

# The Harvard Club of the United Kingdom



◆ News & Notices ◆ March / April 2009

## Letter from the President

Last week, the club received a wonderful letter from a long-time member who lives far from London with a generous donation "in gratitude for past pleasures". We strive to create a sense of community for Harvard alums throughout the UK and organise Harvard related gatherings. Your input as to what you want from your Harvard Club experience is critical, and over the past few years, the overwhelming comment has been to have Harvard faculty members speak about their research and courses. In January, **Dean Harry Lewis** spoke about privacy in the information age (see Ed Han's synopsis below); in February, **Robert D. Mowry**, the curator of Chinese Art explained how Harvard acquired its outstanding Chinese collection; this month **Provost Steve Hyman**, the former director of the National Institute of Mental Health and the driver behind the Mind, Brain and Behaviour institute will discuss his work, and on April 23, **Jack Meyer**, who ran Harvard's endowment for 15 years will discuss considerations in managing a University endowment and his work in founding the Asian University for Women. We have been fortunate in the superb quality of the talks as well as the thoughtful and engaged questions of the members. Please keep suggesting what you want, and we will strive to continue to provide pleasures.

**Brandon Bradkin AB '89, JD '92**

### Upcoming Events

◆ **3 April 6.30pm**

**An Evening of Art and Networking for Ivy League alumni** hosted by Sims Reed Gallery and the Brown Club of the UK. 30 Bury St., London SW1Y 6AU (nearest tube Green Park)  
Contact: mark.best@gmail.com

◆ **\*7 May 7.30pm £30**

**HCUK and BAC in association with Royal Shakespeare Company and Bristol Old Vic - Kneehigh production of Don John at BAC**, Lavender Hill, Clapham Junction, London SW11 5TN. Contact: Yuko Thomas (ythomas@polygoninv.com)

◆ **\*23 April**

**Jack Meyer** at Goldman Sachs, Peterborough Court, 133 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2BB (host: Sanjay Patel). Contact: Verity Langley (vll@me.com)

◆ **\*21 May 7.30 pm**

**Royal Ballet Mixed Bill** at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Contact: Evi Kaplanis (evi@kaplanis.com)

◆ **\*20 June 7.00 pm**

**John Harvard Dinner**, Emmanuel College, Cambridge  
Contact: Erika Helgen, Lionel de Jersey Harvard Scholar,  
2008-09: ehelgen@gmail.com or  
Joan McIver: jpmaciver@post.harvard.edu

*\*invitation enclosed*

*See also events - www.hcuk.org*

**F**ormer Harvard College Dean Harry Lewis spoke to an audience of over eighty Harvard alumni in London on January 16, bringing to life the peril and promise of digital technology. The talk was especially relevant for those of us who are simultaneously thrilled and disturbed by the increasingly pervasive presence of technology. With real world examples, Harry Lewis made vivid for us the contradictory feelings we have toward the impact of technology on our lives: how a Myspace hoax can lead to a young child's suicide, how Google (a for-profit corporation) can predict a flu epidemic more quickly and accurately than the CDC, how frighteningly easy digitization has made it for the government to lose personal information collected from millions of individuals, and even how your cell phone or OnStar system can be used by government authorities to monitor your conversations. He also highlighted the regulatory and governance challenges given the pace of technology evolution, highlighting examples of well meaning but blunt, reactionary policy decisions.

It is difficult to imagine a speaker on the intersection of technology and policy: Harry Lewis is currently the Gordon McKay Professor of Computer Science in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and is an incredible teacher - names in 2003 Harvard College Professor in recognition of his outstanding teaching.

For those of us interested in learning more, he discusses these themes in greater depth in his latest book, *Blown to Bits: Your Life, Liberty, and Happiness after the Digital Explosion* (Addison-Wesley, 2008).

A special thanks to **Harry Lewis** for a great evening, and to **Don Guiney (AB '78)** and **Brandon Bradkin (AB '89, JD '92)** for their help in hosting and organizing the event.

**Edward Han AB '96, MBA '02**

### What we love about Harvard

**When asked to write about the best thing they have experienced at Harvard these sophomores both independently came out with this!**

It sounds awfully cliched to say this but what I love most about Harvard is the people. Coming from Harrow I thought I knew exactly what it's like to have a close group of friends with diverse interests but it's not until I got to know people here that I understood what it's truly like to have friends not only from all over the world, but whose interests roam from performing acapella in Taiwan to running a summer program in a South African Baboon sanctuary. People often say that your best friends are formed in University. I never believed it before: I do now.

**Timi Soley AB'11**

My time so far at Harvard has been defined by the people that I have met. In just one and a half years here, I have established a strong, interesting, diverse group of friends, none of whom I knew before I moved here. Whether they have grown up in America or not, whether they were familiar with Harvard or not, whether they had experienced a similar background to mine or not, each of these people have been so valuable in creating a very strong support system for me...and even better, they also know how to have a good time! My experience here would not be nearly as rewarding, nor as enjoyable, without the incredible people that Harvard has to offer.

**Becky Malkin AB'11**

## From Classroom to Boardroom

**T**im Creamer (soon to graduate Harvard College) was kind enough to contribute his reflections on being the first UK student to run HSA.

With the spring semester underway, Harvard College seniors are winding down their various extracurricular activities as thesis deadlines loom and graduation beckons. After years of devotion to one or more of the hundreds of student activities on campus, many seniors can be excused for feeling somewhat sentimental as they train and prepare a new class of student leaders to take their place. Participation in extracurriculars can literally define one's undergraduate experience and is arguably essential to realizing the true value of a Harvard education.

This past year, I served as President of Harvard Student Agencies – a \$5M student-run corporation, the world's largest of its kind. I joined the organization in the fall of my freshman year and have worked there in some capacity all the way through to my senior year. HSA employs over 300 students, including a management team of 30 undergraduates that devote 20+ hours a week during term time and 40+ hours a week in the summer. HSA certainly requires a large commitment but in return it provides perhaps the most comprehensive business and management training that one can acquire as an undergraduate. Among many other achievements, the highlights of this year at HSA include the expansion of The Harvard Shop - HSA's retail operation – to a second storefront, the establishment of a new dorm equipment and furniture agency, and the negotiation of a new multi-million dollar publishing contract for the Let's Go travel guide series. The successes of the past year are made only more impressive by the knowledge that they were achieved by students simultaneously engaged in one of the most rigorous degree programs in the world.

As the first British president of HSA, I am particularly aware of how privileged an experience this has been when I compare the opportunities that I was afforded at HSA to those available to my peers at UK universities. On the average day, I would juggle client meetings and classes – negotiating million dollar deals between sections. Since activities and responsibilities of this nature are passed on from year to year at Harvard, they have come to be expected, almost routine. Yet this active culture of participation and involvement of students outside of the classroom is, on reflection, truly remarkable, and contributes greatly to making Harvard College one of the most exciting and challenging undergraduate experiences available.

Having recently handed over the reins at HSA, I am actively seeking career opportunities in London and can only hope that whatever comes next will be as rewarding as have been the past four years at Harvard and HSA.

Timothy Creamer AB'09

Articles, event reviews, announcements or details of upcoming events for inclusion in the next issue should be emailed to Cindy Levy (cindy\_levy@mckinsey.com) by Friday 25th April 2009. All contributions welcome!

## Justice Online

**F**or a number of years, the most popular course among Harvard undergraduates has been Moral Reasoning 22, Michael Sandel's "Justice" (as if Ec 10 is ever going to be relevant to what's going on in the real world). For the past two years, it has also been available in an online format to alums (us). Rather, the lectures and readings have (you download the one, say for your iPhone-o-matic, and the others come in bound paper form, rather large). This, unfortunately, omits a rather crucial part of philosophy class, namely: discussion. (Oh, there was an online forum, but that's not the same now is it?) Enter the HAA-UK, in the person of Joan MacIver, who organized a monthly series of lunchtime discussions to complement the course. (There were, sadly, no reaction papers or final paper.) Sessions took place in the august chambers of the Royal Society of London for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge (canteen). Discussions also at times required a leader, which weighty mantle was assumed by yours truly.

Over the course of five meetings, featuring a rotating cast of seven alums (some trekking from the far reaches of these isles, or at least outside Zone 1), discussion ranged from the anecdotal to high abstraction ("Yes, that's very sad about your cat. Now, how can we relate this to Kant's categorical imperative?"), and progressed from "So what is ethics?" to "Where I disagree with Kant is that I don't think he's being precise enough on this point." A particularly engaging author (as you've perhaps picked up) was Kant, (for some of us, not the first time; these campaigns of attrition are somewhat difficult if the other party is already 200 years dead), though Rawls, Aristotle, and others also proved fodder for our discussions.

A high point was a visit from Sandel fils (Adam), who was (conveniently) pursuing graduate studies (philosophy, as it happens) nearby, and was willing to schlep into town to share his wisdom, straight from the colt's mouth, such as it were.

The course was long on questions, short on answers, as philosophy courses often are, but we universally enjoyed the opportunity to engage the material and deepen our understanding of ethics. Not having a final helped too.

There are hints that Harvard is considering other ways to engage alums and the community in studies - perhaps other online courses, in this or another format, and, if there is any Justice in the world, this isn't the last that we shall hear of this.

Thanks to all who participated, in person or online, and thanks again to Joan for organizing these!

Nils Barth AB'00/01

### Founding (and Funding) a University A Talk by Jack Meyer April 23rd, 2009 18.30

*Ensuring a positive return on your philanthropic dollar – the value of investing in women's education in the developing world.*

Goldman Sachs, Peterborough Court,  
133 Fleet Street London EC4A 2BB.  
Please contact Verity Langley in advance if you wish to attend. Email: vll@me.com