum accordingly.

But palliative care advocates have been plumbing along within the institution for years. In
“When you get families where everybody’s not on the same page, the default in most of U.S. health care is to leave them where they are, invest as little time and effort and angst personally as you can, let them deal with it, and when she dies, she dies.”

Thomas Smith
2000, clinical nurse specialist Rita Moldovan became essentially a consult service of one in a 1,000-bed hospital. Few clinicians had a clear understanding of palliative care in those early days. “That first year, I was called by a nurse to look in on a patient with pancreatic cancer,” Moldovan says. “Her physician met me at the door and said, ‘Oh, palliative care, she’s not ready for that.’ And the patient died two days later. That happened often.”

The year 2000 also saw the launch of the Harriet Lane Compassionate Care pediatric palliative care program at the Children’s Center. Cynda Hylton Rushton, a professor in the School of Nursing and the Berman Institute of Bioethics as well as an internationally recognized expert in palliative care and ethics, says it formed out of an initiative looking into how the center was taking care of dying children. “What we learned was that the staff had some real concerns that we were not doing as well as we could in terms of managing their pain, in terms of talking about issues that were important.” Some of the staff felt unprepared to handle certain intractable symptoms, Rushton says, as well as the complex clinical and ethical situations that can arise when children are living with life-threatening illnesses. For example, families with a dying child sometimes feel they are protecting the child by not telling him the truth. “One of the most heartbreaking things is that children know, and often what they will do is engage in a mutual pretense to protect their parents,” Rushton says. As a result, they are alone with their worries. “One of my patients wanted to plan his own funeral. He had things he wanted to do,” she says. “But if nobody will let him talk about it, what do you do?”

Perceptions of palliative care within the institution have gotten better, according to Moldovan. But for some, the term still evokes the grim reaper. Lynn Billing is nurse coordinator for the Harry J. Duffey Family Pain and Palliative Care Program at the Kimmel Cancer Center, which formed in 2007. She says, “A lot of times, we’ll have that initial, ‘Hello, we’re from palliative care,’ and you see this”—she mimics a patient drawing back in horror—“and we’ll say, ‘Don’t worry, we’re just here to talk about how you’re feeling. We’re not going to talk about anything you don’t want to talk about.’

The Duffey program grew out of an existing service that focused exclusively on pain. Named for the husband of a philanthropist who funded the program, the team consists of Billing, a nurse practitioner, two part-time pharmacists, and a part-time physician. Cancer Center social workers collaborate with the team, as does a chaplain. The team sees between five and 10 patients a day, usually at the request of the medical team, though anyone—including a patient—can request their services. End-of-life discussions are rarely the reason the team is called in, but they frequently happen organically. This is partly because the team members have more time to dedicate to each patient than do other physicians and nurses, Billing says. “Palliative care traditionally is designed so we’re able to sit down—and that’s very important, the part about sitting down—and have conversations,” Billing says. “We hear a lot: ‘You’re the first person who’s really listening to what I’m saying.’”

Nurse practitioner Catherine Saiki has a particularly personal stake in her chosen field. In 2008, she lost her partner of 13 years to breast cancer. A member of the Cancer Center’s palliative care team since last summer, Saiki is grateful for the manner of her partner’s passing. After eight years of difficult treatment, much of it palliative, she died peacefully at home, with the support of hospice. “I feel like Deb’s death was the closest thing to a miracle that I’ve ever been a part of,” Saiki says. “It doesn’t have to happen the way it’s happening right now.”

Saiki was recently consulted to help a patient with very advanced lung cancer who was experiencing shortness of breath. After suggesting a remedy to her medical team, Saiki stayed to talk with the patient. She learned that the patient was hoping she’d be strong enough to go through another round of chemotherapy, but the treatments she’d already undergone had taken a severe toll. Saiki suggested that hope did not only have to be about survival. “Can you share some of that hope with hoping for a good death?” Saiki says she asked the patient. “To be able to imagine what a good death might be like, in addition to imagining what another six months might look like? They’re not mutually exclusive.”

“The patient looked at me sort of quizzically,” Saiki says, “and said, ‘A good death? What is a good death?’”
It’s a question that rarely comes up in the course of medical treatment. Instead, death often comes at the bitter end of an exhausting succession of increasingly futile procedures. In the absence of other cues—such as advance directives—the default is what surgeon and journalist Atul Gawande has called “the seemingly unstoppable momentum of medical treatment.” In his book The Better End: Surviving (and Dying) on Your Own Terms in Today’s Modern Medical World (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011) emergency room doctor Dan Morhaim, a Maryland state delegate and adjunct professor at the Bloomberg School, describes giving CPR to a frail 90-year-old with dementia whose end-of-life wishes were unknown. “Sometimes, when doing CPR, you can feel the ribs snap and crack and then crunch on each succeeding chest compression,” he writes.

Tens of thousands of people undergo CPR in a given year, including many with life-threatening illnesses, yet survival rates for the latter group are extremely low. “They’re abysmal,” says Moldovan. “But patients don’t know that.” As part of her work, she sometimes shares survival statistics related to procedures like CPR with patients and families.

Some of the push for ever more interventions is influenced by what Smith calls “our deep and abiding desire not to be dead.” But he also blames doctors. In a 2012 study of nearly 1,200 patients in The New England Journal of Medicine, 69 percent of those with advanced lung cancer thought that it was at least somewhat likely that chemotherapy could cure their cancer. For patients with advanced colorectal cancer, that number was 81 percent. Chemotherapy at such late stages may prolong life for weeks or months but is not at all likely to cure the cancer. These false beliefs about the effectiveness of chemotherapy, the authors concluded in part, “suggest the need for targeted education to help all physicians learn to communicate honestly.” Smith agrees that physicians are not always good at giving clear prognoses, especially when the odds aren’t good. “It’s really hard looking another human being in the eye and saying, ‘I’m sorry, but there’s nothing medical science can do to make you live longer,’” he says.

To some doctors, ceasing curative treatment can feel like giving up. “One of the defining features of a good physician is clinical competence,” says Rushton. “So if you think that when your patient dies, it’s a reflection of your competence, it’s hard to go down that road.” Medicare also compensates doctors much more for medical procedures than it does for conversations, which—especially when they concern end-of-life matters—can be lengthy. A modest attempt to remedy this led to the furor over “death panels” in the years leading up to the Affordable Care Act.

But, advocates say, when providers fail to initiate end-of-life conversations, they are robbing their patients of the chance to tie up loose ends and make a variety of decisions that could ease their passage and decrease the burden on their families. These include logistical considerations—naming a guardian for children who might be orphaned, drawing up a will, filling out an advance directive—as well as more intangible matters related to one’s legacy. “How do you want to be remembered?” Smith asks. “Now is a good time to write notes to people, to keep a journal, to find that box of Polaroids from the 1960s that you might be the only person who knows who those folks are.”

It is only after watching a loved one undergo a harrowing series of treatments, cycling in and out of intensive care, that many families discover there is something worse than losing someone you love. There’s having someone you love die after prolonged, needless suffering. When seriously ill patients and their families have the opportunity to discuss the implications of a prognosis in-depth, sometimes they choose a different path.

Saiki’s lung cancer patient had not discussed with her family the likelihood that she would not survive. “She said that every time she brought it up with her kids they would sort of push it aside: Mom, don’t talk like that. You’re not gonna die,” Saiki says. “Of course, they’re trying to protect her and she’s trying to protect them.” But as Saiki and the patient were talking, the patient’s husband came into the room. “[The patient] said, ‘We were just talking about where it is that I want to die.’ And he said, ‘And where is that?’”

It was the first time the patient and her husband had been able to plan for the possibility of her death, and to cry about it together. The next day, they decided to sign up for home hospice and let the disease take its course.

Andrea Appleton is a Baltimore-based freelance writer.
### Sree Lakshmi Productions

**Malaikkottai**

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Anand Pandian, an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology, was sitting with a crew of young filmmakers as they bemoaned that perennial fate of young filmmakers: too many ideas, not enough money. It was 2009, and the film they were working on was being directed by Mysskin, an up-and-coming filmmaker who named himself after the prince in Dostoyevsky’s *The Idiot*. The director’s first film had yet to be released, and he wouldn’t get paid until it did. He barely had enough money to keep his new project going.

“They were almost out of money, and there was this conversation about needing to get an office,” Pandian, a youthful 40-year-old, recalls with a chuckle.

Pandian couldn’t stay for the rest of the day. He had to get home to look after his 6-month-old son. His wife, Sanchita Balachandran, a lecturer in the Department of Near Eastern Studies and curator/conservator of the Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum, had a Fulbright grant to study metals conservation in India, and they took turns watching over their son.
Tamil films had Southern Indian villagers as protagonists and focused on the ordinary lives of middle-class or lower-middle-class people.

while the other worked. He left the crew to their work midday on a Saturday.

Pandian had traveled from Baltimore to India specifically to follow the making of Mysskin’s film from beginning to end, and he was imagining that research being a key piece of his fieldwork for his latest book project. And though the film had barely gotten off the ground, Pandian felt a deep investment in the project as part of his ongoing research. Graduate school had taken Pandian to Tamil Nadu, the southern Indian state from which his family hails, from 2000 to 2002. Prior to that, he had spent a post-undergraduate year doing volunteer environmental work in the region, studying rural agriculture and development. He considered continuing that research for his dissertation but found himself more drawn to studying agrarian life, trying to understand how people develop a sense of right and wrong with respect to each other and their natural environment.

Movies, he had noticed, permeated these relationships. “There were all these little things that underscored for me the inescapable importance of cinema,” Pandian says. “You’d be hanging out with people at a stall, just having tea, and there’d be this endless chain of film songs that were playing and people would use them to make sense of an election or what happened last night or the way this boy ran off with that girl.” Movie allusions— their characters, storylines, songs—were the currency of everyday life. Pandian wanted to know how movies did that, how they seeped into people’s minds so much that they were part of how they understood the world. He figured watching how filmmakers work might provide some insight into that, which is what brought him back to India this time around.

Indian cinema is a mammoth industry largely ignored by American audiences and film journalists and scholars. In 2011 the Motion Picture Association of America, which provides ratings to movies for commercial release, rated 758 movies. That same year its Indian counterpart, the Central Board of Film Certification, certified ratings for 1,255 movies in nine languages, and Indian movies accounted for 90 percent of Indian ticket sales. Tamil cinema is a robust part of that industry—of those 1,255 movies, 185 were Tamil, the third highest after Hindi (206) and Telugu (192). Pandian was interested in a specific subset of Tamil films: the “cinema of the countryside,” as he calls the genre, that emerged in the late 1970s. These movies had southern Indian villagers as protagonists and focused on the ordinary lives of middle-class or lower-middle-class people. Pandian wanted to know what went into creating these stories that people used to shape their lives.

When Pandian returned to the film crew after the weekend, Mysskin pulled him aside and confided, Something amazing had happened. On Sunday night, a very famous, very popular Tamil actor saw his unreleased movie and fell in love with it. He wanted to work with Mysskin—immediately. Mysskin found himself in the unbelievable position of being invited to work with a superstar, but it meant abandoning his current project. “At that point, I couldn’t stay on,” Pandian remembers. “I had a baby, I was an untenured professor, I can’t jump ship to try to follow this other larger project. It just seemed impractical.”

It threw his research a curveball. He ended up hooking up with a different film crew for a different project for a spell. Then another. Then another. “I decided to cobble together something, doing a little fieldwork here, a little fieldwork there,” he says. In all, Pandian worked with 17 film projects at different production stages over six years.

This is not usually the way anthropologists conduct their fieldwork. Anthropologists typically conduct studies of a people, a place, a culture. The resulting ethnography is a narrative of a specific experience had by the fieldworker. In a 1998 New York Review of Books essay, anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously borrowed James Clifford’s expression for the anthropological endeavor: deep hanging out.

“We conventionally think of fieldwork as an immersion into some other rhythm of life,” Pandian explains. “At first you’re unsettled, you don’t know what’s going on, you don’t know the language, you don’t know the people, you’re at a loss. But then you slip in. People begin to say, ‘Do this, sleep there.’ And gradually you’re in a rhythm; you become part of something, and in the end there’s a tearful goodbye when you have to leave. And then that something becomes further and further away from you and you long for it and that mood—that you want to be there but you’re not—infiltrates the writing. That [process]
has something to do with the melancholy quality of a lot of anthropological writing."

Anybody who has ever spent time on a film set knows that filmmaking can run from chaotic to mind-numbingly boring, from waiting all day for something to happen to shooting for hours into the night. Its rhythms of life are dependent on too many different variables—clashing personalities, the availability of daylight—to become a regular pattern.

“What if [the fieldwork] doesn’t have that consistency to begin with?” Pandian asks. “What if it’s more radically open-ended than that? What if the people in it don’t themselves know what tomorrow or the afternoon or the next hour may bring? I feel like I had to rethread the elements of my being to actually be able to move with things as these filmmakers were moving with them.”

He’s not being dramatic. His fieldwork experience affected him—not only because he needed to acclimate to filmmakers’ arrhythmic lifestyles. It changed how he thought about experience itself, about how people navigate and understand the world. Like a novelist or painter finding his voice in his medium after a decade of working or a scientist whose experiments lead him to pursue something unexpected, the social scientist shapes and hones his ideas throughout his career. What he’s learned in the classroom gets challenged, rethought, and reconsidered by what he learns in the field.

Pandian’s fieldwork, and the book project it supported, brought him to that nexus with his own ideas—about what anthropology can do, about how ethnographies should be written, about what other cultures can teach us about how we create. What started as an effort to understand Tamil film grew into a multipart investigation of the filmmaking process that he hopes will shed light on human creativity.

Currently titled *The Reel World: An Anthropology of Creation*, Pandian’s book has become a meditation on what he calls life’s “radical uncertainty,” a slipperiness that he believes isn’t unique to filmmaking. “How do you live with the not knowing of where a sound will take you?” Pandian asks. “How do you live with the not knowing where a rhythm as it changes over time will take you? I came to see that there is a way of living with not knowing what these filmmakers were actually doing.”

If that sounds like an ambitious goal for a book, it is. *Reel World* is trying to do many things at once, and it’s difficult to gauge just how successfully it does that after reading only a few of its episodic chapters. Pandian hopes to send the manuscript out to publishers in the spring for publication in the next two years.

In September, he was still fine-tuning chapters and organizing the entire book. Getting up from a chair in his office, Pandian walks over to the scanner by his desk while explaining that his final chapter discusses the role of point of view in how we understand the observable world. He opens the scanner and returns with a sheet of paper, placing it on the table in front of him. It’s a very crude drawing: a series of boxy, triangular shapes that run around a rectangular in the middle of the page.

“I will begin the chapter with this picture that my son drew when he was 3 and a half,” he says. He points to the series of triangular shapes. “I know this is how he draws ships, but this is not [a drawing of] six pirate ships. This is one pirate ship.” He laughs. “When I look at this, I think of Muybridge,” he continues, alluding to Eadweard Muybridge, the 19th-century British photographer who used a series of cameras to study human and animal locomotion. “I see frames. I see stop motion. Why is a 3-year-old doing this?”

For Pandian, that’s a variation of the nature or nurture question: Do people create imagery that looks like movies because we live in a television-era, or do movies look they way they do because that’s how we process our sensory experiences? That’s an epistemological question burdened with mystical overtones, a leitmotif that runs through *Reel World*. In the introduction, Pandian recounts a Tamil invocation he heard during his fieldwork at the start of a new film project (translation Pandian’s):

*O godscreen, who we call cinema! We bow first to you!*

Deifying movies and their celebrities isn’t unique to Indian cinema, but when fans are “mad for film, as we would say in Tamil,” Pandian says, it’s a passion that approaches the religious. Pandian doesn’t consider himself a member of any cinematic congregation, despite
“When we think about the problem of modernity and nature, I think one of the biggest difficulties that we have is finding a way beyond a mood of melancholy, this sense that what we needed was once there and is there no longer.”

Anand Pandian

growing up close to America’s dream factory, Hollywood. The son of an Indian cardiologist who came to work in the United States in the 1970s, Pandian was born in the U.S. but started elementary school in India. His family eventually returned to the States and settled in the Los Angeles area by the time Pandian was 7 years old. His first exposure to Indian cinema came via screenings put together by the expatriate community. A relative of his owned a theater in Madras—also known as Chennai, Tamil Nadu’s capital—and during visits, Pandian and his family would be given special seats in the balcony. “And if we came late, after the film was over they would replay the beginning for us,” Pandian says. “So there was a certain element of going to India being about seeing at least a film or two.”

Pandian mentions his cursory early experiences with cinema to position himself as an anthropologist studying filmmakers, not a devout film scholar. *Reel World* isn’t the typical scholarly film book—an examination of a director’s oeuvre, a genre overview, a detailed study of a single film, a look at a cinematic generation, an overview of film theory, or a collection of criticism. In fact, Pandian doesn’t particularly care for the movies he studied. “I can’t stand them actually,” he says. “They convey a certain kind of masculine aggression and violence that I find really troubling.”

What initially sparked his interest in these films was observing how they became entangled in their audience’s consciousness. He first noticed it during his dissertation fieldwork, and an anecdote from that time period opens *Reel World*. In 2001, Pandian had traveled to Cumbum Valley in Tamil Nadu, where the Piramalai Kallars people live. “Kallar” is the Tamil word for “thief” or “deceitful person,” and the British government designated these people a “criminal tribe” from 1918 until a little before the 1947 independence. One morning, Pandian was walking through a field toward a farmer named Longandurai, who started singing while working in the field. The song he sang came from a Tamil movie released 14 years earlier, in which a woman farmer was engaged in a similar activity. Longandurai quoted the movie, equating his experience in the field with hers in the film, and how and why that happened has demanded Pandian’s attention ever since.

*Reel World* began as a study of “the rise and fall of these representations of the countryside and whatever that might have done to the way people lived in such places,” Pandian says. But his filmmaking fieldwork led him to see parallels between farmers’ relationship with their work, farmland, and filmmakers’ relationship with their work, which Pandian qualifies as the observable world.

In conversation, Pandian says the relationship a person and people have with the world at large is an idea that has popped up throughout his academic career, which actually started in environmental activism. He studied environmental sciences as an undergrad, earning a degree in political ecology and migrating to anthropology in graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley. He was dissatisfied with the way environmental studies frames and explores its issues.

“When we think about the problem of modernity and nature, I think one of the biggest difficulties that we have is finding a way beyond a mood of melancholy, this sense that what we needed was once there and is there no longer,” Pandian says. “That mood pervades contemporary environmentalism. I have it. Anyone who has children, who cares about the world that they may inherit from us, has it. It’s very difficult to shake.”

“But I think that melancholy isn’t enough to go on,” he continues. “We can’t live in the world if our living in the world amounts to nothing more than a kind of hanging on to what it might have been like before we got here. And yet, that is all that environmentalism is giving us.”

Pandian turned to anthropology to understand other ways of framing the relationship between people and the world. In the Cumbum Valley among the Piramalai Kallars, he encountered “circumstances in which the cultivation of the soil may be taken to sustain a cultivated life,” as he writes in his first book, *Crooked Stalks: Cultivating Virtue in South India*. Here was a place where Pandian observed people who didn’t see the natural world through this melancholic lens. Instead, “cultivation” became to Pandian a metaphor for a twofold enterprise: work that improves the self and the land. “We may be accustomed to thinking of the countryside as the signature realm
of backwardness and inertia, as an idle space that can and must be overcome by forces of transformation always assumed to arrive from somewhere else,” Pandian writes in Stalks. He found, however, that “the rural citizen confronts the present as heir to an agrarian tradition of moral cultivation—as a subject of ongoing development rather than an antagonist to change.”

With Stalks, published in 2009, Pandian produced a slightly unconventional ethnography. Yes, it is a detailed account of one population, the Piramalai Kallars, and places them in a historical framework of southern India, but it is also deeply concerned with what it means to be a good person—both to the Piramalai Kallars and in general. It’s an academic text written with a novelist’s attention to narrative, and in it, Pandian doesn’t offer instructions on how to lead a good life as much as encourage the reader to wonder how his or her own moral sense came about.

Among the Piramalai Kallars in southern India, Pandian encountered people who create a moral code through a cultivation metaphor: The sense of self is tied up in the land. Among the filmmakers, Pandian encountered people who create a cinematic world through a collage of tangible and intangible things—sounds and images, yes, but arranged to trigger emotions such as fear, love, sadness, joy. These emotions aren’t exclusive to cinema; they’re the grist of ordinary life. As he acknowledges in Reel World’s introduction, what struck him about Longandurai singing was how seamlessly a cinematic allusion slipped into reality for the farmer. The thought caused him to recall how, growing up in LA in the early 1980s, he feared the bathroom faucet would spew blood—an image implanted in his mind by a Tamil film his parents took him to. What’s going on, he writes, “when the world begins to look and feel like film”? Cinema takes
reality and recasts it into a representation. But it can also provide insight into daily experiences. How it does that is what *Reel World* pursues, and in doing so Pandian believes he’s gaining some insight into understanding how what we do influences how we think.

On the last Tuesday afternoon in September, Pandian reads a chapter from *Reel World* as part of the Anthropology Department’s fall 2013 colloquium. He sits at the head of a seminar table surrounded by his anthropology peers and members of other departments, while undergraduate and graduate students fill the chairs around the room’s perimeter. The chapter Pandian reads, titled “Desire,” describes his fieldwork on a movie set during the shooting of a love scene.

It very quickly becomes clear that this isn’t going to be a conventional lecture. He reads with a breathless urgency, his words coming in nonstop waves. He describes how the director, Selvaraghavan, creates this scene involving actress Andrea Jeremiah and actor Dhanush, the director’s brother. He talks about how between takes, the actress reads from a François Truffaut book. He senses a degree of tension on the set that seems to have nothing to do with the movie. He says a cab driver tells him that the actress was rumored to be the cause of the director’s divorce. As he talks, his language becomes both more academic and more casual: He quotes French thinker Gilles Deleuze; he refers to Selvaraghavan with the diminutive Selva.

It’s a disorienting and expressionistic reading. Pandian wrote the chapter as a single sentence—the version he read at the colloquium contained 3,163 words. Ethnographic data isn’t usually presented with such panache, and academic colloquia don’t usually feel like a movie pitch. But Pandian believes that ethnographic writing should take on different forms if the material demands it.

For each chapter in *Reel World*, Pandian has written in a different style that explores an aspect of filmmaking—not the divisions of labor (acting, directing, editing, cinematography, etc.) but the more abstract, elemental components the filmmaking process brings together to create its onscreen world. His outline for *Reel World* contains 19 chapters with titles like “Space,” “Love,” “Desire,” “Time,” and “Sound.” The “Desire” chapter is written in the frenetic run-on, trying to tap into the impudent urges that charge that emotion. The “Sound” chapter includes text treatments that suggest musical rhythms and tempos, evoking the fugitive process of composers arranging notes and noises into a sequence that, when paired to images, so effortlessly produce an emotional response.

It’s an admittedly literary approach to writing, but for Pandian it’s not simply for the sake of creating artful prose. He’s trying to capture the moments of creation he observed, which didn’t feel like inspired moments originating from inside the artists’ minds but rather the artists acknowledging something already present. For the “Sound” chapter, for instance, Pandian spent time with a composer who was scoring a movie, a process he describes as an attempt to create the sound that he hears in his head. It’s a lurching process, Pandian in a studio as the composer tries out ideas, rhythms, an electric guitar part here, a keyboard there, listening to the lyrics, trying to divine what sounds are going to work. A chosen
bass line feels off. Some speakers need to be fixed. And then, Pandian writes, the song comes together in a 24-hour period. Pandian points out to the composer that he never talks about the song in terms of “I created this.” He says, “I got it,” as if he’s catching something that’s already there.

“It just came to me,” the composer tells Pandian in Reel World. “I’m sort of a messenger. It just flows through me.”

Pandian notes how frequently a variation of this expression came up with the filmmakers he followed, the idea of the creator merely being a vehicle to capture something already there. They talk about creating things not as a productive act but as harnessing something that already exists in the world.

That idea leads Pandian to think about what anthropological fieldwork can offer cognitive science. His fieldwork for Reel World “has led me to some basic questions about how we imagine the relationship between mind and world,” he says. “I think, through this project, I’ve become attracted to a certain kind of hypothetical or even mythical possibility: What if we approached the world as if it were the case that our minds were already out there [in the world] rather than somewhere at a distance [residing solely in the brain]? How would it change our understanding of the world if we imagined and acted as though our minds were already part of it?”

What he’s suggesting touches on some relatively recent theories in cognitive science. In Western philosophy, various theories of knowledge have been proposed from the Greeks through the Enlightenment, but they frequently rely on the supposition that the individual mind gains an understanding of the world through empirical processes: observations, perceptions, and sensations.

Since the middle of the 20th century cognitive scientists and psychologists have suggested more systems-based knowledge theories. “Some people speak of extended mind, some people speak of distributed cognition or embodied cognition,” Pandian says of these theories. “There is this interest in, OK, don’t reduce the mind to the brain. Think about the brain as networked in some larger experience.

“I feel like that is what happens when people make films,” he continues. “The whole world is part of a process of turning light into film. The whole world is part of a process of releasing sound. So the mind is everywhere and nowhere at once. I think that’s actually important. I think that’s really interesting. And I think that, again, with these larger questions of how we make a home for ourselves in the mind, I think taking that seriously may be of consequence in the way that we perceive our ecological predicaments.”

For Pandian, anthropology offers a way to understand how people are already doing that. “At some level, my first book was about what farmers do,” he says. “This book is about what filmmakers do. I think I’m going to continue to work on what people do, not because I want to fetishize what people do or describe how amazing and inventive people are when they do what they do. [Studying] what people do gives us very practical access to what is done to them in the act of doing. Another way to say [that] is to say how they’re transformed.

“I’m interested in those transformative possibilities. And I think—I really mean this—I think in the face of that overwhelming sense of melancholy and anxiety I spoke about, I think all we can do is pick up these transformative openings and see how far we can run with them.”

At the close of his anthropology colloquium, Pandian referred to the Overture to French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss’ The Raw and the Cooked, the first volume in a mammoth exploration about how myths create a home in the human mind. Change “myths” to “moving images” in passages of Levi-Strauss and the argument becomes similar to Pandian’s: “I therefore claim to show not how men think in moving images, but how moving images operate in men’s minds without their being aware of the fact.”

“The world that we encounter is already suffused with images of various kinds, and there are some very big questions about not only how we navigate such a world but how we grapple creatively with it,” Pandian says. “Anthropologists ought to have something to say about that. I don’t know to what extent this book could be taken to have something to say about that—I don’t know if I’ve ever said anything explicitly about that yet. But maybe, by the time the book is published, I will have.”

Bret McCabe, A&S ’94, is the magazine’s senior writer.
There is a power struggle for control over the message conveyed by the packs of Marlboros and Camels that line the walls of the world’s convenience stores. Tobacco companies, restricted in many countries from advertising through traditional media like television or magazines, turn to the cigarette pack itself as their only remaining means of marketing. They adorn the packs with holographic designs, pictures of cute animals, and misleading names like “Long Life.” They take the focus away from what’s really inside the packaging—and the harmful effects on the smoker’s health. “In some ways, the pack can be seen as the last stand,” says Katherine Clegg Smith, an associate professor in the Bloomberg School of Public Health. “When other avenues [of advertising] are restricted, the pack may be what’s
It's challenging to control because the pack is the product.”

As tobacco control advocates push governments to require stronger warning labels on cigarette packs, cigarette companies fight back by filing lawsuits, shrinking the size of the packs (and thus the size of the warnings), or creating packs that unfold after purchase to reveal more branding artwork free of health advisories. It's a never-ending battle. “One of the challenges is every step we take, the companies take three steps,” says Joanna Cohen, an associate professor of disease prevention in the Bloomberg School and the director of the school’s Institute for Global Tobacco Control.

Cohen and Smith are systematically documenting the variety of cigarette packages available in 14 low- and middle-income countries with the highest number of smokers. They have created TPackSS, the Tobacco Package Surveillance System, an initiative of the Institute for Global Tobacco Control, with funding from the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use. The project’s team of researchers is traveling through the designated countries, stopping at three cities in each one and collecting and photographing every different pack of cigarettes they find. In Russia, they were able to collect around 500 unique packs; in China, they expect to purchase more than 1,000.

“We are interested in looking at the rest of the world and seeing where we are,” Smith says.
Brazilian packs have graphic warning labels that, by law, must cover 100 percent of the back of the pack.
“What are companies doing to create markets where there were not strong tobacco markets before? How is the tobacco industry now marketing to women? We’re providing policy advocates with the evidence they need to push for more protective marketing policies in their countries.”

Soon, Cohen and Smith hope to have an online photo database to help global public health advocates compare packages from country to country. Visitors will be able to browse photos of each brand’s packs from around the world, and eventually will be able to sort by genre: packs geared toward women, or packs with a technology theme. They’ll also be able to see which brands do not comply with government regulations, such as those whose warnings are too small in size. A glance at the archive-in-progress immediately shows two things: the ghastly warnings required on packages in some countries, including gruesome, government-mandated photographs of cancerous mouths, and just how clever tobacco companies can be in working their way around the regulations.

Cohen equates the importance of the cigarette package warning to pharmaceutical products having a foldout sleeve with information explaining possible side effects. “What do you expect a warning to do on a pack?” Cohen asks. “Is that going to actually change what’s going on in your brain? I think that’s too high a bar to put for a warning on a product. When I think about an effective warning, what the warning needs to do is increase people’s knowledge and awareness about the harmful effects of a product. This product kills one out of every two of its long-term users. It should not have a smiling panda on it.

“It’s very sophisticated marketing,” Cohen says. “And I guess it’s extremely disheartening given how lethal the product is.”

Jeanette Der Bedrosian is the magazine’s assistant editor.

A collection of packs from China, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Brazil, Canada, and Australia shows the range of approaches to health warning labels.
**NONFICTION**

### Sights Unseen

Nearly two miles above sea level, Rosemary Mahoney is given pragmatic advice on how to know where she is: “When we feel the ground coming different under our feet, we know where we find ourselves.” At that moment, Mahoney, A&S ’85 (MA), is blindfolded and being led around Lhasa, Tibet, by two blind teenage girls, Yangchen and Choden. When Mahoney asks Yangchen how she knows it’s cloudy outside, you can almost hear the implied “duh” in the young woman’s tone: “I do not feel the sun on my nose.”

A travel writer fond of solitary excursions to unusual and sometimes remote places, Mahoney drinks in landscapes and people and turns them into page-turning meditations on the self and herself. The above scene comes from *For the Benefit of Those Who See* (Little, Brown, 2014), Mahoney’s latest adventure, for which she tries to rob herself of her most trusted tool: sight.

The resulting book is a compassionate realization that seeing isn’t the only path to knowing. The book is informed by two teaching stints, one at Braille Without Borders, a training center for the blind in Lhasa in 2005; the other at its sister facility, the International Institute for Social Enterprise in Trivandrum, India, in 2009. Both were started by German social worker Sabriye Tenberken, who lost her sight at 13, and her Dutch partner Paul Kronenberg. A magazine assignment initially brought Mahoney to Lhasa, and her first encounter with Tenberken establishes the book’s rhythms: The blind woman runs errands around the city with the writer in tow, and the sighted one requires the guide.

For the entire book, Mahoney tries to understand sightless reality, and she does it with such blunt tenderness that it lends her writing a shambolic glee. Though she alludes to secondary sources—philosophical considerations of blindness, medical accounts of sight being restored to blind patients—it’s her experiences that make *Benefit* so thoughtful. In her introduction she confesses that she once considered blindness worse than death; later, she admires the self-possession of her blind students and speculates that they have a fundamental connection to the world that she doesn’t. In between, *For the Benefit of Those Who See* documents what happens when a well-trained observer begins to hear, smell, and touch the world as individually as she sees it. **Bret McCabe**

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**FICTION**

### An Ordinary Life

*Someone* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), the latest novel from Alice McDermott, a Writing Seminars professor in the Krieger School, was shortlisted for the 2013 National Book Award, and given the way her quietly profound sentences carve out a monumental grandeur, it’s easy to see why. In it, Marie Commeford, McDermott’s remarkably unremarkable creation here, recounts her life, from her Brooklyn childhood between the wars through marriage, motherhood, and old age. It’s deceptively simple: Marie is an ordinary woman, but in allowing her to chronicle her richly nuanced interior life, McDermott allows one of those characters from life’s margins to occupy center stage in that epic journey that takes place between life and death. **BM**
**Market Irrationality**

William Connolly’s *The Fragility of Things* (Duke University Press, 2013) wonders if rethinking the social roles of our jobs and lives might produce the changes we need. With *Things*, the professor of political science continues addressing life’s vulnerabilities—such as crises in electoral politics, climate change, and social inequality—rendered by Western neoliberalism’s evangelical devotion to market processes. It’s a political theory book rooted in understanding social organization from neoliberal fountainhead Friedrich Hayek to communitarian philosopher Charles Taylor as a way to speculate that how we act now might change tomorrow. “Our lives are messages,” Connolly writes, and varying from the conventional market norm, “can disrupt and redirect the flow of authority” and encourage others to do the same. BM
Hollis Interviews
G. Sayeed Choudhury
Sheridan Libraries’ Associate Dean for Research Data Management

...Sayeed Choudhury

Trivia: Slept through his first earthquake, in Los Angeles in 1995
Favorite food: Samos (in Greektown); Tom Yum soup and Ka Pow at Ban Thai

How did a graduate of the Whiting School of Engineering end up working in the digital humanities?
The short answer is that all of my work has to do with data sets and data curation. When I was an engineering student, one of my professors told me that humanists don’t use statistical techniques because their disciplines are “data poor.” Upon seeing a medieval manuscript for the first time, I realized the humanities aren’t data poor; it’s just harder to extract the data digitally from within the various physical layers. I think there are certain unique opportunities for humanists given that they haven’t been used to dealing with data. They also seem to embrace the role of interpretation more readily. Data sets are a new kind of special collections, if you think about it.

You grew up in the United States. When did your family move from Bangladesh to America?
My father was a professor of political science at the University of Dhaka and a cabinet minister during the breakup of Pakistan in 1971. For political reasons, when Bangladesh was formed, he was not granted citizenship. He could not stay in Pakistan and had, for a time, a United Nations-issued white passport, designating a man without a state. Finally, we ended up in England with him teaching at Oxford, and in 1974 moved to Durham, North Carolina. I was 7 and my older brother was 12. During my time in England, I developed a love for soccer and chocolate, both of which survive to this day.

What brought you to Johns Hopkins as an undergraduate?
At first, I wanted to be an astronomer. Hopkins had just become home to the Hubble Telescope. So my first thought was to major in physics, but I soon switched to engineering after the Challenger shuttle accident.

Your switch to engineering was after the early problems with the Hubble.
Yes, I noted that those failures were also matters of communication and politics; they were systems problems—engineering problems—of a different sort. Being a good engineer requires good data and good computing capacity.

When and why did you begin working for the Sheridan Libraries?
It’s a funny story. I borrowed money from my brother for World Cup soccer tickets in 1994. He generously lent me the money “interest-free,” but he asked me to get a part-time job because he knew how little money I made as a graduate student. I talked myself into a one-year job in the Digital Knowledge Center to conceptualize and launch an R&D program digitizing special collections. The first projects were digitizing sheet music from the Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music and [prototyping] a robotic system that would automatically retrieve and scan books on demand. It became clear that the curation of data and data sets, as well as a collection development strategy,
were tasks that libraries needed to address formally. Data sets are primary research materials; they are fragile and they provide insights into the problems of our time.

You are known in digital humanities circles as someone who asks new kinds of questions about the way texts are digitized.

With the *Roman de la Rose* Digital Library, I focus on the methodological questions: How will digital texts be used? How will texts be read and by whom and for what purposes? Will scholars want to compare versions of the text or different annotations of a particular passage, for example? I see my work as building the scaffolding that allows humanists to ask the questions they may not know they want to ask.

You mention that one of your father’s books, *The Last Days of United Pakistan* (1974), was banned and publicly burned. Do you see a connection with your own work digitizing texts and making them widely available for study?

It’s an interesting thought. My brother and I each have a copy. Perhaps in some unconscious way, the desire to keep a copy was my first thought about preservation. I remember reading a sign in the Forbidden City in Beijing: “A single act of carelessness leads to the eternal loss of beauty.” I believe Brené Brown said, “Stories are data with a soul.” For all my thoughts about data, engineering, or scholarship, ultimately preservation is about keeping people’s stories alive for future generations.

G. Sayeed Choudhury, Engr ’88, ’90 (MS), is the associate dean for research data management and Hodson Director of the Digital Research and Curation Center at the Sheridan Libraries.
Making the (Up)grade

More than 750 public school students in Baltimore’s Charles Village neighborhood returned to classes this fall in buildings that were safer, more functional, more attractive, and better suited for learning, thanks to $1.6 million in summer upgrades.

Half the rapid renovations at Margaret Brent and Barclay elementary and middle schools were donated by Johns Hopkins University. Baltimore City Public Schools matched the university’s contribution, enabling the two schools to replace badly worn, inadequate, out-of-date restrooms; renovate their cafeterias; create more welcoming, attractive, and secure entrances; and install windows and doors to admit more natural light.

In addition, Barclay now has improved handicapped access and a renovated, more efficient kitchen. New doors and a security system were also installed at the former Barclay Recreation Center, attached to the school and now operated by Greater Homewood Community Corporation as the 29th Street Community Center. New renovations at Margaret Brent included heating and air conditioning repairs. The Brent gymnasium has also been renovated, thanks to a separate gift from the family of Baltimore native and Memphis Grizzlies guard Josh Selby.

“Our goal is for these schools to be great choices for all neighborhood families,” says Karen Stokes, executive director of GHCC, which over the past three years has put together roughly $3 million in resources to strengthen six north Baltimore schools academically and physically. “For us to build on the progress we’ve made at Barclay and Margaret Brent, some immediate physical improvements were needed, and we are thrilled that Johns Hopkins and the school system have stepped up.”

Barclay and Margaret Brent, both located blocks from the Johns Hopkins Homewood campus, are critical to the Homewood Community Partners Initiative, says university President Ronald J. Daniels. Johns Hopkins has committed a total of $10 million to that project, launched in December 2012. HCPI is designed to reinvigorate 10 area neighborhoods; build a vibrant, livable urban center; and attract 3,000 new resident families over the next 10 years.

The $800,000 that Johns Hopkins contributed to the schools’ summer renovations is its largest HCPI expenditure to date. The university also plans to channel funds into academic support for both schools—part of an effort by a variety of partners to make them schools of choice for neighborhood households and an attraction for new residents, including university faculty and staff members. For instance, in November the university supported the launch of a smart classroom pilot program, outfitting one classroom in each of the two schools with tablets, docking keyboards, an ATIV PC for the teacher, and a touchscreen interactive whiteboard to use during daily lessons.

“High-performing schools are at the heart of healthy neighborhoods, and our entire community is stronger for the results of this remarkable collaboration,” Daniels says. “That’s as good for Johns Hopkins as it is for each one of our neighbors.”

Dennis O’Shea
Gateway Sciences’ Baker’s Dozen

A group of Johns Hopkins researchers got good news recently, news of the sort that invariably makes a researcher smile—more money. In October, Provost Robert Lieberman announced the latest round of grants from Hopkins’ Gateway Sciences Initiative. The grants, ranging in size from $6,000 to $210,000, will help fund 13 projects; a total of 32 researchers will be involved in those projects. This is the second round of grants from the initiative; the first round of 10 grants was awarded in 2011.

The Gateway Sciences Initiative was founded in 2011 to support efforts to find innovations for improving the teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—STEM, in shorthand—across the university, at both the undergraduate and graduate level. The Provost’s Office and the office of President Ronald J. Daniels fund the grants. The commitment for the second phase of grants totaled $800,000.

The recipients represent five schools: the Krieger and Whiting schools, the School of Nursing, SAIS, and the Bloomberg School. Three faculty at SAIS, including Dean Vali Nasr, received a grant to “flip” the standard Fundamentals of Energy course; instead of attending lectures and doing quantitative and analytic assignments outside of class, students now will access the lectures online, and collaborate with each other and faculty on the analytic work in classroom meetings. A pair of assistant professors in the School of Nursing will pursue a similar “flipped” class methodology in two foundational graduate nursing courses for pediatric and family nurse practitioner students. Three members of the Krieger School’s Department of Chemistry will use their grant to devise a better method of steering incoming freshmen to the proper level of initial chemistry instruction.

The third annual Symposium on Excellence in Teaching and Learning in the Sciences will take place January 13 and 14, part of a broader symposium co-sponsored by the Gateway Sciences Initiative and the Science of Learning Institute. Dale Keiger
Halfway There

Johns Hopkins’ Rising to the Challenge campaign hit its halfway mark in November, when gifts and pledges from more than 162,000 donors passed $2.25 billion.

Rising to the Challenge: The Campaign for Johns Hopkins is the largest-ever fundraising effort undertaken by the university and its sister institution, the Johns Hopkins Hospital and Health System. So far, donors have endowed 94 professorships and designated $190 million for undergraduate and graduate student aid. A total of 262 donors have made campaign commitments of $1 million or more; 28 of those are for $10 million or more. There have also been more than 365,000 gifts of $1,000 or less. A $350 million gift from New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Engr ’64—announced in January and the largest gift ever given to Johns Hopkins—is part of the campaign.

The campaign, which aims to raise $4.5 billion, is targeted for completion in 2017. Catherine Pierre

New Engineering Dean

T.E. “Ed” Schlesinger, a distinguished engineering researcher, teacher, and veteran leader of one of the top academic departments in his field, has been appointed dean of the Whiting School of Engineering.

Schlesinger is now the David Edward Schramm Memorial Professor at Carnegie Mellon University, where he has been head of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering since 2005. He will start his new position as Benjamin T. Rome Dean of the Whiting School on January 1.

“Ed Schlesinger’s record as a researcher, educator, and administrator reflects a tireless commitment to excellence and a genuine passion for engineering and higher education,” university President Ronald J. Daniels said in an announcement. “I have been struck by his thoughtfulness, drive, and infectious enthusiasm.”

Schlesinger has presided over significant growth in Carnegie Mellon’s renowned ECE Department, where he also worked with faculty to define a strategic vision for his department, led a redesign of its undergraduate program, and expanded its graduate studies.

His research has focused on solid state electronic and optical devices, nanotechnology, and information storage systems, and he has published more than 250 articles and conference proceedings and holds 12 patents. In 2007, he was part of the Carnegie Mellon team whose self-driving SUV won $2 million in a DARPA Grand Challenge sponsored by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

Schlesinger, who holds degrees from the University of Toronto and the California Institute of Technology, earned early career recognition as a Presidential Young Investigator and received an IBM Faculty Development award. Since then, he has received Carnegie Institute of Technology awards for research and teaching as well as two R&D 100 awards related to technology development. He is a fellow of IEEE, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics.
Giving Back

Johns Hopkins volunteers fanned out across Baltimore on Saturday, October 19, to plant, paint, build, and clean up on the fifth annual President’s Day of Service. Nearly 1,000 people took part, serving 45 partner organizations.

“I hope you are able to carry the essence of this experience forward, deepening the connections you make to Baltimore and all the communities you call home,” university President Ronald J. Daniels said in an address to the volunteers.

Several Johns Hopkins Alumni Association chapters simultaneously conducted service projects in their cities, and the East Baltimore medical campus held a related event on October 5, sponsored by the Student Outreach Resource Center. In all, 1,250 people registered to volunteer in President’s Day of Service projects. The President’s Day of Service is organized by the Johns Hopkins Center for Social Concern and funded by the Johns Hopkins Parents Fund.

Dave Alexander

A Strong Finish

It would be tedious to fully research this in a manner befitting Johns Hopkins, so take what follows not so much as ironclad statement of fact, but as assertion: November 2 through November 23, 2013, were the best three weeks in the history of Hopkins fall sports. Blue Jay athletes won five Centennial Conference championships, participated in five NCAA post-season competitions, and brought home a national championship.

Men’s and women’s cross-country got things started by winning their conference titles on November 2. Seven days later, the undefeated Hopkins football team earned the program’s 500th all-time victory and clinched the conference title on the same day. Later that evening, women’s soccer won the Centennial Conference tournament for the ninth time in league history. Finally, on November 11, volleyball became the first fourth seed in conference history to win the Centennial championship tourney.

A week later, men’s and women’s cross country each won NCAA regional championships, propelling both teams into the national championship meet. Women’s soccer won its first two NCAA tournament games, to advance to the Sweet 16 for the sixth straight year. And football completed its second undefeated regular season in the last three years.

This set the stage for the next weekend of joy and heartbreak. The football Jays lost their NCAA first-round game when Wesley College scored with 12.8 seconds to go. Playing in Vermont, women’s soccer advanced to the national quarterfinals before losing to Middlebury College in the last 17 seconds. But women’s cross country triumphed, winning its second straight national championship; sophomore Hannah Oneda finished fourth overall. Men’s cross country placed 11th, its best-ever championship result. DK
Abbreviated

Edited by Ann Stiller

Natalia A. Trayanova, a professor of biomedical engineering in the Whiting School of Engineering, and Hans Tomas Bjornsson, an assistant professor of genetics and pediatrics in the School of Medicine, have received National Institutes of Health grants for biomedical research projects that face significant challenges but could lead to major health care payoffs. The Johns Hopkins researchers are among 78 grant recipients nationwide under the High Risk–High Reward Program supported by the NIH Common Fund.

Five Johns Hopkins graduate students were among the 85 students from prominent graduate schools in the United States and China named to the 2014 class of Siebel Scholars, a program that recognizes the most talented students in the fields of business, computer science, and bioengineering.

Pamela Jeffries, a professor in the School of Nursing’s Department of Acute and Chronic Care and associate dean for academic affairs, has been named the university’s first vice provost for digital initiatives. She will coordinate efforts to expand the use of digital educational technology in both online and classroom settings.

As part of its Centennial Year celebrations, the Whiting School has published a history of the school. The large-format book reviews 100 significant moments, ranging from the discoveries and inventions of distinguished professors to pranks played by engineering students.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has awarded the Johns Hopkins Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality a three-year $7.3 million contract to bring its checklist for reducing ventilator-associated pneumonia, the most lethal of all hospital-acquired infections, to hospitals nationwide. The Armstrong Institute, part of Johns Hopkins Medicine, also received a $2.1 million contract to develop, implement, and study a program that better supports people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease following hospitalization.

Theoretical physicists in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences’ Department of Physics and Astronomy have received a $1.3 million, three-year grant from the John Templeton Foundation to develop new ideas about the origins of the universe and ways to test those ideas. Marc Kamionkowski, a professor of cosmology and particle physics, will lead the project, working with co-leaders Alex Szalay and Joseph Silk, faculty members in the department.

Texas energy entrepreneur and financier T. Boone Pickens plans to give $20 million to Johns Hopkins to support daring but potentially vision-saving research at the university's Wilmer Eye Institute. The gift, included in Pickens’ estate, will create an endowment to fund a T. Boone Pickens Scholars program, supporting clinician-scientists with promising but innovative ideas for new research avenues. Pickens has publicly said that he has been treated at Wilmer for cataracts and for macular degeneration.

Julie Freischlag, the William Stewart Halsted Professor and director of the Department of Surgery in the School of Medicine, and surgeon-in-chief of Johns Hopkins Hospital, is leaving these positions in mid-February 2014 to become dean of UC Davis School of Medicine. During her tenure at Hopkins, she boosted the Surgery Department’s performance and transformed its culture by championing diversity.

Joan Kub, an associate professor in the School of Nursing’s Department of Community-Public Health, served on the expert workgroup for the second edition of the American Nurses Association’s Public Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, released in summer 2013.

Christy Wyskiel has been appointed senior adviser for enterprise development to university President Ronald
J. Daniels, and will oversee the commercialization of discoveries and inventions by Johns Hopkins faculty, staff, and student researchers.

Katherine A. Ates, the top aide to Sen. John D. “Jay” Rockefeller IV, a West Virginia Democrat, has been appointed a vice president and chief of President Daniels’ staff, serving as a top adviser and liaison to key groups inside and outside the university.

Thomas A. LaVeist, the William C. and Nancy F. Richardson Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management in the Bloomberg School of Public Health and founding director of the Center for Health Disparities Solutions, has been elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

In the latest U.S. News & World Report list of “best national universities,” Johns Hopkins moved up one slot to a tie with Northwestern University for No. 12, its highest placement in 14 years. The university was tied for 17th in the category of undergraduate engineering education for schools whose highest degree is a PhD. Johns Hopkins’ biomedical engineering program, which is shared by the schools of Engineering and Medicine, remains ranked No. 1.

Carey Business School Associate Professor Toby Gordon has been selected as a recipient of the Middle Atlantic Association of Colleges of Business Administration 2013 Innovation in Teaching Award. She is being recognized for her role as faculty leader of the school’s yearlong Discovery to Market technology transfer course.

Jeffrey Sharkey, director of the Peabody Institute, has been named principal of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, effective September 2014. A search committee has been appointed to help identify his successor.

Through a new partnership between SAIS and The Atlantic, students from the school are regular contributors to the magazine’s online “Global” and “China” channels. Since early July, more than a dozen students from all three SAIS campuses have been participating in the project, writing on such topics as the Cote d’Ivoire’s recent civil war and the political crisis in the Czech Republic.

Juniors and seniors from high schools across Maryland have been helping the Applied Physics Laboratory process hundreds of thousands of high-resolution brain tissue images to create a picture of how the cortex is wired at a single neuron level. This is the inaugural project for the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education’s STEM Challenge Program, created to provide high school students with the opportunity to develop solutions to real-world problems posed by industry experts.

GOLOMB’S GAMBITS™

A different word will complete each of the 12 three-word sets below. The completion may be a single word, a hyphenated word, or a familiar two-word phrase. (Example: for the set bed, elbow, store, the completion word room gives bedroom, elbow room, store room.) Enter your completion words into the grid provided. When done correctly, the next-to-last column will be an appropriate instruction.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1. ale, house, mid</th>
<th>2. arm, peach, snake</th>
<th>3. mile, mill, touch</th>
<th>4. failing, ninth, steep</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. mince, nut, sweet</td>
<td>6. ice, main, native</td>
<td>7. opera, sun, wine</td>
<td>8. ill, second, trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. computer, fire, penal</td>
<td>10. generous, hot, pointed</td>
<td>11. Arctic, danger, neutral</td>
<td>12. hourly, living, minimum</td>
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Solutions on page 78
Irene Pollin worked as a psychiatric social worker for more than 25 years, providing medical crisis counseling to patients who had received diagnoses of cancer, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, and heart disease. Most of these illnesses were chronic and could not have been prevented. But heart disease, she realized, was different.

“There are not many diseases that are preventable,” Pollin says. But with heart disease, medication and lifestyle changes adopted in early adulthood can help. “If you can reach somebody by age 25 to 30, you’re going to make a major difference in that person’s life. If you can change their lifestyles, you can save their lives,” she says.

Earlier this year, Pollin made a $10 million gift to the Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease at Johns Hopkins. Her gift, says Ciccarone Center Director Roger Blumenthal, A&S ’81, will be used to expand the scope of research on prevention of cardiovascular disease, enhance the advanced training of fellows, and translate national guidelines and scientific research into practical strategies.

As part of the gift, Blumenthal, a Johns Hopkins professor of medicine, has been named the inaugural recipient of the endowed Kenneth Jay Pollin Professorship in Cardiology, established in memory of Pollin’s infant son. “I like the work that Roger is doing, and I want to support it in my son’s name,” says Pollin, who has also made donations to other institutions in memory of her 16-year-old daughter, Linda Joy. Both children had a congenital heart defect known as tetralogy of Fallot, which robs the blood of oxygen. Linda Joy did well after her first surgery at age 4, but died after a second surgery 12 years later. Kenneth Jay was just 15 months old when he died.

“Here was this darling, gorgeous little big-blue-eyed guy,” she says of her son. “And [when he was] 6 months old, I was told he was in heart failure.” A healthy heart is a gift, Pollin says, and those who are lucky enough to be born with one should take care of it. “My kids couldn’t do that,” she says. “They didn’t have that option.”

Ten years after the death of her daughter, Pollin earned a master’s degree in social work and started a career as a mental health professional at the age of 40. She wrote two books, *Medical Crisis Counseling: Short-Term Therapy for Long-Term Illness* and *Taking Charge: Overcoming the Challenges of Long-Term Illness*. 
She also founded Sister to Sister, a women’s heart health foundation that has been offering free cardiac screenings at health fairs since 2000 as part of its mission to increase women’s awareness of heart disease.

Blumenthal and Pollin began a professional collaboration in late 2005 when Sister to Sister and the Ciccarone Center teamed up to analyze data Sister to Sister had gathered through screening 8,000 middle-aged and older women. (Blumenthal also helped care for Mrs. Pollin’s husband before his death in 2009; the couple was known for owning the Washington Wizards basketball team and building two sports arenas in the D.C. area.) All the women were considered to be at low risk for heart attack and stroke based on existing U.S. guidelines that took into account age, smoking or non-smoking status, blood pressure, and cholesterol. But, Blumenthal explains, when the data was analyzed to include exercise and dietary habits, family history, blood sugar, and triglycerides, many of the women were found to be at least at moderate risk of a cardiovascular event in the future.

Sister to Sister also offers an online cardiovascular risk assessment tool called Smart for the Heart on its website, sistertosister.org. “It’s fabulous,” Pollin says. “It’s offered in four languages and I know it works.”

Blumenthal is interested in Pollin’s strategies for motivating women to change their behaviors to improve heart health. While regular exercise is important, people still need to periodically monitor their blood pressure and cholesterol. “It’s important to remember the concept that lifestyle plays a key role, but appropriate medication in higher risk individuals can be lifesaving,” he says. “We are at a time now when we can figure out ways to improve the health and welfare of so many different people. We are about to have new guidelines from the American Heart Association and other leading organizations published that will emphasize the point that so much is preventable. We need to motivate people to take charge of their lifestyle habits.”
Anthropology and robots are subjects rarely lumped together. That they are united by Tom Smith, A&S ’11, who became a self-taught robot builder while majoring in anthropology and cognitive science, can be blamed, in a sense, on comedic actor Michael J. Fox. Smith says he signed up for a course in which Jane Guyer taught an invited lecture called “Back to the Future,” solely because he was intrigued by its title, a playful nod to Fox’s popular trilogy of like-named films. It was his first foray into anthropology. The lecture didn’t concern a time-traveling DeLorean car but rather the cultural aspects of money—specifically how the future is thought about and discussed in financial circles. Smith became enthralled with the field, and additional Guyer classes followed, ultimately leading to his dual major and current occupation. And though Smith has been out of school for a couple of years now, he and Guyer still get together regularly for long discussions over dinner or drinks.

**Tom** I think we kind of connected around complex systems. That was the area that I found most interesting in both majors. In cognitive science, there is more of a neuroscience emphasis. I was really getting deep into the brain’s visual systems, and then at a higher level, in thinking about consciousness—about the emergent properties of connections in the brain. And in anthropology, I saw that same kind of thread, the idea of complex systems, but in this instance being cultural or economic.

**Jane** There’s one conversation that I always remember that we had very early on, where I said to Tom, “Have you ever thought about trying to bring this cognitive science and anthropology interest together?” And he said, “Well, can I?” I seem to recall responding, “What do you suppose they pay the faculty for here?” (Laughing) “It’s in our job description to cultivate students’ interests. If you see a connection, it’s part of my job to figure out some way to work at it.”

**T** But it’s not something that always happens. I think it is something unique to Hopkins, or at least something that’s done very well here. You actively pulled me into the field, which was a fantastic thing to have happened.

**J** You were fascinated by both disciplines—and inventing robots at the same time.

**T** Yeah, the robots—Project Gado—grew out of work I was doing in the Anthropology Department and also for the Center for Africana Studies. I was going out into neighborhoods in East Baltimore and interviewing residents in the area around the medical campus that ended up being redeveloped. I wanted photos to capture what the neighborhood and the residents looked like, but the people there historically had not been...
able to afford cameras, so there weren’t any old photos sitting around in people’s attics. I ended up tagging along on a project that the Sheridan Libraries here at Hopkins were doing called the Diaspora Pathways Archival Access Project. Its team was working over at the Afro-American newspaper doing an index of their archive. The paper has been around since 1892, and they have this huge archive of photographs. I had no idea it existed—one and a half million photos sitting around in a building over on North Charles Street. The problem was, there was no way to digitize the materials and share them because it was too resource-intensive and they didn’t have the staff to do it. I thought about how to solve that problem and ended up coming up with the idea of building a robot that could do the digitization automatically. Over a summer, I hacked together this colossal machine that weighed 200 pounds and filled a whole table, but it could lift photographs and digitize them without damaging them.

**J** Tom had a proposal, in which I was a reference, to digitize the housing records of Baltimore City, which are in some building in the back of beyond, hopefully not being eaten up by some kind of insect.

**T** Literally, they had a snake in the archive.

**J** Then, I have this set of records from Nigerian newspapers that a colleague and I amassed, and I’ve been talking to Tom about digitizing all of those, which is about 12 file boxes. There is a lot of scholarly material and archival material out there in the community that this kind of technology can make available for study.

**T** After I graduated I was able to move seamlessly from being a student to working full time on Gado. We’ve really taken it from this giant thing that filled a desk to a kit you can buy online for $500 and assemble in your own archive. And now it is all over the world. We have robots from Santa Ana, California, to Finland. The iterative, circular logic in anthropology, where you are continuously coming back to the original question and continuously testing and trying things—reassembling the parts and trying something different—is so incredibly similar to the process of running a company, at least in the early stage. I have even come in and talked to Jane’s classes about that mode of thought as applied to the business world.

**J** You have to be constantly responsive to change, to demand, to success, to failure, to shifting parameters, and that’s the way we are in our fieldwork. We are constantly responsive to the voice of, and the action by, the population because that’s our disciplines’ job in the great intellectual division of labor: to keep expanding horizons of knowledge about human capacities for imagination and action in the world.

Jane Guyer is the George Armstrong Kelly Professor in the Department of Anthropology and has been teaching in the Krieger School since 2002. Her research interests include money and culture, social and economic anthropology, and West Africa, where she has extensively traveled. Last year, she won the Distinguished Africanist Award from the African Studies Association for her studies of economic life in West and Central Africa and other, programmatic, contributions to African studies.
CULTIVATING A DREAM

Written by | RACHEL WALLACH

On two and a half acres in the coffee and avocado valleys of western Guatemala, two young alums have found their calling.

Colleen Donovan, A&S ’07, met Shad Qudsi, Engr ’06, over a game of Boggle in the fall of her freshman year. They began dating while working for a science and technology company in Providence, Rhode Island, after graduation; a year later, they were ready for something new. She wanted to travel. He wanted to farm. So they signed up for Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms, a nonprofit network offering volunteer opportunities. In the fall of 2009, they found themselves buying a piece of land in Guatemala.

That land is now a productive farm, but it’s literally been a rocky road. The hilly acreage is prone to flooding and is not tractor-friendly. The couple had no electricity for three years, filtered water they fetched from the nearby spring, and slept in an 8-foot-by-6-foot shelter.

“Lots of our friends have started buying houses this past year,” Donovan muses. “Remember our first house?”

“I don’t even remember where we kept our clothes! What about our toiletries?” replies Qudsi.

“We didn’t have any toiletries,” says Donovan, laughing.

Gradually, they built additions and now have a home with a bedroom. In 2011, they got married. They have also built a profitable farm inspired by permaculture, a design methodology that favors biological solutions like perennial plants and native insects over herbicides and pesticides. Their farm produces goat dairy products, chickens, pigs, honey, edible and medicinal mushrooms, and more than 60 species of crops.

The goal of the farm, called Atitlan Organics, is nothing less than to catalyze a new form of agriculture—one that is low-input, high-yield, non-capital-intensive, and compatible with small parcels of land. The farm serves as a kind of demonstration project, showing what’s possible. Permaculture education led by Qudsi includes on-farm courses, consulting services, and a volunteer program hosting visitors from around the world, including Johns Hopkins University students. “We believe that the current industrial, centralized agriculture system is not healthy and that the future lies in decentralized, small-scale, highly diversified producers that are free and unhindered to sell their products in local markets,” Qudsi says.

Meanwhile, Donovan has discovered that her passion lies with young children. She has spent the past two years teaching kindergarten at nearby Escuela Caracol, Guatemala’s first Waldorf school, and plans to start her Waldorf teacher training next year.

“It can be hard, living so far away from our families, and I’ve always felt that if I had come down here by myself, I never would have moved permanently,” Donovan says. “But having done all this with Shad has made all the difference. We both feel that these days, Guatemala is our home at least as much as the U.S. is, and though we talk about possibly moving back to the States one day, it certainly won’t be for many more years.”
Jay Shepherd, A&S ’88, may seem an odd choice of speaker for last May’s launch of the Johns Hopkins Law Affinity group in Boston.

After all, he is a self-described “recovering lawyer” who is not afraid to tell a room full of attorneys that, according to Forbes magazine, theirs is the unhappiest occupation in the country. But Shepherd, who ended his 17-year legal career in 2011, is now a writer and motivational speaker who helps professionals—lawyers and everyone else—become “rock stars” at work and love what they do.

That was the goal he had for the members of the Law Affinity community, a group of alumni, students, and friends of the university who are drawn together by common interests and shared experiences.

“I’m not a pied piper talking people out of practicing law,” Shepherd says over the phone from his Boston home. “I know some lawyers who love what they are doing.”

Shepherd admits he became an attorney almost by accident. For one thing, 1988 was a tough time to graduate with a degree in international studies. “I had a Cold War degree just as the Cold War was ending,” he says. After three years of indecisiveness working for a Boston bank, he headed off to law school and wound up becoming an employment lawyer. Shepherd later launched his own firm and became a trade-secret specialist.

“I enjoyed being a lawyer, but I got to a point where I started to lose interest,” he says. “It never had been my lifelong dream. My real passion was writing.” Today, he has the business book Firing at Will: A Manager’s Guide on store shelves.

His speech distills his life lessons down to what he calls the “Five P’s” of occupational happiness: passion for your work, potential to be outstanding, people who want and need your skills, premium prices for your services, and pursuit of work that challenges you. “Nobody threw any tomatoes,” Shepherd jokingly says of his talk’s conclusion before roughly 20 members of the Law Affinity group, who were gathered at the offices of Boston law firm Hinckley, Allen & Snyder LLP.

Jennifer Doran, A&S ’98, a corporate partner at the hosting firm, was in that audience and remarks that many of her peers have already followed Step 1 of the Five P’s. “Everyone goes to law school, and then people end up in different places,” she says. “It’s interesting to see the variety of paths that people have taken.”
DO TRY THIS AT HOME

Written by | LISA BELMAN

You don’t have to be a professional chef or a wine expert to prepare a succulent meal from scratch and select a nice bottle of vino to complement it. However, it doesn’t hurt to get some tips from the pros now and then—especially when the tips are straight from the chefs at The Culinary Institute of America (CIA) and from classical radio station WBJC’s program director and wine enthusiast Jonathan Palevsky, Peab ’86. A group of Johns Hopkins alumni and friends who attended last May’s Alumni College, Food and Wine in the Hudson Valley, uncorked some principles from the pros to elevate their wining and dining to a whole new level.

Inside the historic CIA in Hyde Park, New York—considered one of the world’s premier culinary colleges—our intrepid alumni foodies, dressed in white aprons and JHU baseball caps, were transformed into professional chefs for the afternoon. With the guidance of CIA chef-instructors and students from the college, the group separated into 10 teams and prepared everything from pot stickers and pizza to roast rack of lamb and risotto primavera. “We cooked like fiends,” Palevsky says. “Our team made unbelievable grilled rib-eye steak, asparagus with hollandaise sauce, and a molten chocolate cake. Our chef was fabulous, the sort of guy that you would want to go to war with; a really good leader who confidently guided us through preparing large amounts of food in a short period of time. But there was carnage.”

“I learned that I don’t need to be afraid of ingredients, whether it’s herbs, olive oil, or even salt,” said Ben Lee, A&S ’93, SPH ’96, Med ’99. Lee, an academic neonatologist, attended the trip along with his wife, Julia Koo, Peab ’02, a professional violinist. “At home, I am hesitant at times to take chances in the kitchen, but being here with a chef at my side gave me the confidence to cook outside the box and know that the dish will still work out,” Lee says.

On day two of the food and wine exploration, the group enjoyed a tour and tasting at nearby Millbrook Vineyards & Winery where Palevsky shared his philosophy that it doesn’t matter what critics like in a wine, you have to find what you like and what works for you. Several alumni on the trip agreed with that idea, and as avid cooks, wanted some tips on pairing wines with food. Typically big wines parallel with big foods, according to Palevsky. For example, if you are serving a huge, smokey steak off the grill, choose a big, bold wine like a California cabernet sauvignon. The acid in the wine will stand up to the fat in the food. But, if you just don’t like cabernets, it’s not the pairing for you. “At the end of the day, people need to come to wine on their own terms and realize that their own ideas are legitimate and valid,” he says. In other words, confidence—both in the kitchen and in the wine cellar—is key.

The Alumni College and Alumni Journeys program is designed to create a community of shared exploration. To learn more, go to alumni.jhu.edu/travel or call 1-800-JHU-JHUI.
1963
Ronald P. Spark, A&S ’63, an associate professor of clinical pathology at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, reports that he has assumed the duties of medical director of the laboratory at the University of Arizona Campus Health Service. He is a past president of the Pima County Medical Society and the Arizona Society of Pathologists.

1964
Frank de Caro, A&S ’64 (MA), is a folklorist and professor emeritus of English at Louisiana State University. He is the author of several books and is particularly interested in how folklore provides important roots for American culture and how stories, especially ones told orally, satisfy our human need for expression. He lives in the historic Garden District in New Orleans with his wife, Rosan Jordan.

Jerry Spinelli, A&S ’64 (MA), is a Newbery Medal–winning author who has published 30 books for young readers. The stage version of his 2000 novel, Stargirl, was produced by the People’s Light & Theatre Company in Malvern, Pennsylvania, in April, and his 1996 novel, Crash, was produced by the Seattle Children’s Theatre in May.

1967
Arthur Weinman, A&S ’67, reports that his firm, Arthur Weinman Architects, has received the American Institute of Architects’ 2013 Design Award for the restoration of the Tarrant County Courthouse clock tower in Texas and the Historic Fort Worth 2013 Preservation Project Award for the restoration of St. Peter’s Catholic Church in Lindsay, Texas. Members of the firm have also written the successful nomination for Inspiration Point in Fort Worth, Texas, to the National Register of Historic Places.

1968
Robert “Bob” Carter, A&S ’68, was elected chair of the National Aquarium Institute Board of Directors in June. Carter is president and CEO of Bob Carter Companies LLC, an organization assisting nonprofit clients around the world in achieving their fundraising goals. His experience also includes a 26-year career with one of the world’s largest fundraising firms, Ketchum, where he served for 12 years as president. Prior to joining Ketchum, Carter was director of development for the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and for the Whiting School of Engineering at the Johns Hopkins University, as well as assistant to the headmaster at the Gilman School in Baltimore. He also taught and organized the development office at the Boys’ Latin School of Maryland.

1969
Eitan Schwarz, Med ’69, a child psychiatrist in Skokie, Illinois, has developed an iPad app called Zilly Dilly that allows parents to control the sites their children can visit on the Internet.

1973
Paul F. Walker, SAIS ’73, was named one of four 2013 Right Livelihood Award laureates for his work advocating for the abolition of chemical weapons. Walker’s leadership has helped eliminate more than 55,000 metric tons of chemical weapons from six declared national arsenals. He has engaged government leaders, nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, and citizens groups around the world to work for a world free from the dangers of chemical weapons. Founded in 1980, the Right Livelihood Awards are presented annually in the Swedish Parliament “to honour and support those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today.”

1974
Tim Hengst, Med ’74 (MA), a professor at California Lutheran University and chair of the

Animal’s Best Friend
Years ago Matthew Bershadker, Bus ’01 (MBA), visited an animal control facility that, like many, was underfunded and overwhelmed. That visit changed the course of his career. Already an animal lover, Bershadker became an animal rights activist and, in 2001, began working at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. “The ASPCA afforded me the opportunity to work within the social sector and work on behalf of animals in need. For me, it was a home run,” he says. After holding several different positions at the nonprofit, Bershadker was named CEO in June. His most recent role was senior vice president of the Anti-Cruelty Society, which intervenes on behalf of animals in crisis before their suffering becomes criminal cruelty. In one case, 55 dachshunds were crammed into one house in the Bronx; through the ASPCA’s intervention, many of them were adopted. “The problems that animals suffer from are largely if not exclusively of humans’ making,” Bershadker says. “We have an obligation to them.” MARIANNE AMOSS
multimedia program, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Medical Illustrators (AMI) in August. The award is the highest honor the organization bestows on an individual. It was created to honor professional AMI members whose life, work, and accomplishments have significantly contributed to the profession and fellow illustrators.

William B. Warner, A&S ’74 (MA),’77 (PhD), is a professor of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the author of several books.

1975

Brian Strom, Med ’75, an epidemiologist and internationally recognized scholar and researcher, was named the inaugural chancellor of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences.

1977

Donald Kurz, A&S ’77, is chairman and CEO of Omelet, a full-service branding, marketing, and entertainment company. Adweek named Omelet one of LA’s “biggest and buzziest” advertising agencies.

Sarah E. Thomas, A&S ’77 (MA), ’82 (PhD), director of the University of Oxford’s Bodleian Libraries, was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society in April under the category of the Arts, Professions, and Leaders in Public and Private Affairs.

Fred Zilian, SAIS ’77, ’96 (PhD), performed as Abe Lincoln in A Tribute to the Battle of Gettysburg, a musical theater performance that was held on July 26 at the Newport Casino Theater in Newport, Rhode Island. The performance commemorated the 150th anniversary of the pivotal battle in the Civil War.

1979

Stuart W. Davidson, A&S ’79, a member of the Philadelphia labor and employment law firm Willig, Williams & Davidson, has been elected a fellow of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers, a nonprofit organization composed of highly accomplished and well-regarded lawyers from the labor and employment law community. The installation was held in November in New Orleans. Davidson was also recently selected by his peers for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America 2014.

Michael Martone, A&S ’79, has been selected as the national winner of the 2013 Indiana Authors Award. Martone will receive a $10,000 prize and will select a public library to receive a $2,500 grant. “There was never a time in my 40 years of writing that I have not written about Indiana. My readers outside the state are always amazed to discover this baffling and beautiful land in my stories,” says Martone. This annual award program established by the Indianapolis Public Library Foundation recognizes Indiana authors’ contributions to the literary landscape in Indiana and across the nation.

1980

Stephen Fish, A&S ’80, an investment adviser for over 20 years, moved his business to UBS Wealth Management Americas in June. Fish reports that he has been recognized by Fortune, Forbes, Financial Times, and The Wall Street Journal for his wealth management practice in Cincinnati.

1984

Robert Blake, SAIS ’84, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, has been nominated by President Barack Obama to serve as the next U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia.

1986

Mark Salevitz, A&S ’86, is a self-taught American painter whose work is influenced by impressionists and post-impressionists. His art will be featured in Persistence of Form, an exhibition scheduled to run from November 22 through December 13, 2013, at the Agora Gallery in New York City. Salevitz resides in Scottsdale, Arizona.

1993

Adam Kaplin, Med ’93, ’96 (PhD), assistant professor of psychiatry and neurology at Johns Hopkins University, created a texting-based mobile phone program called Mood 24/7 (now licensed to Remedy Health Media) to help patients with bipolar and other disorders track their moods. Recording the data helps doctors and patients understand why the symptoms occur when they do, and this awareness can lead to improved treatments.

1994

Holly Mulcahy, Peab ’94, ’94 (PC), ’94 (MM), was appointed the new concertmaster for the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera in May. Mulcahy, a violinist, will perform on each of the seven masterworks programs as well as some of the chamber and pops programs for the 2013-14 season.

1995

David Greenberg, A&S ’95, is an assistant professor of internal medicine and microbiology at UT Southwestern Medical Center. Greenberg is the senior author of a study published in The Journal of Infectious Diseases that tested a new type of antibiotic called a PPMO, which successfully killed a multidrug-resistant germ common to health care settings.

1997

P. Michael “Mike” Field, A&S ’97 (MA), a senior communications specialist at the University of Pennsylvania and a playwright, collaborated with director John Sadowsky, A&S ’71, to bring Ludovico Ariost’s 1516 poetic masterpiece Orlando Furioso, to the 2013 Maryland Renaissance Festival. Largely unknown to contemporary American audiences, Orlando is the source of orcs, hippogriffs, and many other mythical elements familiar through The Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, and other popular books. The Maryland Renaissance Festival in Crownsville, Maryland, is one of the mid-Atlantic’s largest and most popular annual outdoor events, attracting more than 250,000 patrons each season from August through October.

Hillary Miller-Wise, SAIS Bol ’97 (Dipl), SAIS ’99, was appointed vice president for information services of the Grameen Foundation in July. In this role, Miller-Wise will lead the organization’s efforts to expand services to the poor via mobile technology. The Grameen Foundation is a global nonprofit
Sending Aid to Africa

When the worst drought in 60 years threatened the lives of more than 13 million people in the Horn of Africa in 2011, the U.S. Agency for International Development was on the scene. Nearly a year earlier, Cara Christie, SAIS ’06, a USAID disaster operations specialist, had anticipated the crisis and coordinated a response strategy tailored to the diverse conditions of the various regions that would be affected. Her plan took into account needs ranging from health care to water sanitation to cash.

That strategy helped save hundreds of thousands of lives, says Carol Chan, the acting director of USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. It also earned Christie a spot as a finalist for the 2013 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals, the “Oscars” of public service, which honor federal workers for commitment and innovation, as well as the impact of their work.

Christie cherishes the opportunity her job gives her to tap into the power of U.S. resources and direct them toward such meaningful efforts. “I have a very pure humanitarian mandate to save lives and alleviate suffering, and I get to do it within the U.S. government,” she says. “It’s a blend of helping people and making sure they are front and center in U.S. foreign policy.”

RACHEL WALLACH

significant experience in a wide range of commercial and residential real estate transactions, including the purchase, sale, leasing, and financing of properties. Anderson was recently selected as a rising star by Super Lawyers rating service and is a member of the Florida Yacht Brokers Association and the U.S. Superyacht Association.

Char Miller, A&S ’99 (PhD), a professor of environmental analysis at Pomona College in Claremont, California, was honored with the Pinchot Medallion “in recognition of distinguished leadership and sustained contributions to advancing forest thought, policy, and action,” from the Pinchot Institute for Conservation. The award was given during the institute’s 50th anniversary celebration in late September.

2000

Mark Stibich, SPH ’00, ’05 (PhD), and his wife, Julie Stachowiak, SPH ’05 (PhD), are co-founders of Xenex health care services based in San Antonio. The company has invented a “robot” that is helping hospitals around the U.S. battle deadly superbugs. The Xenex device, which has been likened to R2-D2, also kills flu/norovirus germs in just minutes.

2001

Jason Abell, Bus ’01, was a member of Team Sadie at the 2013 Baltimore Running Festival on October 12. Jason and his wife, Amy, started the nonprofit organization Sadie’s Gift in tribute to their daughter, who died at 3 days old. The organization’s mission is to improve the lives of sick children and their families through Johns Hopkins Children’s Center.

Eva Chen, A&S ’01, popular beauty and fashion blogger and past editor at Teen Vogue, was named editor-in-chief of Lucky, a shopping and style magazine, in June.

Marjorie Patricia George, Med ’01, HS ’02, ’04, is a pulmonologist and assistant professor of medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. George is also the founding rider and captain of Team Phenomenal Hope, a Pittsburgh-based cycling team dedicated to raising awareness about pulmonary hypertension and the Pulmonary Hypertension Association.

2003

Helen M. Bayer, A&S ’03, writes that her mother, Lois Bayer, died on June 6 in Anguilla.

Neilesh Patel, Engr ’03, was awarded the National Jefferson Award for Greatest Public Service by an Individual Under the Age of 35 at a ceremony on June 19 in Washington, D.C. Patel was honored for founding the nonprofit HealthCare Volunteer, which has facilitated health services for more than 1 million people around the world. Patel, also a practicing dentist, started the organization as a dental student at the University of California, Los Angeles, with $250 of school loan money. The Jefferson Award, dubbed the “Nobel Prize for public service and volunteerism,” is one of the nation’s most prestigious awards honoring Americans who have performed public service on a national level.

1999

Christopher J. Anderson, A&S ’99, was promoted in July to partner at Robert Allen Law, an international boutique law firm. Anderson regularly represents U.S.-based lenders in the documenting and structuring of export credit facilities. He has

organization that helps the world’s poorest people achieve their full potential by providing access to essential financial services and information on health and agriculture that can transform their lives.
ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

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ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

2004
Brooke Neuman, SAIS Bol ’04
(Dipl), A&S ’05, chief of staff to
retired Gen. Stan McChrystal, was
selected by Diplomatic Courier as
one of its 2013 Top 99 under 33
Foreign Policy Leaders.

2006
Andreas Nick, SAIS ’06, was
elected a member of the
Bundestag (German national
parliament) in the national
elections in Germany on Sept. 22.
He was directly elected as a
Christian Democratic Union
candidate in his home constitu-
cency of Montabaur in Rhineland-
Palatinate with 49.4 percent of the
personal votes.

2007
David Newman-Toker, SPH ’07
(PhD), an associate professor of
neurology and otolaryngology
at the Johns Hopkins University
School of Medicine, recently
led a study confirming that
eye-tracking goggles can help
diagnose a stroke quickly and
cost-effectively.

2008
Ian Sims, Engr ’08, Peab ’08, ’10
(MA), ’10 (GPD), a saxophonist
and faculty member at the
Peabody Preparatory, performed
a commissioned composition in
the first annual Baltimore Jazz
Alliance Composers’ Showcase
on September 29. The Baltimore
Jazz Alliance is a grassroots
organization of jazz aficionados,
musicians, and venues dedicated
to promoting jazz in Baltimore and the
surrounding areas.

2009
Kristen Solts Anderson, A&S
’09 (MA), Republican strategist
and vice president of the Winston
Group, made the National
Journal’s annual Women of
Washington list of the 25 most
influential Washington women
under 35.

2010
Theodors “Teddy” Serge Roux,
SAIS Bol ’10 (Dipl), SAIS ’11, an
associate with Entrepreneurial
Solutions Partners, made the Diplo-
matic Courier’s 2013 Top 99 under
33 Foreign Policy Leaders list.

2011
Pete Yaksick, Ed ’11 (Cert/
MSEd), a developmental
psychologist with a specialty in
adult neurocognition, is an
assistant professor of criminal
justice and psychology at
Mercyhurst University. Yaksick
reports that he graduated in May
from Columbia University with an
MA in developmental psychology
and says he has accepted an offer
to remain on a Columbia cognitive
science research team investigat-
ing the effect of dyadic interaction
on reasoning, metacognition,
attitudinal polarization, and confir-
mation bias. Yaksick previously
worked as a television journalist
for more than a dozen years.

2012
Dina Fine Maron, SPH ’12, was
hired in June as an associate
editor of Scientific American,
based in the Washington, D.C.,
office of the Nature Publishing
Group. Maron has previously
reported for Newsweek, Science

2013
Devika Bhise, A&S ’13, played
the role of student Tiffani Riccitelli
in the off-Broadway play about a
failing New York City public
school, And Miles to Go, written
by Chad Beckim.

Completions
Solutions (Puzzle on page 67)

1 alewife, housewife, midwife
2 armpit, peach pit, snake pit
3 milestone, millstone, touchstone
4 failing grade, ninth grade, steep grade
5 mincemeat, nutmeat, sweetmeat
6 Iceland, mainland, native land
7 opera glasses, sunglasses, wine glasses
8 ill wind, second wind, trade wind
9 computer code, fire code, penal code
10 generous tip, hot tip, pointed tip
11 Arctic zone, danger zone, neutral zone
12 hourly wage, living wage, minimum wage

The vertical message is FIND AN ENDING.

GOLOMB’S ANSWERS
IN MEMORIAM

Bessie Pear Jacobs, Bus ’31, April 17, West Palm Beach, Florida.
John W. H. Glasser, Med ’57, June 24, Wyckoff, New Jersey.
Irvin I. Klein, Engr ’39, ’41 (MSE), October 24, Baltimore.
Frances Huckestein, Nurs ’42 (Dipl), July 8, Pittsburgh.
Joseph S. Fischer, A&S ’43, September 11, Boynton Beach, Florida.
Murray A. Heine, Engr ’47, ’52 (MS), August 6, Hamden, Connecticut.
Walter Lyon, Engr ’47, ’48 (MSE), June 7, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.
Virginia Pidgeon, Nurs ’47 (Dipl), October 14, 2010, Chicago.
Norman Herz, A&S ’50 (PhD), May 28, Athens, Georgia.
Jane P. Whitten, Peab ’50 (Cert), ’53, ’55 (MM), March 6, Philadelphia.
Walter E. Woodford, Engr ’50, May 22, Centreville, Maryland.
Robert L. Church, Engr ’51, Bernardsville, New Jersey.
James A. McComas Jr., A&S ’52, April 9, Henderson, North Carolina.
Edith M. Range, Nurs ’53 (Dipl), June 3, Silver Spring, Maryland.
James F. Williamson, A&S ’53, June 6, Gaithersburg, Maryland.
Albert K. Lane Jr., Engr ’54, May 22, Finksburg, Maryland.
William R. McCarron, A&S ’54, SAIS ’56 (MA), May 12, White Hall, Maryland.
John C. Smith II, Med ’54, March 14, Minneapolis.
Laura Lyman Brecher, Nurs ’55 (Dipl), ’58, May 31, Toledo, Ohio.
Robert Main Burton, A&S ’55 (PhD), June 3, Corvallis, Oregon.
Richard A. Bartlett, Med ’56, March 25, Bolton, Massachusetts.
Harry A. Mueller, Bus ’56, March 13, Baltimore.
Sami I. Said, Med ’58 (PGF), SPH ’59 (PGF), April 30, Stony Brook, New York.
William H. Hoffman, Engr ’59 (Cert), ’60, May 6, Ellicott City, Maryland.
Griffith Pitcher, A&S ’60, April 23, Smyrna, Georgia.
Henry Rittershofer, Engr ’60, May 22, La Mesa, California.
Jane D. Battaglia, HS ’61, March 5, Denver.
David L. Simes, HS ’61, March 1, Daytona Beach, Florida.
William Wolf, Engr ’63, June 18, Rumson, New Jersey.
Jerald H. Bennion, Med ’64 (PGF), February 12, Salt Lake City.
Jeff Eichengreen, A&S ’64, July 2, Colorado Springs, Colorado.
Peter V. Hanks, Engr ’64, February 16, Lexington, Massachusetts.
Lewis E. Porter, Engr ’64, May 18, Miltondale, Maryland.
Louis A. Wely, Bus ’64 (Cert), ’75, ’81 (MA), July 12, Chester, Maryland.
Doris E. Magaha, Ed ’65 (MEd), May 5, Frederick, Maryland.
Randolph Wilson Bromery, A&S ’68 (PhD), February 26, Davers, Massachusetts.
Donald C. Cannata Sr., Engr ’68, Bus ’82, October 30, 2012, Pasadena, Maryland.
William P. Finney, Ed ’68 (MA), April 19, Towson, Maryland.
Mrs. Mary Hintgern O’Sullivan, Ed ’68 (MAT), July 28, Middletown, Connecticut.
David W. Paul, SAIS ’68, May 2, Seattle.
Nelson T. Potter Jr., A&S ’69 (PhD), May 12, Springfield, Nebraska.
Thomas E. Wenz, Ed ’71 (Med), March 24, Bismarck, Delaware.
James E. McConigle, Engr ’76, March 1, Bel Air, Maryland.
Thomas P. Meurer, Engr ’80, March 23, Baltimore.
Paul Willing, Engr ’82, June 20, Catonsville, Maryland.
Richard C. Zasadka, A&S ’82 (MLA), April 30, Annapolis, Maryland.
James R. Crook Jr., A&S ’91 (MLA), March 6, Towson, Maryland.
Frederick L. Brancati, SPH ’92, Med ’92 (PGF), May 14, Baltimore.
Cortright “Cort” McMeel, A&S ’94, April 19, Denver.
Lynne T. Taguchi, SAIS Bol ’94 (Dipl), SAIS ’95, February 12, Bellevue, Washington.
Edward Henry Weiss, Bus ’98 (MA), June 3, Baltimore.
Anne T. Smedinghoff, A&S ’09, April 6, River Forest, Illinois.
COLLEGIALITY

Written by | ELISABETH DAHL, A&S ’91

As the radiators in our Gilman Hall basement classroom clang-tap-clangged to life one frigid February morning, my introductory poetry class embarked on our first workshop period. A freshman named Cortright McMeel—or Cort, as he’d scrawled in all caps atop the page—passed around his poem, “Among the Dead.” A description of a boy taking a girl to an art museum before taking her home to bed, the poem was beautiful, coarse, stark, and funny.

A junior that year, I hadn’t expected a freshman to produce something so good, especially not right out of the gate. The guy could write; that much was clear. But, as the course went on, Cort also proved to be a gracious workshopper who gave and received feedback with equal zeal. He took everyone’s work as seriously as he did his own.

Whenever Cort, A&S ’94, read poems out loud—his or anyone else’s—he’d lean forward, his whole body engaged. His face might get red. He might sweat. Outside the classroom lay winter—a world frozen, as if in marble. Inside the classroom, we had the radiators—and Cort.

Relationships are often valued for their vastness and growth. But my connection to Cort became special for its limits. We had no mutual friends. We weren’t hanging out in the Hut, meeting up at parties on the Beach, or wandering through art museums together. And that made what we did share—mutual respect for each other as writers and readers—feel that much purer. This, I felt, was what I’d been looking for in college. This was collegiality.

In 2008, after not having spoken since our Gilman Hall days, Cort and I reconnected on Facebook. From opposite parts of the country, we’d exchange occasional messages about books and writing, agents and publishers. When he read from his first novel, Short, on campus, I attended. Afterward, we talked about—what else?—books.

Cort died in the spring of 2013 at age 41, a shocking truth I learned of via the same medium that had put us back in touch. He left behind a beautiful family as well as many admirers and friends.

How do you mourn a friend you rarely saw, one whose hometown and favorite drink you couldn’t name? The same way you’d mourn anyone else whose presence in the world seemed so vital—profoundly, and for the rest of your life. I won’t ever forget Cort, or how he brought spring to that poetry workshop long before it was due.

Elisabeth Dahl is the author and illustrator of Genie Wishes, a novel for tweens.
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