The many roles of randomness
The many roles of randomness
Anyone could manage our family Trust but he earned our family’s trust.

Scout always made Pop Pop smile and smiles were hard to come by at the end. We wanted him to be happy but the hospital said, “Absolutely no dogs allowed.” I don’t know what Tim said or did, but he arranged for us to bring Scout in before Pop Pop passed. I’ve never seen him happier and more at peace than when he was sitting with his beloved dog. Tim could make us millions of dollars managing our portfolio, and he has, but he’ll never give us anything more valuable than that moment because true worth is in the little things.

— David, Santa Barbara
28 The Whole World in Its Plans
The Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability, opening in September, is the university’s first new school in more than 70 years. Its novel structure will enable scholars to speed their knowledge about planetary caretaking into the real world.

32 Point of Pride
When Leland and Jane Stanford planned their Arizona Garden, an opulent display of desert plants, they meant to signal power and pomp. Little did they know it would later become the canoodling capital of campus, or that it would fall into disrepair for decades, only to be saved by a tenacious, largely volunteer troop undeterred by its dangerous denizens.

38 Unlikely Stories

ON THE COVER: ILLUSTRATION BY GARY TAXALI
Contents

19 Meet Emma Wong
A singer-songwriter on protest music, refugee rights and the future of human health.

24 Every Body Is a Canvas
Imagine looking in the mirror and seeing your lungs painted across your chest. Artist Savannah Mohacsi, ’20, brings such surreal experiences to her subjects in an effort to connect bodies and minds.

64 Keep the Change
She’d asked everyone who knew her well what she should do: join the Stanford admissions department or follow the siren’s song into acting? Then she left it up to the flip of a coin—or so she thought.

Digital
NEW AT STANFORDMAG.ORG
STANFORD’s summer reading list
Chess streamer Alexandra Botez, ’17, makes her move
Video of musician Emma Wong, ’24, at alu.ms/emmawong
Michelle Vasquez, ’88, a daughter of Uvalde, on not taking anything for granted

ALL RIGHT NOW
22 Handsome headpieces

DEPARTMENTS
4 Dialogue
6 Editor’s Note
A cover toss-up
8 President’s Column
A school that sustains
10 1,000 Words
Cardinal keepsakes
54 Biblio File
Literature 2.0?
57 Farewells
63 Classifieds
100% luxury. 1/8th the cost.

pacaso.com
About Dam Time
Our May cover story examined how longtime adversaries have come together to improve hydropower practices and the health of rivers.

Your article was refreshing and uplifting in terms of getting people from both sides of the aisle to find common ground and work together for the good of all. Would only it be that the Uncommon Dialogue approach be adopted by the U.S. Congress to a much greater degree.

Richard E. Jones, PhD ’70
Saffron Walden, United Kingdom

Thankfully, stakeholders are less adversarial when it comes to dams. But please note that fish ladders are at best marginally successful, not to mention hydroelectric turbine–caused mortality to anadromous species on their downstream migration.

Ray Nagashima, ’80
Westminster, Colorado

CORRECTIONS
The May cover story on dams should have said that wind and solar power can be stored once they are converted into electricity, and that hydropower makes up 7 percent of U.S. electricity (not energy).

Our May profile of Michelle Monje should have referred to neuroblastoma as a cancer that arises in nerve cells, rather than in the brain.

The March Farewell for Wilma Chan, MA ’94, should have indicated that she was struck by a car in Alameda, Calif., rather than in Oakland.

Our March profile of Ricardo Muñoz, ’72, should have said he was born in Chosica, Peru, rather than Joka, Peru.
A $1.5 million Taube Philanthropies donation to Stanford Libraries supports a partnership with the Stanford Center for Human Rights and International Justice to digitally archive and provide public online access to the world’s most complete collection of records from the International Military Tribunal conducted at Nuremberg in 1945 and 1946. More than 250,000 pages of documents are being converted into digital files using optical character recognition technology that turns printed materials, including handwritten, typed, or scanned paper files, into an electronic format that easily can be searched. In addition to search capabilities, comparison, annotation, and linking functions supporting scholarship, teaching, and public awareness will be provided.

Taube Philanthropies is proud to support programs and institutions around the world that approach research and learning from different perspectives and disciplines, but that share a commitment to excellence and to the well-being of our diverse human community.

“The Taube Archive of the International Military Tribunal of Nuremberg at Stanford will play a crucial role in keeping alive the memory of the horrors of the Holocaust.”

—Peter Berkowitz, Tad and Dianne Taube Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University

Learn more at TAUBEPHILANTHROPIES.ORG

Transfer of the archive of the Nuremberg trials to the Peace Palace at The Hague, 1950
What Are The Odds
One coin, two covers and a randomized approach.

**WHEN WE INVITED** artist Gary Taxali to illustrate our theme package on randomness and chance, he had just one request: Could he create two covers? Immediately, we knew we’d hired the right person.

To decide who would receive which cover, we held a small ceremony in our corner conference room. Art director Giorgia Virgili balanced a quarter on her thumb, heads up, and flicked it into the air. It came up tails. And with that, those of you who are undergraduate alumni won a lotto-ball spinner to determine not who won the lottery, but who would serve in Vietnam (page 42). We solicited your tales of happenstance, and you told us about everything from marriage to bereavement (page 44). Two of you even sent in related anecdotes—purely by coincidence (page 53).

Our package of stories on randomness (and related concepts) begins on page 38. If, by chance, you enjoy it, we hope you’ll let us know.

Email Kathy at kathyz@stanford.edu.
Why moving to a home on

28 acres

may be good for your health

Rattling around a big old house may not be as healthy or safe as it once was. As we age, nutrition, exercise and immediate access to health services become increasingly important. So living in a Life Care Community may be better than long-term care insurance for those 65+.

Carmel Valley Manor offers three levels of healthcare: independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing, all at no additional cost. We are Monterey County’s only Life Care Community. Call Angie Machado at 800-544-5546 to schedule a tour, or visit cvmanor.org

Voted Monterey’s Best Retirement Community*
A School for the Future
With the creation of the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability, the university confronts the greatest issue of the 21st century.

FROM EXTREME WEATHER to the smoky skies we often experience in California in the fall, our world is increasingly showing the effects of climate change. As we’ve considered how Stanford can help tackle the climate crisis, one thing has been clear—the scale of our effort must match the magnitude of the challenge. For that reason, this fall, we’ll launch Stanford’s first new school in more than 70 years, the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability.

During Stanford’s long-range planning process, faculty, students, staff and alumni shared ideas for how the university can have greater impact in sustainability. Faculty committees considered their suggestions and developed plans for better organizing our climate and sustainability scholarship. In May 2020, Provost Persis Drell and I accepted the structural committee’s recommendation to create the new school.

The school is designed to have impact in three broad areas: earth, climate and society. It builds on Stanford’s strong tradition of scholarship about our planet, currently focused in the School of Earth, Energy and Environmental Sciences as well as the department of civil and environmental engineering, Hopkins Marine Station, and the Woods and Precourt institutes. These organizations will come together as part of the new school.

The school has a three-part structure. First, traditional departments, both existing and new, will advance understanding on sustainability issues across academic disciplines. Second, the school will incorporate the Woods Institute for the Environment and the Precourt Institute for Energy, as well as a new institute focused on sustainable societies. These institutes will bring scholars together to engage in cross-disciplinary work.

Third, the school will include a Sustainability Accelerator, aimed at creating technology and policy solutions. The accelerator will connect scholars with funding, infrastructure, technological resources and external partners so that discoveries made on campus can become solutions with broad and meaningful impact.

Together, these structures will amplify the work of our scholars—everything from clean energy technologies to the effects of climate change on human health to infrastructure resilience and more. We are now working to bring many more talented scholars to campus, and they will help open new pathways to discovery and solutions. Leading the school will be its inaugural dean, Arun Majumdar, an expert in energy solutions and policies who has deep experience in academia, government and industry.

The school will educate a new generation of leaders who are deeply committed to setting our world on a better path. It will equip our students with the skills and knowledge they need to contribute solutions in the decades to come.

We are fortunate to have found natural partners in John and Ann Doerr, who gave a transformative gift to open the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability, which was augmented by other generous donors. The Doerrs have a deep focus in this area—Ann is a former board member and current advisory board member of the Environmental Defense Fund, and John wrote an important book called Speed and Scale: An Action Plan for Solving Our Climate Crisis Now. They saw Stanford’s strong tradition in this space and recognized how our approach aligns with their own. I am deeply grateful to them.

The creation of this new school is a historic moment for Stanford, but it’s also deeply rooted in the university’s mission and traditions. Jane and Leland Stanford established the university as a place where students and scholars would pursue knowledge not just as an end in itself but for the sake of humanity. With this new school, we aim to do just that—and, with the school’s three-part structure, to provide a new model for how research universities can multiply their beneficial impact on the world.
Learn how to keep your heart healthy at stanfordhealthcare.org/foodforheart

Food for Heart

Small changes at mealtime can make a big impact on your heart health.

According to the American Heart Association, nearly half of American adults have some type of cardiovascular disease. However, with simple, smart food choices and guidance from the leading doctors and dietitians at Stanford Health Care, working towards a healthier heart can be as easy as sitting down for a delicious meal.
“I wanted to preserve something from the natural environment—who knows what the coastline will look like hundreds of years from now?”

Worn by Sleeping Beauty herself (Cardinal Ballet’s Eleanor Prince)

200 bound pages of emails between college friends

Mechanical Engineering 218B robot and team
“It’s the last photo we took before the pandemic,” says Betsayda Puerta as she places a Polaroid of herself and her best friend into the time capsule. Soon after, a student drops in a COVID test kit. (“Unused!” she promises.) Such are the memories of the Class of ’22, most of whom spent a year and a half on campus before pandemic shutdowns scattered them around the world. It is only as seniors that they, as a cohort, have found themselves back in a mostly typical college environment. And they made the most of it, filling their time capsule to the brim. Now sealed and buried under the Quad is the stuff of Stanford. An Axe Committee badge from an epic football game, a copy of an honors thesis, a sketch of a friend. A face mask. Rubber ducks emblazoned with the Bridge Peer Counseling Center phone number. And one worn-out, recently replaced prosthetic leg. “As a tour guide, I walked over 1,000 miles backward in this leg,” says Mary Cooper. She carefully places it in the box and pats it goodbye. Then she turns to join her friends. It is time to take the next step.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN ATTKISSON

For
Keeps

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PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN ATTKISSON
Damsel in Distressed: My Life in the Golden Age of Hedge Funds
By Dominique Mielle, MBA ’98
In 1998, Dominique Mielle joined Canyon Partners, then a little-known company. Over two decades, she rose to the top of the firm, the only woman partner in one of the largest hedge funds. *Damsel in Distressed*, the first female hedge fund memoir, exposes the inner workings of the industry in its golden age. “An often-hilarious romp through the jungles of high finance ... I suspect it will become a classic of the genre.” —The Wall Street Journal

Cling and Wait
By E.E. Hunt, MA ’63
Black lives matter but violence and destruction of property in the process of justice becomes another form of injustice. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King had it right that nonviolence is the most powerful form of justice seeking, and he gave his life to support this premise. This book is a challenge for those condemning the death of George Floyd to use Dr. King’s approach and be less Marxist in today’s American society.

Big Data: A Tutorial-Based Approach
By Nasir Raheim, Master of Science ’81
This book will serve as a guide and answer key questions, “What,” “How” and “Why” of “Big Data.” I envisioned this book to be composed of tutorials that will help navigate through the information wonderland and lead to the end goal of extracting useful business insight from Big Data.

Private Gardens of the Pacific Northwest
By Brian Coleman, ’74
Stunning exploration of 20 lush private gardens. These sprawling estates, small sanctuaries, and artful retreats capture the natural beauty of the verdant Pacific Northwest, each one splashed with hints of boldness, modernity, artistry, and exquisiteness. Capturing the personality of those who cultivate them, these gardens have their stories told with author Brian Coleman, who takes readers through the flourishing natural beauty that the Northwest has to offer.

The Two Greatest Ideas: How Our Grasp of the Universe and Our Minds Changed Everything
By Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, ’68
A breathtaking examination of the two greatest ideas in human history. The first is the idea that the human mind can grasp the universe. The second is the idea that the human mind can grasp itself. This panoramic book reveals what is missing in our conception of ourselves and the world. Learn more: https://princeton.press/greatest-ideas

To Build a Life
By Jack Simpson, PhD ’75
Before receiving his physics PhD, Jack knew that he was not a physicist, even though he was there as the data came in at the biggest discovery in the history of SLAC. But Stanford had other opportunities, like taking a shot at curing cancer, and a head start in software on one of the largest machines in the world. These and other adventures led to new US companies and NGOs around the world.

The Power of the Telling
By David Hathwell, ’64
In his shining collection, David Hathwell gathers his previously published poems together with new poems, enhancing their luster with illuminating commentaries. Poet Richard Wilbur praised the poems as “concretely evocative, with a clear flow of argument, and a seriousness that allows itself to be locally playful.” James Fowler called them “taut, measured, and shapely, like svelte dancers.”

Posthuman Bliss? The Failed Promise of Transhumanism
By Susan B. Levin, PhD ’93
*Posthuman Bliss?* argues that transhumanism, or advocacy of the radical bioenhancement of human beings, is misguided, both philosophically and scientifically. This book “will be of enormous interest to anyone who cares to think about what it means to be human in an age when the problems of our shared existence can seem so dire that the only solutions left are technological.” —Erik Parens, The Hastings Center. Available through Oxford University Press and on Amazon.
Cold War Secrets
By F. L. Grieves, ‘60
A young Army Intelligence officer finds himself stationed in West Germany in the late 1950s. His official work involves the sobering reality of processing refugees from East Germany and then working with the West German Border Guard (Bundesgrenzschutz) on the Iron Curtain. Following an “incident” at the border, he fights for his life in a military hospital, leaving his plans for a future with a local young woman he met in jeopardy. Available on Amazon.com. Paperback or Kindle.

Nighttime Remembrances and Other Poems
By Elisabeth Barbou Baylor
Available on Amazon, this collection of poems recounts a century of joyful, sorrowful, and humorous thoughts and experiences of a Midwestern woman with both a small-town and a world view. Extracted from a larger collection of writings (Essays, Poems, and Short Stories by Elisabeth Barbou Baylor and Hugh Murray Baylor), this posthumous book is self-published by the author’s three sons. Available in hardcover and paperback.

Playing Grandma’s Games
By Karen South Arnold, ‘64
Remember the game of Goose, Faro, or Red Dog? This fun little volume samples historical games from colonial America up through the country’s western settlement. It includes board games, card games, and indoor and outside activities for both adults and children. Illustrations reinforce the text and show useful equipment construction. Let your child out to play and learn a bit of history at the same time!

The Lost Ship
By Jeff Lucas, ’68
International Best Seller. Jack meets Armstrong, an octopus, who has learned to talk via a found scubaphone. The two take off to find an old sailing ship, encountering 140 marine creatures, navigating a cave system, and fighting four treasure hunters to the death. “This book will take you on a breathtaking, adventure-filled ride through the sea. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, BLASTOFF!” —Leah Kaelin, age 11. 10 percent proceeds to The Nature Conservancy.

Planning to Stay: Burnout, Demoralization, Exploitation, and How to Reclaim Your Classroom and Your Life ... Anyway
By Jess Cleeves, MAT ‘07 Stanford Teacher Education Program
Empowering solutions for the educators who are bearing the brunt of public education’s structural harms. Foreword by Bryan A. Brown, Professor of Teacher Education, Stanford Graduate School of Education.

What Your Food Ate: How to Heal Our Land and Reclaim Our Health
By David R. Montgomery, ‘84 and Anne Biklé
Are you really what you eat? David R. Montgomery and Anne Biklé take us far beyond the well-worn adage to deliver a new truth: the roots of good health start on farms. What Your Food Ate marshals evidence from recent and forgotten science to illustrate how the health of the soil ripples through to that of crops, livestock, and ultimately us. Available now wherever books are sold and Dig2Grow.com.

Christianity without Dogma
By Jack Bergstrand, MS ’95
Christianity is declining, becoming more toxic, and people are getting hurt. The “deconstruction movement,” filled with people challenging the faith, is growing rapidly. To see if Christianity can be fixed, Bergstrand examines the faith as a system, not through the eyes of a theologian or clergy member, but through the eyes of an independent consultant.
I AM Stories: Up at the Retreat
By Fran Shaw, Ph.D., ‘71
Ten Americans arrive in Switzerland for a bumpy week on retreat with a rare guide who says, “With attending to presence, staying collected, we can live in a new way.” Here are accounts, with humor, of ordinary heroes, sometimes “unskillful,” who taste real transformation when an unknown dimension suddenly arises. As Rumi says, “Something opens our wings.” Excerpts at franshawbooks.com. Paperback and E-Book available on amazon.com.

The Stakeholders’ Golden Rule
By Raymond A. Giuliani, Jr., MBA ’75
Deregulation runs amuck when fiduciary responsibilities are replaced by politics. Ray Giuliani pulls back the curtain on his former employer, ERCOT, with an enlightening and entertaining expose of the mismanagement, corruption and on-going dysfunction inherent in that quasi-government entity which eventually put ERCOT in the spotlight for the epic failure of the Texas electricity grid during the great Texas Winter Storm of February 2021. www.raygiuliani.com

STIFLED, Where Good Leaders Go Wrong
By James G. Wetrich, Inaugural Fellow, Distinguished Careers Institute, ’15
Seasoned entrepreneur, company executive, and consultant Jim Wetrich brings you a comprehensive examination of exactly what’s stifling American businesses in the modern world. Throughout his four decades of business experience across three continents, Jim has developed a keen insight into what works and what doesn’t in business leadership. https://jimwetrich.com/

I Chose ADVENTURE: a memoir
By Jonathan Visbal, MBA ’84
This fast paced, rollicking memoir is written from the perspective of the author’s three global passions: motorcycling, windsurfing, and playing in rock ‘n’ roll bands. Visbal also raises the alarm about the devestatation of climate change and the steady erosion of freedom in our technological world but refuses to surrender his optimism for the future.

Through The Glass Ceiling to The Stars
By Eileen Collins, MS ’86
Eileen Collins was an aviation pioneer her entire career: one of the Air Force’s first woman pilots, the second woman in the elite USAF test pilot program, and the first woman to pilot and command a US space mission. NASA entrusted her to command the daring return-to-flight shuttle mission two years after the Columbia disaster. She shares her life lessons with the aim of inspiring a new generation.

Grand Ascent
By Peter R. Boutin, ’72
This book is a fascinating biography of a colorful mountaineer and offers a glimpse of life in the Old West. From the hardships endured by the pioneering Owen family as they cross the Great Plains in 1854 to the challenges overcome by William Owen in leading the first documented ascent of the Grand Teton in 1898, this book has been praised as “an engaging page turner.” Available on Amazon.

Applied Analog Electronics: A First Course in Electronics
By Kevin Karplus, MS ’76, PhD ’83
This textbook takes students from knowing no electronics to being able to design and build amplifiers and filters to connect sensors to micro-controllers—the only prerequisite is Calculus 1. Students design and build digital thermometers, blood-pressure meters, optical pulse monitors, audio power amplifiers, and EKGs. PDF: https://leanpub.com/applied_analog_electronics
Paper: https://www.worldscientific.com/worldscibooks/10.1142/12781

The Impact Challenge: Reframing Sustainability for Businesses
By Alessia Falsarone, ’03
Inspired by the experience of practitioners that have successfully influenced the learning behaviors of complex organizations, the Impact Challenge provides a roadmap for businesses seeking to drive systemic innovations as they leverage sustainability initiatives in a programmatic and intentional manner. First in the Impactful Data Science Series by Taylor & Francis. www.theimpactchallengebook.com
Out of Quisqueya: From Trials to Triumphs in America
By Milliardaire Syverain, M.D. '93
The author chronicles the dazzling and the harrowing events of his childhood charged with haunting absurdities from the pervasive blighted poverty he endured. It is a story of grit, hope, and the promise of America that immigrants cling to. It's both the author's journey and a universal immigrant story. This memoir tells of the trials and triumphs of human resilience when dealing with a daunting existence.

Twentieth Century Mouse Genetics: A Historical and Scientific Review
By Robert P. Erickson, M.D. '65.
This monograph provides a comprehensive examination of key advances in mouse genetics throughout the 20th century. Here the author identifies the contributions of historic mouse genetics studies, and how those approaches and early discoveries are still shaping human genetics research and medical genetics today.

Parents Are You Ready? The Practical Guide To Launching A Successful High School Student
By Kim Duckworth, '79
This book dissects the state of parenting and teen education in America today. It heralds the message of hard work, perseverance, and rigor. Does your child have incredible potential, but you don't know how to guide them to be their best or gain admission to college? Is your child not living up to their potential? This book shows you how to unleash a productive, driven, resilient, young adult!

ABLAZE WITH COLOR: A Story of Painter Alma Thomas
By Jeanne Walker Harvey, ’81
This vibrant children’s book celebrates art and the power of imagination by telling the incredible true story of Alma Thomas, the first Black woman to have a solo exhibit at the Whitney Museum in NYC and have her work chosen for the White House collection. Illustrated by Loveis Wise. (HarperCollins, ages 4-8) *Starred reviews*

Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn
By Katie (Bryan-Jones) Anderson, ’97
In this award-winning book, Katie Anderson offers you insights about what it means to lead, to learn, and to care, by weaving together heartwarming and deeply reflective stories of personal discovery and organizational history. Walk away with a fresh perspective and excitement about people-centered leadership, organizational excellence, and yourself. Amazon #1 Bestseller with 200+ reviews LearningToLeadLeadingToLearn.com

Lettuce Get in Trouble
By Linda Kuo, MFA ’99
Sara Little, a troublemaker of the best sort, guides her young friends in an adventure to discover the joy of food through design. The real Sara Little (1917-2015) was a prolific designer, a Stanford professor, and a global traveler. She asked great questions and applied her unique curiosity to designing revolutionary products from medical masks (that led to the N95) to cookware and spacesuits. https://www.saralittletroublemaker.com

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How Organizations Should Work: envisioning a high-performing organization made of a network of internal entrepreneurs
By N. Dean Meyer, MBA ’76
Summer reading ... a time to relax, get a perspective on your career, and imagine possibilities. This is your chance! Take your nose off the grindstone for a few hours, and reflect on the kind of legacy you could leave—a truly great organization—and on a leadership adventure worth doing. HowOrganizationsShouldWork.com

TO ADVERTISE YOUR BOOK IN THE NEXT STANFORD AUTHOR SHOWCASE SECTION, EMAIL VPPIPIN@STANFORD.EDU OR CALL 650-723-0460.
**This Quest is Bullshit!**
By J.P. Valentine, ’18

The Questing Stones have come to Nowherested, and Evelia Greene is finally ready to receive her life’s quest. Perhaps she’ll be a great warrior, or a wealthy merchant, or a brilliant mage. Perhaps her quest is simply to live a quiet life, constantly honing a craft to the heights of perfection. Or perhaps the Questing Stones will grant her the legendary mission of popping over to the next village to pick up a loaf of bread. Either way, adventure is out there, and Eve is determined to have one.

**The Nothing Mage**
By J.P. Valentine, ’18

“There’s nothing there.” The words may as well have been a death sentence to young Declan. Without mana, there could be no studying at the sky-piercing Pinnacle Towers, no monster hunts, no following in his father’s legendary footsteps. He’d be a cripple. But when a terrible accident forces him to flee, Declan learns the true nature of his mana. Just because it doesn’t resonate at any known frequency, doesn’t mean it isn’t magic. And just because you can’t see something, doesn’t mean it isn’t there.

**Day of the Jumping Sun**
By Margaret Panofsky, ’72

On far-future Baffin Island, dwindling humans whose ancestors survived 2050’s Final War bow to sophisticated rulers—Prairie Dogs, enhanced by fallout, five feet tall, brilliant, twisted. Enter time travelers from the 20th century, three families, clueless and shattered—until they find their inner fire, fueled by love. Allegorical post-apocalyptic fiction, “the ink bubbling like lava.”—Martin Shone

Available at www.dayofthejumpingsun.com

**Dr. Chuckle’s Two-Puns-A-Day Perpetual Calendar**
By Paul Frishkoff, Ph.D. ’70

Do you celebrate National Escargot Day, or Blame Someone Else Day, or, perhaps, Talk Like Shakespeare Day? This perpetual calendar pairs 732 totally original puns with a full year’s worth of bizarre and wondrous (actual, proclaimed) holidays. One of four Dr. Chuckle pun books, all available on Amazon.

**Figurski at Findhorn on Acid**
By Richard Holoten, ’75 and Assistant Vice Provost for Learning Environments, Emeritus

Lauded by critics as “funny, crazy, ultra-postmodern satire” and “a cross between Borges and the Marx Brothers,” this cult classic hypertext novel featuring “Rosellini’s 1737 Mechanical Pig” has been lovingly recreated for the modern web in a 20th anniversary edition by the Electronic Literature Lab, Washington State University Vancouver. Freely available at figurskifindhornonacid.com

**Academia. Exzellenz hat ihren preis**
By Karen Ruoff (Kramer), ’67, ’84, Director of Stanford-in-Berlin

This comédie humaine views today’s university as a sandbox. Compliance cops, ebullient IT celebs, fund raising fanboys, well-heeled alums, residual pros and a sage tomcat romp about in the satiric sublime. “The incisive gaze and savvy that characterize Academia pose questions that reach far beyond Academe—it’s a campus novel in the way that Mann’s Magic Mountain is a novel about skiing.” —Die Weltwoche

Translation by Christa Schuenke.

**Orchestration**
By Saundra Henderson Windom, ’75

The war cost her everything, a mother, a father, and a country. Four-year-old Bang Sun found tied to a tree, is riddled with disease, malnutrition, and bears the scars of a tragic life. Facing a future of nothing but pain, loss, and hopelessness, we follow the story of a mixed-race African-American child of the Korean War. A powerful memoir of strength, grace, resilience, courage, and kindness, you’ll find yourself immersed in this beautiful and inspiring recollection of the child called Bang Sun. (orchestrationthebook.com)

**Come, Grandma!**
By Kristine Jones Gooden, ’67, M.A. ’68

Bald Eagles are interesting birds and have a life cycle that is fun to observe. They return to certain trees and nests year after year, and then depart for months. The pair of eagles that inspired this book most often had three eaglets, which is rare. Often their nests are difficult to observe, but the author was very lucky to be able to clearly watch this particular nest over a dozen years. “Come, Grandma” is the story of Grandma and her grandson Waylon watching the nest from May to August.

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**Dr. Chuckle’s Two-Puns-A-Day Perpetual Calendar**
By Paul Frishkoff, Ph.D. ’70

Do you celebrate National Escargot Day, or Blame Someone Else Day, or, perhaps, Talk Like Shakespeare Day? This perpetual calendar pairs 732 totally original puns with a full year’s worth of bizarre and wondrous (actual, proclaimed) holidays. One of four Dr. Chuckle pun books, all available on Amazon.

**Figurski at Findhorn on Acid**
By Richard Holoten, ’75 and Assistant Vice Provost for Learning Environments, Emeritus

Lauded by critics as “funny, crazy, ultra-postmodern satire” and “a cross between Borges and the Marx Brothers,” this cult classic hypertext novel featuring “Rosellini’s 1737 Mechanical Pig” has been lovingly recreated for the modern web in a 20th anniversary edition by the Electronic Literature Lab, Washington State University Vancouver. Freely available at figurskifindhornonacid.com

**Academia. Exzellenz hat ihren preis**
By Karen Ruoff (Kramer), ’67, ’84, Director of Stanford-in-Berlin

This comédie humaine views today’s university as a sandbox. Compliance cops, ebullient IT celebs, fund raising fanboys, well-heeled alums, residual pros and a sage tomcat romp about in the satiric sublime. “The incisive gaze and savvy that characterize Academia pose questions that reach far beyond Academe—it’s a campus novel in the way that Mann’s Magic Mountain is a novel about skiing.” —Die Weltwoche

Translation by Christa Schuenke.

**Orchestration**
By Saundra Henderson Windom, ’75

The war cost her everything, a mother, a father, and a country. Four-year-old Bang Sun found tied to a tree, is riddled with disease, malnutrition, and bears the scars of a tragic life. Facing a future of nothing but pain, loss, and hopelessness, we follow the story of a mixed-race African-American child of the Korean War. A powerful memoir of strength, grace, resilience, courage, and kindness, you’ll find yourself immersed in this beautiful and inspiring recollection of the child called Bang Sun. (orchestrationthebook.com)

**Come, Grandma!**
By Kristine Jones Gooden, ’67, M.A. ’68

Bald Eagles are interesting birds and have a life cycle that is fun to observe. They return to certain trees and nests year after year, and then depart for months. The pair of eagles that inspired this book most often had three eaglets, which is rare. Often their nests are difficult to observe, but the author was very lucky to be able to clearly watch this particular nest over a dozen years. “Come, Grandma” is the story of Grandma and her grandson Waylon watching the nest from May to August.
Stanford Authors’ Showcase

A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT FEATURING BOOKS BY STANFORD ALUMNI

Gen Z, Explained: The Art of Living in a Digital Age
By Roberta Katz, ’69, Sarah Ogilvie, Jane Shaw, Linda Woodhead

Gen Z (people born since the mid-1990s) grew up with the Internet, in a world of constant change, and their actions and values can seem puzzling. The interviews, surveys, and linguistic analyses in this book provide a comprehensive portrait of Gen Z, giving parents, grandparents, teachers, and employers much-needed insight into what these young people care about and why they behave as they do.

Keep Smiling
By Richard McCombs, GSB ’79

Keep Smiling is about my experiences managing one of the first American companies to operate in Vietnam after the trade embargo was lifted. Keep Smiling describes living and working there in a joint venture in the rice industry. My GSB education didn't begin to help me understand how to interact with the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Can be purchased on Amazon or at www.richardmccombs.com

The Dawning of Diversity: How Chicanos Helped Change Stanford
Frank O. Sotomayor, MA ’67

If you want to know how and why the movement to diversify nearly all-white Stanford began during the turbulent 1960s, this is a "must read." Activism by Black and Mexican American students frame this little-known history. In poignant recollections, Chicano alums recall their experiences of anguish and joy, distress and romance, struggles to achieve goals and dreams that came true. A final chapter looks at Stanford’s race, ethnicity and gender diversity today.

The Blue of the Fire
By Melissa Kerry, pen name of Melissa Dagdag BA, MA ’91

This is a collection of poetry rooted in the analysis of self and of the self in relation to others. The book examines themes common to psychoanalysis and the meaning of being a writer/creator. Some poems provide a commentary about the act of writing and others delve into relationships and various psychological experiences. There are four sections: Self, Mother, Other and Lover. Available at www.bookwrangler.com.

Mr. McCoodle Shares a Secret
By Melissa Kerry, pen name of Melissa Dagdag BA, MA ’91

This colorful picture book fosters emotional intelligence by prompting children to talk about and explore their feelings. It’s the story of a man who faces challenges identifying and expressing his feelings, who finally recognizes his fear and does not allow it to stop him from experiencing fun at a county fair. The main character has many animal friends and human friends of diverse backgrounds. Available at www.bookwrangler.com.

The Wrong Kind of Woman
By Sarah McCraw Crow, MA ’88

“An deeply human endeavor that must be nurtured to achieve its full potential. As with tending a garden, care must be taken to organize, plant, feed, and weed—and the manner in which this nurturing is done must be consistent with the nature of what is being nurtured. In this book the authors propose a new and holistic rethinking of the nature and nurturing of research.

Fiery Star: The Journals of Emma Rose Lightfoot
By Leslie Rivers, MFA ’72, Winner National Indie Excellence Award

Fiery Star takes the reader into the rich and rugged world of 19th century California, and the lives of the actors who brought their art to the raw towns of the Gold Rush. The tour of the Star Troupe, with its young headliner Edwin Booth, begins well, but when the towns they play burn to the ground, the company is threatened by the rumor that Booth is the firebug. Based on a true story! www.leslieannrivers.com or order at Amazon.com

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WHO WE ARE

Meet Emma Wong
Singer-songwriter from Hong Kong goes for global and local.

“Music can be a call to action.”
All Right Now

"There are a lot of things I miss about Hong Kong: the food, the smells. Hong Kong is very fast-paced. Here, it’s so calm. It’s all sunshine. It’s very different, but Stanford has definitely become home as well.

"For as long as I could remember, I wanted to learn the guitar. It was also because my dad wanted to learn so badly. When I turned 12, for my birthday I got a guitar and started my singer-songwriter journey. I got lessons, and my dad learned beside me. I have lots of memories of Sundays at home, us just singing and jamming out.

"In a ninth-grade music class, we studied protest music, and I wrote a song about the Manchester Arena bombing at the Ariana Grande concert, about how sad it is that it takes tragedy to get people to come together. I’m in a music class right now called Stories and Music of Refugees. We are learning about the genocide in Cambodia and writing music about refugees. I’m at a point right now where a lot of the projects I was working on in high school are coming full circle.

EMMA WONG, who was born and raised in Hong Kong, grew up in a small apartment in a 21-story building with her mom and dad. Her grandparents lived in the apartment across the hall, and beside them were hundreds more neighbors from around the world. Collectively, they spoke English, Spanish, French and many different varieties of Chinese. Like the city itself, the building was a mélange of cultures, cooking aromas and musical sounds.

"The tiny little apartments get you really close," says Wong, a rising junior. "It was a great place to grow up. There was a lot of focus on being a global citizen and what was going on around the world. I loved that.

Wong, whose mom is Canadian and whose dad is from Hong Kong, came to Stanford with a mission to develop her abilities to serve others while creating new bonds. She uses her talents as a singer, an instrumentalist and a songwriter (these days, on ukulele, guitar and guitalele) to bring disparate communities together—once by writing a song based on her interviews with Syrian refugees in Canada, and other times by busking in downtown Palo Alto to raise money for charities.

"It was my dream in high school to be a refugee lawyer, but coming to Stanford gave me a different perspective. I’ve really found a passion for biology and technology.

"My grandmother broke her leg when I was, like, 10. It definitely changed her quality of life. She couldn’t be involved in the same things she used to do, like tai chi or going out and about. She was really social. The idea gets bounced around a lot at Stanford about making sure that people’s lives are healthy for as long as possible. I want to work in preventive health care so that people can live as many years as possible being healthy and happy.”
Palo Alto’s best address.

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Explore your options and learn more about moving to Webster House. For information, or to schedule a visit, call 650.838.4004.
Fascinated

Each summer, a professor fashions craft supplies into top style statements.

When Michele Foss steps into a craft store, “it’s just game on,” she says. By the time she departs—cart filled with everything from feathers and fabric to place mats and plastic toys—she can hardly remember what she went in for.

For Foss, ’96, these shopping trips are an essential part of making a fascinator—an ornamental headpiece attached to a headband or clip. Fascinators are easy to spot at royal weddings and on Derby Day, but they’re also increasingly popping up in less formal settings, like backyard photo ops for social media.

“This whole influencer culture is creating moments at home that used to be relegated to supermodels and fancy photoshoots for Vogue or Elle,” she says. For most of the year, Foss is a professor of communication studies at Sacramento State. But since 2008, summer has been her fascinator season, when she dreams up creations for friends and customers who want to stand out at weddings and galas.

Each of her designs, posted on her Instagram @curiouscrows, gets a name: “Savanna,” with beige ribbon ringlets and twisted twine, has a safari theme. The bright green leaves of “Andrea” were inspired by cabbage. From afar, “Twilight” looks like a tilted blue top hat, but viewed closer it reveals itself as a large blue flower, its fabric petals unfurled and glowing thanks to hidden LEDs. The key to painstaking craftsmanship? “Hot glue,” Foss says. “Lots and lots of hot glue.”

Foss’s friend and former student Elaine Welteroth—a judge on Project Runway—is probably her most famous client. But her sights are set even higher—she’d like her creations to be donned across genders and grace even more famous noggins. “Is there a way that I could attract, like, a Billy Porter, for example, into wearing a fascinator?” she asks, referring to the Tony Award–winning actor and fashion icon.

“It’s that idea of risk-taking,” she says. “Fascinators are not for the kind of person that is shy. They’re really for the people who are like, ‘Yeah, look at me. I’m fascinating.’”

Camara Phyllis Jones, MD ’81, and Jimmy Chen, ’10, are the first recipients of the President’s Award for the Advancement of the Common Good, created to celebrate Stanford alums whose work has positively and sustainably changed their communities. Jones, a physician and epidemiologist, has used research and advocacy to highlight the impact of racism on health, influencing the CDC to declare racism a public health crisis. Chen founded Propel, an anti-poverty software company aimed at helping low-income Americans improve their financial health.... With a third consecutive NCAA championship under their singlets, Stanford men’s gymnastics has been called “the most dominant team gymnastics has ever seen.” And they weren’t the only team on a roll this spring. Ahead of summer pool parties, the best thing to happen in the deep end was No. 1 Stanford women’s water polo nabbing its eighth NCAA championship. Winning seemed to be par for the course in recent months, as women’s golf nabbed its second NCAA championship, bringing the Cardinal to an all-time total of 131 NCAA team titles and 158 total national championships. And Stanford baseball was a hit, heading to the College World Series at press time.
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IN HER FIRST YEAR AT STANFORD, Savannah Mohacsi, ’20, took the Art of Medical Diagnosis, a course in which students draw anatomical sketches, using cadavers as models. They also apply the medical skills of observation and diagnosis to art at the Cantor Arts Center and at the Anderson Collection. Those experiences inspired Mohacsi’s path through Stanford: She would pursue premedical coursework, major in human biology and minor in art practice. And when senior year came around, the Honors in the Arts interdisciplinary capstone program presented the perfect opportunity to combine her passions.

When it came time to submit a project proposal, she took inspiration from *Skin Wars*, a body-paint competition show she had binge-watched with her mom. The series illuminated the intersection between Mohacsi’s preferred medium—paint—and medicine’s canvas. Her capstone became a way for her to simulate the patient-doctor relationship. She conducted in-depth conversations with her subjects prior to painting on them, then highlighted body parts with which they had special, or perhaps complicated, relationships. On one person, Mohacsi painted knotted intestines as a physical representation of the patient’s struggle with abdominal pain.

Most people don’t encounter their insides visually. Mohacsi says her favorite moment is when “people first confront [the body painting] in the mirror and see their whole stomach displayed on their skin. I’m giving them a fresh and new experience that they never would have had.”

Mohacsi now lives in Los Angeles, where she coordinates COVID-19 compliance in the film industry while continuing her body painting, which she documents on her Instagram, @thebodyascanvas.

—Evan Peng, ’22

Every Body Is a Canvas
How one artist explores our insides.
Special discount for Stanford alumni

Switching to GEICO is a bright idea.

Stanford alums could save even more with a special member discount.
‘Real Life Is Inside of You’

The classes of 2020 and 2022 receive wise words on a rare double-ceremony weekend.

COMMENCEMENT WAS CROWDED:
5,089 graduates from the Class of 2022 clustered shoulder to shoulder outside Stanford Stadium on Sunday, June 12, awaiting a much-anticipated fully in-person ceremony. Just a day earlier, the walkways were packed with some 2,600 alumni from the Class of 2020. They’d returned to their alma mater to don the caps and gowns they’d lacked when they graduated virtually. The unprecedented back-to-back celebrations honored two classes connected by the chaos and isolation of the pandemic.

On Saturday, the Class of 2020 heard from France Córdova, ‘69, who, in the mid-1990s, became the youngest person and first woman to serve as NASA’s chief scientist. Córdova, an English major turned astrophysicist turned leader of universities, encouraged students to “vector into the unknown,” as she had. “Real life is not somewhere else; it’s inside of you,” she said.

On Sunday, Netflix co-founder Reed Hastings, MS ’88—speaking remotely on-screen after having tested positive for COVID-19—advised the Class of 2022 to harness the powers of invention and story to address challenges such as climate change and inequality. “As the world speeds up, will our wax wings melt? Or will we bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice?” he asked.

President Marc Tessier-Lavigne readied the Class of 2022 undergraduates, as he had at their convocation four long years ago, for many more twists, turns and departures. Their time at Stanford, he said, would provide them “a foundation for a life of change and transformation.”
The Class of 2022, by the Numbers:

- 1,594 undergraduate degrees
- 2,371 master’s degrees
- 1,124 doctoral degrees
Megan Shea, '17, a PhD student at Stanford, is an engineer and oceanographer who researches environmental DNA, or eDNA, a relatively new technology designed to help monitor and maintain the health of the world's oceans.

“It’s like forensics for the ocean,” says Shea. “You scoop up a sample of ocean water, filter all the bits of DNA and sequence it to understand what organisms are present.” It can help solve problems like the spread of invasive species—increasingly an issue because of rising ocean temperatures—that destroy coral reefs and other ecosystems that billions of people depend on for food and income.

Shea knows, though, that she can’t spend all her time studying fundamental science. If she’s to help safeguard the seas, she also needs to know how to influence policy. So, as a student in the Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources, she takes courses across campus in communication, policymaking and the sociology of science, honing the skills she’ll need to help get such environmental technology out into the world.

“Currently, I’m in a PhD program in the School of Earth,” Shea says. “My two main advisers are in two totally separate schools: the schools of Engineering and Humanities and Sciences. My academic world is split across many corners of the university.”

The Time Is Now
Shea is one of hundreds of students, researchers and faculty scattered across campus who have long been working on the challenges of sustainability—preserving natural resources for the long-term benefit of people and planet—that are made increasingly urgent by the rate of climate change. Now the university is taking the bold step to bring this brain trust together under one umbrella—and build upon it—with the creation of its first new school in more than 70 years, the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability.

The school will focus on three broad areas: earth, climate and society, said President Marc Tessier-Lavigne in a letter to the Stanford community. “It represents our collective commitment at Stanford to developing knowledge and solutions in these fields at the scale this work demands.”

“Climate and sustainability are the defining issues of the 21st century,” says the school’s inaugural dean, Arun Majumdar, a professor of mechanical engineering and former director of Stanford’s Precourt Institute for Energy who has advised the Obama and Biden administrations on renewable energy. “Arguably, there is no other issue that is more important that will affect humanity and the planet. As is often said, we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”

Years in the making, the new school propels a key part of the university’s long-range vision: to create a future in which humans and nature thrive in concert and in perpetuity. The transition team, led by professor of physics and applied physics Kathryn Moler, ‘88, PhD ’95, and professor of geological sciences Stephan Graham, MS ’74, PhD ’76, sought input from faculty, students, staff, alumni and volunteers. The two then served as transition dean and vice dean, respectively, for the new school. (Moler took a leave from her role as vice provost and dean of research, and Graham also serves as dean of the School of Earth, Energy and Environmental Sciences until September 1, when it becomes part of the new school.) The plans they stewarded are supported by lead gifts totaling nearly $1.7 billion, including the largest gift in Stanford history: a $1.1 billion donation from John and Ann Doerr.

“It’s not a small thing to make a new school—there is medicine, law, engineering, education, humanities and sciences, and...
Academic Departments
APPONT FACULTY AND BUILD CURRICA

Sustainability Accelerator
DRIVE POLICY AND TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Interdisciplinary Institutes
THROUGH THEMED INITIATIVES, BRIDGE SCHOLARSHIP ACROSS AND BEYOND THE UNIVERSITY

• Civil & environmental engineering (joint with School of Engineering)
• Energy science & engineering
• Geological sciences
• Geophysics
• Climate science
• Environmental behavioral sciences
• Environment & ecosystems
• Global environmental policy
• Oceans

Woods Institute for the Environment
Proposed new initiatives include:
• Biodiversity & conservation
• Freshwater solutions
• Healthy planet, healthy people
• Natural climate solutions
• Sustainable food systems

Precourt Institute for Energy
Proposed new initiatives include:
• The climate economy
• Data science for decision-making
• Energy technology solutions
• Infrastructure system solutions

Institute for Sustainable Societies
• Culture, behavior & communications
• Environmental governance
• Environmental justice
• Sustainable cities

Existing
• New/Proposed

Via technology and policy pillars:
• Advance high-potential technology by providing labs, tools and subject-matter expertise to help researchers refine and scale projects
• Support interdisciplinary policy design and industry partnerships beyond the university
• Influence laws and practices, connecting directly to real-world needs
business,” Moler says. “And now we are saying sustainability will be as long-lasting as those. Just as the world needs lots of different schools of medicine, the world is going to need lots of schools of sustainability.”

A Sustainability Commons on the west side of campus will bring together the new school’s people and programs, adding two planned flagship buildings to the existing Green Earth Sciences Research Building and Jerry Yang and Akiko Yamazaki Environment and Energy Building.

The school has a distinctive three-part structure designed to enable it to both conduct groundbreaking academic research and translate those findings into real-world impact. In addition to traditional academic departments, it includes expanded interdisciplinary research collaborations and a “sustainability accelerator” to drive policy and technology solutions (see infographic).

This multidisciplinary approach brings together STEM, policy and the social sciences, Majumdar says, creating new opportunities for partnerships. The school will include 90 existing faculty and plans to hire 60 more over the next 10 years. It will house the Woods Institute for the Environment and the Precourt Institute for Energy as well as a planned third interdisciplinary collaboration, the Institute for Sustainable Societies.

“Frankly, we need science and engineering technology, but we also need innovation in the social sciences and policies that will affect people on a global scale,” Majumdar says. “That’s why we need a new school and why it is structured this way, at this time.”

Many people have been asking Stanford to do more in these areas. Among them was John Doerr, who said at a recent campus event that he was inspired to fight against climate change in 2006 by his then 15-year-old daughter after a family viewing of Al Gore’s film An Inconvenient Truth.

“She said, ‘I’m scared and I’m angry,’” said the venture capitalist, his face crumpling with emotion. “‘Your generation created this problem. You better fix it.’”

All Hands on Deck

Stanford should not and, the university hopes, will not be alone in its efforts. “No single institution can solve this problem,” Majumdar says. “We need coalitions of governments around the world and nonprofits all looking for solutions. We need frameworks for how to partner with media to tell the story.”

It is because of the epic and urgent need for everyone to pitch in that Majumdar has indicated that some scholars at the new school may work with fossil fuel companies, provided they are committed to being part of the solution. In May, hundreds of students, faculty, staff and alumni signed an open letter calling on the school to decline funding from fossil fuel companies, prompting Majumdar to elucidate the approach. “I want to clarify that the School does not have plans to seek funding from oil and gas companies for its general operations,” he wrote in a letter to the school community. But, he added, individual faculty members and initiatives could pursue industry partnerships in accordance with university policy.

“There are companies that deny climate change,” he said at a campus event. “Those are dead against my values. But I also believe it’s unwise to paint the whole industry with a single brush.” Majumdar plans to maintain an open conversation with the community over the coming months to discuss such issues, with a goal to create a shared set of values.

Shea, the graduate student working on eDNA, signed the open letter. She believes the dialogue is essential to ensure that the school engages with the world ethically and works for environmental justice.

“So many people’s lives have already been catastrophically affected,” Shea says. “This new school has the potential to radically reshape how research is being done at Stanford and beyond.”

Driving Force

Ultimately, the school is designed to not only conduct research and educate students, but also to ensure that knowledge generated at Stanford has benefits worldwide. The Sustainability Accelerator will drive this in both technology and policy realms, explains Michael Wara, JD ’06, a senior research scholar at the Woods Institute for the Environment and the accelerator’s interim director for policy engagement.

On the policy side, the accelerator will support cross-campus policy design and partnerships with government and other external stakeholders on everything from ecological resilience to environmental justice. Students will be trained in policy analysis to help future government officials understand the breadth of environmental challenges facing us and how to alter their course.

“I try to put grad students in the driver’s seat,” says Wara, a former Stanford law professor. In one of his courses, a student team provided policy analysis for a U.S. senator who wanted to know the possible outcomes of new taxes on carbon emissions. The team supplied background research on potential effects on levels of energy emissions, implementation costs and more. “What the students say to a policymaker might change their view,” Wara says.

“We have designed a school for the future,” said Tessier-Lavigne, “combining knowledge generation and impact.”

Tracie White is a senior writer at Stanford. Email her at traciew@stanford.edu.
On the edge of campus sits a historic cactus garden with a thicket of stories to tell.

point of pride

by Sam Scott

photography by Erin Attkisson
S
doner or Later, anyone who tests their green thumb by volunteering in the Stanford cactus garden—the Arizona Garden, if we’re being formal—is going to feel its bite. “You work in the Arizona Garden, trust me, you will shed blood,” says Stanford historic preservation planner Julie Cain, who has dug into the garden’s ornately laid out beds as well as its 140-year past. “It’s just a matter of time.”

It’s not the murderous-looking spikes of the golden barrels or the Ferocactus rectispinus that tend to get newcomers.

Common sense screams caution there. It’s the silky-looking fuzz of the “Mickey Mouse cactus”—Opuntia microdasys. A brush with one can leave you hollering for the Scotch tape, about the only way to extract the microscopic spines too numerous to tweeze out. “All of us have gotten punctured, stabbed, hooked, you name it, and none of us dread anything more than the Mickey Mouse ears,” Cain says.

Not to be too glib, but their pain has been the campus’s gain. Once famous (or infamous) as the preferred make-out spot for generations of Stanford students, the Arizona Garden had virtually disappeared under weeds and the leaf litter of encroaching oak trees by the time the school decided to attempt a rescue in 1997 as part of a broader restoration of the area that includes the Mausoleum and the Angel of Grief statue. The effort, largely composed of volunteers, has returned the garden close to the stunning glory of its beginnings.

When Jane and Leland Stanford commissioned the garden in the early 1880s, they had no clue they were creating the canoodling capital of anything, let alone a future college campus. With their only child, Leland Jr., very much still alive, they had happier plans for their vast Palo Alto farm than building a university in his memory. They were planning a country estate befitting their status as giants of the Gilded Age. And like many a modern multi-millionaire, they wanted to wow. Amid plans for about 400 acres of lush landscaping surrounding a planned mansion, the cactus garden was meant to be an unmistakable sign to visitors that they had arrived. “It’s supposed to be a crown jewel,” Cain says.

The restoration has brought back the magic; the cactus garden is like an enchanted other-world on the southwestern edge of the Arboretum, the vast tree-filled area that flanks Palm Drive. And yet it can be hard for modern eyes to perceive the awe the garden would have evoked in 1882. Beautiful, yes, but why would it stand out amid all the other luxuries afforded by two of the richest Americans of their day?

To appreciate the full impact, you need historic glasses, Cain says. In the early 1880s, some people were growing desert plants in greenhouses and glass cases, but few were using them in landscaping—and none in formal Victorian parterre gardens, with their intricate patterns of beds and pathways. Rudolph Ulrich, the German landscape designer responsible for the garden, was eager to push the envelope with an attack of colors, textures and species. “He was looking to blow your socks off,” Cain says. “He wanted you to look at that garden and say, ‘Oh my God, I’ve never seen anything like this.'”

And you hadn’t. The rare and fierce-looking cacti may have drawn top billing, but Ulrich sampled widely, filling the garden with American Southwest, Ulrich’s vision might have died on the vine. It was Leland Stanford’s trains as much as his fortune that allowed the landscape architect to wander off into the Sonoran Desert with teams of workers to fill boxcar after boxcar with mature prickly pears and 50-year-old saguaros before bringing the bounty back on the Southern Pacific Railroad. A crown of thorns made from these cacti might just as well have been cast in gold, such was the cost. “The Arizona Garden was a status garden,” Cain says. “It really was to say, ‘This is the type of garden we can afford to have.'”

Ulrich appears to have first installed cactus garden at the Hotel Del Monte in Monterey, Calif., which Stanford and his fellow surviving Big Four railroad tycoons had built as a destination resort. That garden was part of an effort to entice distant guests to make long journeys (by train, of course) and to keep them
happy during extended stays. (If you were going to cross the country, you lingered awhile.)

The fact that the garden needed little water and advertised the Golden State as a place where anything could grow was so much the better for a California booster like Leland Stanford. He apparently liked the Monterey creation so much, Cain says, that he wanted his own.

Leland Jr.’s death in 1884 changed everything. Instead of flourishing at the doorstep of Stanford family life, the garden found itself on the quiet cusp of a fledgling campus, adjacent to a memorial. It wasn’t immediately forgotten, however. Jane Stanford was a major figure for the first generation of students, faculty and staff, and while her memory remained strong, the region with the garden, the Mausoleum and the Angel of Grief remained hallowed ground, Cain says.

But reverence can fade with time. And in the mid-1920s, Chung Wah and Ah Wah, the pair of gardeners who lived in a nearby bunkhouse and tended the cacti, retired to China. In short order, the Depression plunged the university into a battle for survival. By the 1930s, nobody was putting in the work required to keep a cactus garden healthy in the clay soil and wet winters of its transplanted setting.

This decline in official attention corresponded with a rise in the area’s appeal to courting couples, which had been part of the garden’s lore since the university’s earliest days. “Down by the cactus so silent and still / The Junior has come to the question at last; / And love him? The maiden has promised she will / Until the long fever called living is past,” a member of the Class of 1901 wrote.

A 1919 article in the Daily mentions a poem called “The Romance of a Bold Suitor in the Cactus Garden.”

The garden’s beauty made it a natural courting spot, though its chief attribute may have been distance, Smith says. It was a good 15-minute walk from the prying eyes of the Quad, the center of campus life. But it was the rising popularity of the car that turned the garden into a lover’s lane. In 1942, senior prom organizers, looking to raise excitement for the dance, put envelopes on every car parked around the garden with a pair of tickets in two of them.

Other gifts of the garden could be more permanent, as Smith and Cain have heard first-hand. “We had one woman tell us, ‘That’s where I conceived my first child,’ and I’m like, ‘Oh my God, this is way too much information,’” Cain says.

As sexual mores (and dorm rules) changed, the area lost its luster, and its lust. By the early 1960s, the cactus garden—once a regular source of innuendo—virtually drops out of mention in the Daily. (This spring, it made a reappearance as one of the “best places to cry at Stanford.” It’s No. 6, with points off for distance.)

Thus began the garden’s most forgotten years. When the university began its reclamations in the late 1990s, its beds were six inches deep in leaves, oaks loomed over the succulents, and most students did not know the garden existed. And yet, a dozen or so species had survived from the original planting.

Revival has been a process of hard work, donated plants and occasional negotiations. Initially, some on campus opposed removing the oaks that had come to obscure the sun. A shade study made clear that trees and garden couldn’t both flourish. The desert plants were “100 percent in shade, 100 percent of the time.”

Cain says. Thirteen mature oaks were soon removed.

Michael Behen, a former member of the San Francisco Succulent & Cactus Society, likens the early restoration process to an open dig. When he joined the effort in 2000, volunteers were searching for the original serpentinite stonework used to create the edges of the garden’s 58 beds, which extend from a central axis in a symmetrical quadrilateral pattern that from above looks like the patterns of a tortoise shell.

Over the decades, the stones had been swallowed by Arboretum dirt. Old photos and maps narrowed the search, but in the end, success came down to lots of hopeful digging, sometimes on hands and knees. “It was like archaeology,” he says.

It remains a never-ending job. Any formal garden requires constant care, including deadheading flowers and paring back growth that would be tolerated in more naturalistic landscaping. But the fact that many denizens of the Arizona Garden could put your eye out necessitates extra vigilance while pruning.

The ongoing run of warm, dry winters has been good to the succulents, if little else, but they still require special attention when the mercury drops. Plastic covers provide some protection, but standing water combined with cold temperatures can take a vicious toll. “Things have to be pretty vigorous to survive out here,” Smith says, who, conversely, has to hand-water the plants four to six weeks during arid stretches. But with the labor comes love. “I’m blessed by the number of people who tell me they really love this garden,” she says. “It always makes me feel it is worthwhile. It’s a privilege to work in a garden of this significance.”

If you go, just mind the mouse ears.
BOB AND DOTTIE KING SHARE
a lifelong commitment to transforming lives and
improving the human condition. Their philanthropic
partnerships—at Stanford and across the globe—
exemplify an enduring family ethos of stewardship
and service. Bob and Dottie’s dedication to making a
tangible impact in the world has been inspired, in
part, by the personal connections they made through
over 50 years of hosting Stanford’s international
students in their home. Their passion for ending the
cycle of global poverty led them to establish Stanford
Seed and the King Center on Global Development,
bringing together faculty and students from across
the university to pursue innovative solutions for the
alleviation of extreme poverty. Over the years, the
Kings have been pivotal to the advancement of other
meaningful university priorities. Bob and Dottie were
foundational benefactors of Knight-Hennessy
Scholars, endowing the King Global Leadership
Program in support of a new generation of global
leaders. Bob also lent his strategic leadership to the
Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial
Intelligence and the new school focused on climate
and sustainability. Along the way, the Kings shared
their counsel, sparked ideas, and nurtured countless
relationships within the campus community. In all
they do for Stanford, Bob and Dottie are, quite
simply, exceptional.

“Bob and Dottie King inspire all of us at Stanford through their dedication to service and philanthropy.
True humanitarians, they have helped leverage the university’s strengths to drive lasting change both in our campus community
and across the globe. Stanford is fortunate to benefit from their remarkable counsel, support, and friendship.”

MARC TESSIER-LAVIGNE, STANFORD PRESIDENT
UNLIKELY STORY

PROBABLY NOT

CHECK AGAIN LATER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY TAXALI
THE STORIES you are about to read might seem a little bit random. We all have tales of happenstance. The luck of the draw. One door opened even as another closed. In the right place at the right time. An absurd coincidence. Or was it?

It can feel as though much in life is governed by chance, but typically, there’s at least some method in the madness. At the same time, we blow on dice in hope of influencing a random outcome and tell ourselves that no machine will ever be able to manage the myriad unpredictable events that a human driver handles behind the wheel. The more our STANFORD team thought about it, there was something about the idea of randomness that we just couldn’t shake.

So we took a chance, pun absolutely intended. We scoured campus for experts on machine learning, philosophy and even the weather to find out what’s actually random, which things aren’t as arbitrary as we think they are, and how to manage our anxiety about all of it. We also let loose a little. We asked alumni to tell us their stories of chance. We chose a random day in Stanford’s history to examine (with a few parameters—thou shalt not pursue serendipity at the expense of storytelling). And we selected—completely at random—a single person to profile from Stanford’s 235,000 living alumni. He’s fascinating. Maybe any person would have been. Or maybe we got lucky.

—Summer Moore Batte, ’99
BEHOLD THE DREADED, GLORIOUS penalty kick in the box. As the goalkeeper nervously adjusts his stance, the striker contemplates: right corner or left? It's the ultimate quandary in the world's most popular sport.

One winter-quarter morning, associate professor of philosophy Thomas Icard, PhD '14, scrawled a cost-benefit grid of that soccer decision on a blackboard in Building 100. After his 16 first-year students had chewed on it for a while, Icard posited the following: The striker should randomly pick a side. Strategically speaking, there's no way to outsmart the opponent, and no path for compromise. “What's good for one [player] is definitely bad for the other,” he explained.

The advice came in a discussion of game theory, but the broader point was to help students understand some of the ways randomness touches decision-making across a range of disciplines, from computer science to economics to quantum mechanics, and how they might better choose when—and how—to employ its advantages.

“For organisms like us, and for any sufficiently complex organism, it's actually massively helpful to do things randomly,” Icard says. “Sometimes our decisions should be made in a deliberate way, weighing all the options. In other cases, it doesn’t matter what you pick.”

The course, Randomness: Computational and Philosophical Approaches, arose from a chance encounter. A student realized that Icard and assistant professor of computer science and of electrical engineering Mary Wootters were both interested in randomness, and he and fellow students invited the professors to give a talk on the subject. Wootters had the idea to spin it into an introductory seminar, which she and Icard first taught in 2019.

“There are two main benefits of taking the course,” Wootters says. “You get to learn a lot of great material: randomized algorithms, physics, philosophy, biology, economics. The other thing is the fun of approaching a topic from a bunch of different angles. If you think this, then you should randomize; if not, then you shouldn't.”

Something is random, Wootters says, if it is generated probabilistically. (Think: What are the odds . . . ?) But there's no single

ODDLY ENOUGH
A frosh seminar explores the uses of randomness.

Being random just makes sense . . .

WHEN REMEMBERING OR KNOWING ALL IS HARD
Should you drive a faster route that's often patrolled by law enforcement or take slower but less-monitored side roads? Mix it up day-to-day to balance the risk-reward calculus.

WHEN THERE'S A NEED FOR SPEED
Your computer programmer may use it to make those web pages load faster for you.

WHEN YOU'RE NOT PARTICULAR
Any toothpaste will do.

TO SAVE YOUR ENERGY FOR BIG DECISIONS
Select any pair from a drawer full of identical socks.

WHEN YOU'RE NOT SURE EXPLORING WILL PAY OFF
Flip a coin to determine whether you'll lunch at a new and unknown (but perhaps better) spot or your old, familiar haunt.

TO BE FAIR
Or so says the lottery!
definition of the term. Instead, Icard says, he and Wootters provide students with a bunch of ways the concept is described and used. To give you a whiff, they start with interpretations of probability, which can itself be defined as relative frequency, or as subjective degree of belief, or as objective chance. Often, they place randomness on a scale—an algorithm, or an object, or an event, can be more or less random. As randomness increases, patterns or rationales become more difficult to detect.

“We ask students, ‘In daily life, when do you treat things as random?’” Wootters says. “One that they often mention is that they like to think of admissions decisions as random so that it doesn’t hurt their feelings when decisions come out.”

One day, the students paired up to play rock-paper-scissors over and over. They recorded and reported their results: 17–29. 25–42. 13–22. Then they discussed their strategies: Was it better to be as random as possible? Or were they able to outsmart their opponent? Randomness, they decided, was a good strategy—it was harder to anticipate. But that didn’t mean it was easy to lay down their efforts at the foot of fate. “I was trying to predict what the other person was doing,” one student said. “I tried to notice patterns.”

Among the other lessons the course imparts: Economists sometimes use randomness to describe market behavior because it’s too complicated to explain otherwise. In cryptography, randomly generated numbers strengthen encryption—as with digital bank security—because it’s harder for hackers to guess them. In movie animation, an algorithm that assigns random movements to characters in a crowd will enhance a scene’s realism. And, of course, randomized controlled trials, which help establish causality and reliability, are used in all manner of medical research and scientific study. However, Icard says, there are times when one might chuck that “gold standard” or cut a randomized trial short—say, when a new medical device saves every child with persistent pulmonary hypertension, while each child in the control group dies—in order to stave off unnecessary pain and suffering.

“What I hope we’ve convinced you of,” Wootters tells the class, “is that these questions are really complicated.”

—Jill Patton, ’03, MA ’04

Random? By Chance? Improbable?

A philosophy professor rolls out some related concepts.

THE WORDS CHANCE AND RANDOM are, of course, different in their daily usage. We are happy to say things like, “There is no chance of rain tomorrow” and “There’s a random person at my front door,” but not the other way around.

Still, one might assume a deep connection between the concepts. A commonplace view even defines random in terms of (some type of objective) chance: An event is random if it happened by chance.

However, science and philosophy distinguish the terms. The philosopher and mathematician Bruno de Finetti famously proclaimed, “Chances do not exist,” favoring instead a subjective interpretation of probability: Nothing really happens “by chance,” even though some events may be more or less surprising. An alternative suggestion might be that an event is random to a specific person if they previously judged the event to have low probability. But lots of events can have low subjective probability: I would have considered it extremely improbable that my student’s essay contained exactly 4,524 words, and yet I wouldn’t say it was random.

A rich mathematical theory of random objects called Kolmogorov complexity measures randomness without any direct appeal to probability (not to mention objective chance). An object is random to the extent that it has no short description; it is disorderly or incompressible. A chance process could produce a random object, but it might produce an object that’s not random. And there may be ways of obtaining random objects other than by chance.

There are a number of related concepts here that can be disentangled: chance, randomness, probability, frequency, predictability, incompressibility and many more. The intricate connections among them continue to be a subject of much research and interest.

—Thomas Icard, PhD ’14
DECEMBER 1, 1969, is not a date that lives in widespread infamy, but it is as etched in Jim Donart’s memory as the assassination of President Kennedy and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It was the first draft lottery of the Vietnam War, a moment when he—and every other draft-eligible man in America—learned how much Uncle Sam wanted him for a widely unpopular war.

The 90-minute event—broadcast live from Washington, D.C., starting at 5 p.m. Pacific—was already underway by the time Donart returned from class and squeezed into the game room of the Alpha Sigma Phi house, where his fellow fraternity brothers sat transfixed in silence. Lottery representatives were pulling blue plastic capsules from a glass container, each opened to reveal a fateful month and day. Men aged 19 to 26 would be called up in the order in which their birthdates were selected. A high draft number got you off the hook; a low number might send you to Vietnam, where Americans had been fighting—and dying—in large numbers for the better part of the decade.

“No one spoke unless their birthdate was pulled. Then there was an expletive followed by a quick departure,” says Donart, ’70. “It was surreal to imagine that one’s entire future could be determined by a ping-pong ball.”

Similar scenes were playing out in dorm lounges across campus. “The whole thing was almost comical until one considered what was involved: getting drafted, serving as a conscientious objector, going to jail or leaving the country,” says Dan Caldwell, ’70, MA ’78, PhD ’78, a resident assistant in Arroyo who was already headed to the military as a member of Naval ROTC. The arbitrariness was much the point. Up to then, conscription had been conducted by local draft boards, an opaque process that critics said enabled the wealthy and well-connected to avoid being drafted. A national lottery aimed to put everyone’s name in the hat. Not that its fairness goals earned much credit from those already set against a war that was nearing the end of its second most bloody year.

In a front-page story the morning of the lottery, the Daily explained the new draft system using a hypothetical student draftee: “C. Fodder.”

Writ large, the 1969 lottery would cause sweeping changes to tens of thousands of lives, a cascading set of effects social scientists have deemed “one of the most significant randomized experiments in history.” Research has found that those drafted after the lottery were more likely to smoke, die young, earn less, vote and raise offspring who joined the military, among other outcomes. Kevin Devine, ’70, refused induction into the military and, after the FBI chased him down, ultimately faced the choice of a three-year prison sentence or conscription into the Army. He joined up, but after multiple trips to the stockade, he was issued a general discharge.

Who Lives, Who Dies

In 1969, the fate of millions was determined by pulling birthdates from a glass container.
It read: “Unable to adapt to military life.” That was the “understatement of the decade,” he says. “The upshot here is that I spent a lot of years after my draft and Army experiences thinking of myself as an outlaw and a bad fit for most elements of life for which Stanford was supposed to prepare me.”

An estimated 500,000 men avoided the draft through various strategies, including conscientious objection, emigration and preventive enlistment in military roles unlikely to see combat. And university students had more options than many—they could become officers and, until 1971, they could defer service till graduation.

Tyler Comann, ’72, a sophomore during the 1969 broadcast, remembers sitting in the hallway of Roble listening to the radio with 15 or so dormmates, each kicking $1 into a kitty to go with 15 or so dormmates, each kicking $1 into a kitty to go with 15 or so dormmates, each kicking $1 into a kitty to go to the first man selected. It wouldn’t take long for Comann to collect. The first birthdate picked—September 14—was his. Rather than face almost certain deployment as an Army grunt, he enrolled in a reserve officer training program for the Navy, the branch of the Armed Forces his father had served in during World War II. He would serve three years in the Navy after graduating in 1972. For him, the experience proved to be a blessing. “I learned a tremendous amount about leadership and about human behavior and responsibility. I had kids working for me from the Bronx, from East L.A., that had gone to Yale, that were from Arkansas and all over. You really figured out people are people.”

Like Comann, Norman Goodman, ’71, MA ‘77, PhD ’81, also had a World War II lineage. He and his brother were named after his mother’s younger brothers, who were killed within a month of each other fighting in the war. Growing up, Goodman was strongly influenced by his parents, who he says worked tirelessly for international understanding and world peace. Whatever results, on its front page.

“It was a huge relief to know that I could plan my life ahead without being forced to fight in a war that I thought was wrong and unjust,” Goodman says. Viewed from the smartphone era, it’s fascinating how a few missed moments could make the suspense of the event even more excruciating. By the time of the lottery, Vance Chan, ’70, MBA ’76, knew two of his childhood acquaintances had died in the war, and he remembers being so queasy during the broadcast he had to rush to the dorm bathroom to dry heave. When he returned, nobody could tell him whether his day had been selected. The agony of uncertainty lasted until the 365th pick, when his birthdate was confirmed.

“Now my plans, my world were upended. Law school would be postponed or, perhaps, become moot. I might become moot.”

It appears that no Stanford student died in the war as a result of the lottery. Of the 20 military deaths in the Vietnam War associated with the Stanford community, according to university archives, all seem to have involved men who joined the military earlier than December 1969. Most were officers. More than 58,000 Americans died over the course of the 20-year conflict.

Certainly for Donart, the results weren’t as dire as he first feared. He joined the Marine Corps Reserve and was to be trained as a machine gunner. But by the time he completed boot camp, troops were starting to come home. Law school was delayed for a year, and his plans for life and family were soon on track.

“But I still shudder when I think of the randomness of that lottery,” he says, “and how it affected so many lives.”

—Sam Scott
IF, TO YOUR SURPRISE, you’ve found yourself calmed by watching and rewatching YouTube videos of paper being cut into perfect circles, or you are somewhat concerned about the amount of joy you got from reorganizing your closet—fret not. Searching for symmetry and order in these, the tiniest corners of our lives, may be just what the doctor ordered in times of chaos and strife.

“So much feels out of our control at a world level right now that it’s impacting our mental health,” says Carolyn Rodriguez, an associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences. Although few of the bad things we see happening are truly random, much feels impossible to predict, and that causes “a lot of angst,” she says. Cleaning and organizing can reduce anxiety and stress—and even become a mindfulness practice—while tidy spaces can help you focus. So videos that celebrate symmetry or TV shows in which someone else’s garage gets decluttered may just be quick hits of relaxation—harmless coping mechanisms to help us deal with constant change and lack of control.

“As a clinician, you try and help highlight the positive coping mechanisms, like taking a walk or uncluttering home spaces,” Rodriguez says, rather than the more negative ones, such as drinking too much alcohol or repeatedly staying up too late.

Rodriguez treats patients with depression and anxiety, including hoarding disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder. So when it comes to understanding the mind’s natural distaste for randomness and general
inclination toward predictability and control, she’s something of an expert. And right now, with wars and plagues and natural disasters, social inequities, economic uncertainty and even the high price of gas, seeking solace in our sock drawers makes perfect sense.

“For some, it’s very soothing to look at ordered things,” she says, admitting that she has watched an episode or two of Get Organized with the Home Edit, where two professional organizers get paid to say things like “pantries are just the most fun” while rearranging cluttered spaces into displays of visual splendor.

“It’s a fantasy,” Rodriguez says. “Why doesn’t a fairy come and organize my life?” Reese Witherspoon, whose Hello Sunshine media company now owns the Home Edit brand, proudly shared photos of her professionally reorganized closet, where her famously pink wardrobe from the movie Legally Blonde is arranged by hue, from palest blush to brightest fuchsia.

Of course, even if tidying sparks joy, it isn’t going to solve serious mental health issues by itself. Intolerance of uncertainty—the dispositional tendency to fear the unknown—has been linked with excessive worry, obsessions and compulsions, and hoarding symptoms. Rodriguez encourages patients with hoarding disorder to start with small goals and just a few minutes of work per day, like uncluttering one square foot at a time or tidying a high-traffic area of the home (for example, the entrance). “Seeing a space—even a small space—that is clear and orderly is rewarding for patients and is highly motivating for them to continue to build on that success,” she says.

She also understands the allure of arranging home items using the method of rainbow organizing—endlessly popular on YouTube and on home organizing TV shows—which involves displaying everything from books to fingernail polish in color-spectrum order, from red through orange, yellow, green, blue and violet.

“The rainbow has a certain order—it’s familiar,” Rodriguez says. “It even touches the heart a little bit, that things are going to be OK. Everything’s neat and organized, like kindergarten.”

Rodriguez herself has found great comfort in organizing corners of her own world, just like she counsels others to try. “For me, it was that front hallway. Having the kids’ shoes aligned in the entryway was very soothing.”

—Tracie White

—Trina Wiggins, ’82
YOU’D BE HARD-PRESSED to find anyone who appreciates the Stanford Daily archives more than we do. Especially since their digitization in 2014, Daily stories of yore have sharpened our own stories on everything from the deadly Big Game disaster of 1900 to the university’s late-’70s dalliance with making Stanford’s official mascot a griffin. (Wiser heads ultimately decided a leonine eagle would be a “bit too he-man-ish” for the job, which is just the sort of historic Daily tidbit that curls our toes.)

But even we know it ain’t all gold in the student journalism vaults. There’s dross aplenty too. So it was with mild concern that this Stanford writer waited to learn the focus of this story, a tour of a randomly selected Daily issue. (Methodology: my 9-year-old son, rummaging blindfolded through mixing bowls containing hand-written days, months and years.) But fear not. The boy chose well. The four pages of the Daily that hit campus on Monday, January 19, 1942, give a lot to consider.

There is a patina of same-as-it-ever-was: Ram’s Head is holding tryouts, fraternities are facing questions of breaking Rush rules, and sororities are tallying pledges, oblivious to the fact that the university will dissolve the organizations two years later. (The decision, born of claims of exclusion and a schism between “hall women” and “Row women,” would bar women’s Greek organizations from campus for 33 years.)

But six weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Vol. 100 Issue 68 of the Daily is unmistakably centered in a time of world war and the likelihood that not only will Stanford students soon be fighting, but also that the destruction might even reach campus. According to a front-page story, the university has been divided into 26 “civilian defense districts,” which are prepping for blackout drills designed to cloak campus in protective darkness. (One letter writer grouses that the blackouts are causing the campus post office to lock up early.) Lest enemy planes aren’t so easily deceived, leaders are also showing a movie on how to suppress fires ignited by incendiary bombs.

Elsewhere, the paper notes a 26 percent surge in the number of undergrads studying chemistry, “the focal point of vital wartime research problems,” and that public and private donations have added $100,000 to Stanford’s coffers for similar endeavors. Two months into America’s entry into the war, the calculus of college has been altered fundamentally. “Everything must be sacrificed to the vast need of production—and that includes the production of trained brains,” President Ray Lyman Wilbur, Class of 1896, MA ’97, MD ’99, is reported to have said to a group of alumni.

But even in war, this is still a student newspaper. The conflagration is also invoked to urge women to snap up 99-cent tickets to the upcoming Sadie Hawkins Hop. “This dance is your last chance to repay the fellows for the money they’ve spent on you,” said...
dance chairwoman Dodie Dolan, ’43. “Get a man before the Army beats you to it.”

A DIFFERENT WORLD

Once ubiquitous, Sadie Hawkins dances might benefit from explanation in 2022. They were annual occasions in which female students had social permission to upturn convention and ask a man out. “This affair is the only campus dance to which Stanford women can drag the men,” as the Daily of January 16, 1942, put it. Based on the Li’l Abner comic strip (Google it), the dances became a national rage in the 1930s. Stanford joined the party in 1940, limiting tickets to 500, apparently due to the 1899 dictate of Jane Stanford that kept the female student body capped at 500 until its revocation in 1933.

The Sadie Hawkins dance is far from the only example in the paper of how thoroughly standards and expectations have changed in 80 years, not least around gender and romance. In 1942, marriage proposals were still a common, and publicized, feature of undergraduate life: “The current boom in five-pound boxes of candy continues as four more engagements were announced last week at Stanford sorority houses,” the paper reported. Not that everyone in 1942 exuded monogamous vibes. “Lives there a man with soul so dead, who never has turned his head, and said, ‘Hmm, not bad!’” quipped one editor in a column urging sororities to host more open houses so that men could meet “a lot of cute women.” The author, Harold Shafer, ’42, could not have known he had reason to seize the day. But tragically, two years later, he would be killed flying for the Marines in the South Pacific, one of nearly 300 Stanford casualties in the war.

The dissonance with our own times continues on the sports page, and not just because the “Frosh Mermen” of Encina Hall triumph in an interclass swim meet. There’s also a photo of Bill Cowden, ’42, whose outstanding defensive play, the paper says, was crucial in two basketball victories over local opposition the previous weekend. Two months later, the team would win Stanford’s only men’s basketball’s NCAA championship. Those familiar with Stanford history won’t be surprised to see Cowden referenced as a “veteran Indian guard.” The Indian was the athletics mascot from 1930 until 1972, after protests by Native American students led to its removal (the decision created the vacancy almost filled by the Griffins). But less well known is that the 1942 Daily used a derogatory term for Native people in headlines and another ethnic slur to refer to the wartime enemy in the Pacific theater.

At top and bottom of the front page are mentions of erstwhile Stanford legends whose legacies have been reexamined. As was apparently annual tradition, David Starr Jordan, Stanford’s first president, gets fond wishes for his posthumous 91st birthday: “Today, with the alumni and faculty of every class from 1891 to 1941, the students of Stanford pause to remember and commemorate Dr. Jordan,” it says. Meanwhile, psychology professor—and pioneer in IQ testing—Lewis Terman gets a plug for a speech he’s giving to the Stanford Mothers’ Club. Both men have undergone public scrutiny due to their support for eugenics. In the past five years, Palo Alto removed both men’s names from middle schools and Stanford renamed campus spaces bearing Jordan’s multifaceted legacy and importance in Stanford history, but also his “beliefs and actions that are antithetical to the values of our campus community” and that he “disparaged a broad swath of human populations and that he forcefully articulated views, unsupported by scientific evidence, of a hierarchy of races, ethnicities and cultures.”

The student journalists of January 19, 1942, took a more declaratory approach. “Unless the standards of Western civilization topple—and that is what we are now struggling to prevent—we must surely recognize in this man the hallmarks of greatness,” the Daily wrote.

But you know what they say about journalism being the first rough draft of history. The Daily archive isn’t the kind of news that stays news, but as a historical record, it only gets more revelatory.

—Sam Scott
THE CAMERA ZOOMS across campus toward Hoover Tower, classical music playing in the background, then settles indoors on a student in a buttoned-up polo shirt at a grand piano. Just another Stanford undergrad seen thousands of times over in an online admissions video, showcasing an array of talents.

“There’s a different kind of atmosphere here, coming from the South, coming out to California,” says Bryant Johnson as the camera follows his fingers across the keys. “I like being around those with a thirst to learn more, a thirst to ask why.”

Five years later, Johnson, ’17, is still thirsting for knowledge and still asking why. Randomly selected from more than 235,000 alumni to be profiled in this issue, he says he’d love another chance to get his voice heard, to speak out loud as a Black man. If luck is what happens to the prepared, then Johnson has long prepared for just such a random chance.

“In the grand scheme, I know where I come from,” says Johnson, who grew up in Georgia, the descendant of enslaved people “immediately off the ship in Brunswick.” He adds, “In my community, you use your gifts for all Black people—the disenfranchised, the wealthy, the poor. You use your blessings to give back.”

Since graduation, Johnson has worked in digital marketing for Meta (formerly known as Facebook), first in Austin, Texas, then telecommuting from his condominium in Atlanta. In the fall, he’ll move on to new challenges as a graduate student in Boston. He’s a reader and a thinker, but he’s also a performer and an adventurer at heart. He’ll hop on a plane whenever he can just to try out a new place, from Utah to Belize. He studied abroad in Paris for 10 weeks as a junior, thinking French would impress women, he says with a laugh.

In conversation, Johnson veers toward the big picture, what life’s all about. He speaks out against racism and prejudice and about the importance of a sense of community. Maybe he learned that from his father, a superior court judge, and his mother, who conveys a sense of legacy when she talks about attending school with the children of Martin Luther King Jr. Some of it, he’ll tell you, he learned the hard way on the playground.

“He was always interested in his voice being heard,” says his mother, Michelle. “We loved that about him.”

Maybe that began in high school when he started a mock trial team. In those days, he wanted to be a good Christian who followed in his father’s footsteps, speaking out for civil rights and heading to law school when he

‘ALWAYS INTERESTED IN HIS VOICE BEING HEARD’

Bryant Johnson has long prepared for an interview like this.
grew up. He adopted courtroom theatrics from table-pounding scenes in movies like To Kill a Mockingbird and Lincoln Lawyer. “I had to be persuasive, so yeah, I’m pulling out all the stops,” he remembers. “I hate losing.”

Johnson’s roots were planted in two Southern communities a 30-mile drive apart—one rural, the other urban. During the week, he attended primary and secondary school in Covington, same as his dad, Horace, who was one of the first to attend an integrated school there, as a fourth-grader. On the weekends, Johnson and his family drove into Atlanta to connect with his mother’s side. Sundays, he attended the Columbia Drive United Methodist Church, the same church where he worships now. The church pianist taught him Bach and rapped his knuckles with a ruler when he didn’t place his hands just right.

He and his older brother, James, excelled in music, sports and academics. They got bullied a bit for being smart, his mom says. But it was racism that left a mark.

“I got called the N-word in fifth grade,” Johnson says. “A kid threw a ball at my head as I was walking to first base.” That kind of thing sticks with you, he says.

Johnson mulls over those types of experiences, how they shaped him and how best to move forward. Listen to him speak and you can hear this ongoing dialogue: How can laws and regulations be applied so disproportionately for people of color? How can political influence lead unfairly to mass incarceration of Black people, affecting voting rights, home investments and land ownership? How can my own skills and talents help change all that?

The spring of his senior year in high school, he opened an email from Stanford, and it said, “Congratulations.” Well, that was that. He was headed out West. His brother grew up bigger and stronger than him, and played football at the College of William & Mary. But Johnson navigated Stanford’s holistic admissions process without benefit of athletics recruitment. And about that, his dad loved to brag.

People would ask Horace Johnson which sport Bryant was going to play, “like clearly I couldn’t have gotten into Stanford on my own,” Johnson says. “My dad would always be quick to correct people: ‘No, he’s not going for sports. He’s going for academics alone.’ It made him proud.”

At Stanford, he was placed into Ujamaa House, an African American theme dorm with an intellectual focus on the African diaspora. His roommate was from Kenya, and he loved that. Johnson worked as a program coordinator at the Black Community Services Center, played piano for and sang tenor in the Stanford Gospel Choir, and pledged Alpha Phi Alpha.

“It was the first collegiate Black fraternity, founded at Cornell in 1906,” he says. “Dr. King, W.E.B. Du Bois, Justice Thurgood Marshall were all Alpha men. My dad was an Alpha man. Most Black men who had an influence on me were Alpha men.”

By his senior year, Johnson was chapter president of the fraternity and a resident assistant in Meier Hall. He had chosen to major in political science—“I wanted to know how governments work”—and he’d cultivated his sense of fun.

“He came to college in suits, Lord have mercy,” says his best friend from Stanford, Charles Akin-David, ’17, MS ’18. “He was pinkies up, all that stuff. I was from Eastside Atlanta, got Jordans on.” He gave Johnson pointers on streetwear, they hung out at Cardinal football games, and there were plenty of visits to the local Wingstop for food that reminded them of home. “Bryant’s my boy, for sure,” says Akin-David. “He’s cool, he’s calm, he’s kindhearted. He looks out for people.”

In 2020, Johnson moved home to Atlanta to be with his family after his dad died of complications from COVID-19. In “deep sadness,” he says, he turned inward, reading books about society, technology and the economy with such titles as Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World and Machine Platform Crowd: Harnessing Our Digital Future. He’d prepared his application for law school but never pushed the ‘send’ button. Instead, he is headed to MIT Sloan School of Management in the fall.

“My north star now is to shape wealth engines, whether it’s investing in businesses or communities,” Johnson says. “It’s not just so I can be rich. In order for marginalized communities to get out of this hamster wheel of inequality, wealth needs to get redistributed. I’m choosing to be a change agent.”

“Me being a Christian man, I want to be judged on the number of good works I do,” he says. “My walk to this day is all in the service. To stay prayerful. To keep moving on.”

—Tracie White
PHOTO: COOPER MALLOZZI

LAST SEPTEMBER, a computer-generated Facebook prompt incited public outrage. At the end of a video showing police officers arresting a Black man, an automated suggestion read: “Keep seeing videos about Primates?” Facebook apologized for the “unaccept-
able error,” which was, in fact, more than that: It pointed to a significant challenge for the field of machine learning. The word primates was generated by a machine learning model, a tool built using an algorithm that crunches some existing data sets (in this case, videos) and then uses that knowledge to classify new information. Such models are limited by the data they’re trained on. In this case, researchers presume, the training data did not include a sufficient number of Black men. Google and Amazon have had to face up to similar blunders. “This is a problem,” says John Duchi, ’06, MS ’07, an associate professor of statistics and of electrical engineering, “and I think people are recognizing exactly how important it is to get good data.”

Machine learning models can automate elements of criminal justice risk assessments, medical diagnoses or wildlife identification. The large data sets they’re trained on are supposed to represent the world at large. “You are picking out some hopefully random—literally, uniformly random—sample of the entire population,” Duchi says.

But researchers are seeing that randomly selected data never fully reflects real-world populations or settings. After all, no training data set is actually infinite, and there are too many variations in real-world data—even with a set of, say, 14 million training images—to capture all the different possible ways inputs could appear. “These companies get a lot of flack” for relying on limited data, Duchi says, “and they do deserve some flack. But at the same time, we—the statisticians, the machine learning researchers—we haven’t really actually developed the tools to prevent this.”

Curating better random data sets is now one of the most active areas of machine learning research, Duchi says, but the work is in its early stages. Meanwhile, machine learning models—warts and all—are already heavily relied upon worldwide.

In 2018, health care software company Epic debuted an early-detection model to help clinicians identify cases of sepsis, which, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, affects 1.7 million U.S. adults annually. Nearly 270,000 die as a result. The model—trained on data from 405,000 patient encounters at three health care organizations—was rolled out in hundreds of hospitals across the country. Thereafter, it failed to
identify 67 percent of sepsis cases, while falsely identifying patients without sepsis.

“Different hospitals have different equipment, different scanners,” says Pang Wei Koh, ’13, MS ’13, who expects to complete his doctorate in computer science in September. “The doctors may use slightly different protocols. And so the data points from each hospital follow a different distribution.”

Simply gathering better data to improve outcomes is not an easy task. “There are few convenient data sets for researchers to use,” says Koh. “Machine learning is all about learning stuff from the data, and it’s very expensive to go and collect data.” Once you have the data, labeling it is labor- and time-intensive.

To begin to address such shortcomings, Koh and fellow Stanford doctoral student Shiori Sagawa created WILDS, a collection of 10 data sets intentionally curated to be more representative of the real world. The researchers considered how machine learning models might be deployed and sought out additional data with greater variation—time of day, type of camera, location and so forth. Koh hopes the move will urge more machine learning researchers to consider the range of data they use when developing and evaluating models.

“Before Google and Facebook had these episodes, I don’t think people were thinking about it particularly carefully,” says Duchi. “It’s a major challenge of our time—to make sure that we have the right representation of the people we’re going to affect with these models.”

—Kali Shiloh

WE OFTEN THINK OF ART INSTALLATIONS as being meticulously planned, but this one was determined by chance. Polish-German artist Alicja Kwade built a 1:100 scale model of Stanford’s Science and Engineering Quad, threw a dozen marbles into it a handful of times, then picked the arrangement she liked best. “It’s a little bit like God would play marbles,” says Kwade in a video of the installation at alu.ms/SEQart. Pars pro Toto—Latin for a part that represents the whole—includes 12 stone spheres sourced from eight different countries and ranging from 16 to 98 inches in diameter.

The project was launched by engineering dean Jennifer Widom, who says the outdoor work “brings a new dynamism and vitality” to the quad. Kwade says in her artist’s statement that the many-hued orbs represent a small galaxy that evokes infinite possibilities. “Each stone represents a self-contained world or universe, drawing on the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics, which suggests that all possible alternate histories and futures are real.”

—Isaac Lozano, ’25
Math Magic

With a random approach, two young scholars solve a tricky problem in one night.

AS A NEW COLLEGE graduate in South Korea, Jin Young Park needed a job, and she wanted to be a mathematician. But she didn’t know how to become one, so she taught middle school math for seven years.

Now, as an assistant professor of mathematics at Stanford, she is drawing accolades from around the world for using a clever randomized process to solve a math problem that has stumped other mathematicians for more than 15 years.

"People are very excited that I was a middle school teacher," says Park, who, along with Stanford PhD student Huy Tuan Pham, ’18, MS ’18, in a single night in March, co-authored a proof that solved the Kahn-Kalai conjecture.

“I would call their proof magical,” says math professor Jacob Fox, Pham’s adviser.

First posed in 2006 by two math professors, the conjecture makes a claim about the “threshold” at which random sets or graphs might result in a useful structure—say, a triangle. Mathematicians use threshold levels—the computational equivalent of a freezing or boiling point—to determine when these structures will appear. However, exact thresholds are hard to compute. The conjecture posited that the “expectation threshold,” which is less precise but much easier to calculate, is actually very close to the true threshold.

For months, Park and Pham had been working on a different problem that gave them the idea that they needed. Their remarkably short proof (six pages) is partly dedicated to constructing “covers,” or collections of sets, that show the Kahn-Kalai conjecture to be true. Their technique could be applied to other tough math problems. Well, tough for most of us.

"After we had that idea," Pham says, "it took us one night to confirm that it really worked."

"It was easy,” Park says, with a laugh.

—Tracie White

CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF CHAOS

Weather isn’t random, but bring a jacket anyway.

IN 1969, mathematician and meteorologist Edward Norton Lorenz was running weather models when he needed to restart some computer calculations. He entered a variable value to the thousandths. The computer, however, had originally run the computations using values that went to the millions. The tiny changes in the initial conditions of his models gave him wildly different results. The disproportionate outcomes, he said, were like the flap of a butterfly’s wings causing a tornado weeks later. He’d discovered the seminal mathematical principle of deterministic chaos: the butterfly effect.

It was fitting that the phenomenon emerged from the mathematically chaotic atmosphere, which changes drastically in response to infinitesimal shifts. Today’s climate scientists and meteorologists use powerful supercomputers to account for as many influences as possible when delivering weekly forecasts, issuing flood warnings and mapping hurricane paths, but they’ll never be able to predict the weather with complete accuracy.

Despite how it may feel sometimes, “the weather is not actually random,” says Aditi Sheshadri, an assistant professor of earth system science. The fluid dynamics equations she uses to predict the movement of the atmosphere around the earth are precise but also limited by available data. To gather enough information for near-perfect forecasts, “you would have to put a sensor at every millimeter squared of the atmosphere,” Sheshadri says. Impossibly small sensors would block out the sky; you’d be breathing them in.

Today, meteorologists can predict the weather about 10 days out, but that window is at risk. Last year, Sheshadri and her team used one of Stanford’s supercomputers, called Sherlock, to investigate the effects of climate change on weather forecasting. Weather in the midlatitudes is governed by large-scale storms—or eddies—so Sheshadri applied the theories of eddy formation to both warmer and colder climates. The news was not good for meteorologists.

“The eddies tend to grow more quickly, and thus propagate error more quickly, in a warmer climate,” Sheshadri says.

Advances in computation are making incremental improvements to the accuracy of the 10-day forecast, according to Sheshadri, but science will be no match for Mother Nature. Still, as Lorenz knew well, small changes make a big difference.

—Kali Shiloh
I WENT TO A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL located in Hyde Park, a leafy old Chicago neighborhood by Lake Michigan. The school had a particular joie de vivre. During the fall, classes were held against the backdrop of rustling leaves that whispered through the classroom windows facing the school’s many courtyards. In winter, the courtyards were a winter wonderland of set pieces, like the Christmas windows at Marshall Field’s department store. The spring, though! In the spring, the smells of melting ice and new growth blew in and crawled through the hallways like a supernatural spirit. For teenagers, that was the scent of rebellion. Kids stopped coming to class. Crushes held all year came into the daring light of prom. Fall friendships were broken and new ones born. It was the season of happy food riots in the cafeteria. Make no mistake: Glasses, knives and heavy ceramic plates were thrown. We all knew it was merely a celebration of next winter being very far away.

On one of those spring days, I left school “early” to play tennis. Walking to the outdoor court, I thought about my application to a brand-new high school. I loved my current high school. It was hip and pretty. My parents had transferred guardianship of me to my father’s secretary to get me into the school district so I could attend. But the pull of even better college prep classes, a radical approach to student life (think Hogwarts houses), a super-strong arts program and brand-new architecture was strong.

This same spring day was the last day to mail the application. In those days, postmarks mattered; they were the undisputed atomic clock of the U.S. mail. Also in those days, no counselors, parents or community programs were involved in your college applications. Kids took direct responsibility for their education, and I had my next step in my pocket—where any kid would keep the key to their future.

After my tennis match, I checked for the application. Gone with the wind! I searched everywhere on the court and eventually gave up. Resigned to my fate of staying at the fun school, I walked home through the park and then along 51st Street. Blocks and blocks away, with my head hanging low, I spied a dirty, deep orange-yellow piece of paper. It was wet and stuck in the bottom branches of a hedge. Could that be it? It was! I mailed it. I got into the new school (which is now considered to be one of the best in the country), and that set my path to Stanford.

I could have taken any other path home. I could have taken the path I did and walked right past it. Either way—and truly, had I chosen to walk almost any other way!—I’m certain I would have had a different life. To this day, I believe that life is chaotically governed by both fate and that damned unknowable wind, but I always hit “send” at least a day before any deadline.

—Janet Savage, ’82
All You Can Read

IN HER BOOK Dopamine Nation, which Stanford reviewed in the May issue, psychiatry and behavioral sciences professor Anna Lembke, MD ’95, confesses that she struggled with her own addiction. It got so bad that Lembke was showing up at work exhausted and hiding from her family on vacation to engage in her habit. Which was reading erotic romance novels. She couldn’t put her Kindle down, partly because the very short chapters ended with a cliffhanger to keep her hooked.

That’s one of the many ways Amazon has changed literature that English professor Mark McGurl chronicles in his book Everything and Less: The Novel in the Age of Amazon (Verso). It is a smart academic book that puts a cheery veneer on a depressing Marxist critique of the death of literature. Also, it’s filthy.

I have long been accused of being sex-obsessed, but not even I saw the “smiling phallus” in the Amazon logo. McGurl merrily delves into the mire, exploring the very specific fiction genres that have flourished thanks to Amazon’s recommendation algorithms. And he actually reads these novels. Not just the Alpha Billionaire Romances (e.g., Loving the White Billionaire), but also the Adult Baby Diaper Lover novels (e.g., Seduce, Dominate, Diaper) and Surreal Satirical Gay Porn (e.g., Bigfoot Pirates Haunt My Balls). He appreciates them all. Really. Truly. Even if that’s not so clear when he’s comparing Fifty Shades of Grey to Mrs. Dalloway. Sure, McGurl can try to elevate Fifty Shades by tracing its roots to Samuel Richardson’s Pamela, but from what I remember from my 18th-Century British Novel course, Pamela sucked so badly that Henry Fielding wrote Shamela to make fun of it.

McGurl argues that literary fiction, the kind that he teaches and explores in his previous book The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing, is just another specific genre, one obsessed with realism. Its consumers are merely another group searching for quality “me time.” This is a book about the end of the elite, the end of gatekeeping institutions, and how neat that is.

But, McGurl can’t help but say, we literary readers are slightly different consumers. We’re not paying a monthly subscription to the all-you-can-read Kindle Unlimited subscription service. We’re not reading self-published authors who pump out epic tetralogy after epic tetralogy on Kindle Direct Publishing. We are Stanford graduates, ensconced in a world far from the literary Age of Amazon, where “nowadays, as a popular novelist, you are not so much crafting a perfect object as, somewhat like a blogger or regular poster, constructing a narrative feed.”

Before he got his PhD in comp lit, McGurl had my job. He was a magazine writer, telling stories about himself for the New York Times Magazine. Unlike McGurl, I stopped my education at a master’s in English. (Fine, it was a co-term.) But I like to fancy that, if I’d gone on to get a PhD, I would have written books like this. Sure, it’s a book that, last I checked, was selling for $1.99 as an e-book and was No. 36 in Amazon’s micro-genre of 21st Century Literary Criticism. No matter how small and insignificant the genre of highbrow literature may become, it’s the one for me.

Joel Stein, ’93, MA ’94, is the author, most recently, of In Defense of Elitism: Why I’m Better than You and You Are Better than Someone Who Didn’t Buy This Book. Email him at stanford.magazine@stanford.edu.

Whether dropping from the air into the Kindle or other device, or showing up on the doorstep in a flat brown box, these are the works that Amazon’s customers demand in largest numbers and which it is happy to supply.
Radical Empathy: Finding a Path to Bridging Racial Divides
Terri E. Givens, ’87; Policy Press. How to put good intentions into action to create lasting change.

While We Were Dating
Jasmine Guillory, JD ’02; Berkley. Can two newly in-love actors be content with sharing the Hollywood spotlight?

Taste Makers: Seven Immigrant Women Who Revolutionized Food in America
Mayukh Sen, ’14; W.W. Norton. Meet the mostly unsung culinary influencers who brought flavor from their home countries to the table.

Why Trust Matters: An Economist’s Guide to the Ties That Bind Us
Benjamin Ho, MA ’04, PhD ’06; Columbia U. Press. The confidence that makes the global economy go ’round.

Saul Steinberg’s Literary Journeys: Nabokov, Joyce, and Others
Jessica R. Feldman, ’71; U. of Virginia Press. Tracing the bookish roots that anchored the longtime New Yorker illustrator’s work.

Planetary Longings
Mary Louise Pratt, PhD ’75; Duke U. Press. The professor emerita of Spanish and Portuguese explains how world-making and knowledge-making flourish in eras of unpredictability.
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When people spoke with Laurie Hoagland about complex investment decisions, they were often met with a pause. “You’d be sitting across from his desk, and there’d be two minutes of silence while he just thought through it,” says Paul Brest, former dean of Stanford Law School and former president of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

While Hoagland listened and thought deeply, his work spoke for itself. During the economically volatile '80s, he increased assets at his St. Louis investment firm from $7 million to $300 million. That success earned him an interview for the position of founding president and CEO at Stanford Management Company (SMC), but it wasn’t his shrewd investment strategies alone that got him the job—it was also his dedication to Stanford. One of 13 Hoaglands to study on the Farm, he was the sort to make an appointment with the university president—as an undergrad—to assess whether he might one day want to lead a college himself. Then he refined his goal. “When he was 25, he said, ‘My dream would be to manage some money for Stanford someday,’” recalls his wife, Grace “Gay” Hoagland, ’59.

He thought supporting the university’s scholars would improve the world. Laurence Hoagland Jr., ’58, who helped transform the field of university endowment investing, died on April 24. He was 85. When Stanford’s treasurer and endowment manager died in 1991, university leaders decided to form a management company to oversee its endowment and real estate holdings. As its inaugural CEO, Hoagland saw an opportunity to mix things up. While other university endowments were invested primarily in U.S. stocks and bonds, Hoagland became one of the first to diversify with international investments, real estate, private equity and—most boldly—venture capital. “For university endowments and big nonprofit endowments, he changed the name of the game,” says economics professor emeritus John Shoven. During Hoagland’s nine years of leadership, the main invested portion of Stanford’s endowment grew from $1.9 billion to $3.6 billion.

At SMC, Hoagland surrounded himself with Nobel Prize–winning economists and future industry powerhouses, including many women leaders (a rarity in the field at the time). With intellectual heft behind him, he had confidence in his unconventional ideas. He left SMC in 2000 and, in 2001, assumed responsibility for the Hewlett Foundation’s endowment, where he navigated difficult conversations as it divested from much of its Hewlett-Packard stock, committing instead to a diverse portfolio that could sustain the foundation over the long term. During his 12-year tenure at the foundation, its holdings grew from $3.7 billion to $7.8 billion, and it distributed $3.9 billion in grants.

In many ways, Hoagland’s thoughtful approach to investing was an extension of those projected conversational pauses. “Once you knew him well enough,” says former CIO of SMC Anne Cassells, MBA ’85, “you knew that you should just wait through those silences because he was thinking, and whatever was going to come out of his mouth was well worth listening to.”

In addition to his wife, Hoagland is survived by his sons, Laurence Hoagland III, ’85, Craig, ’86, MA ’93, David, ’87, and Edward, ’90, MA ’91, and 10 grandchildren.

—Kali Shiloh
wildflower walks with his family. He was an avid singer and member of the San Francisco Symphony Choir. Survivors: his wife of 72 years, Catherine; children, Caroline Armstrong, Gregory and Nicholas, ’86, MS ’89, MBA ’94; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Emily Flora Sala Chapman, ’45 (social science/social thought), of San Francisco, March 23, at 98. She contributed to the Stanford Daily. She was the founder of one of the first cooking schools in San Francisco and the author of seven cookbooks, including Fifteen Minute Meals and a series for Williams-Sonoma. She was known for her personal style, fashion taste and interior design, and she took her children to live in Florence, Italy, in the early 1960s for “the exposure.” Her homes appeared in House Beautiful and Architectural Digest. Survivors: her children, Cecelia, Peter and Duncan; and four grandchildren.

Betty Ann Porter Badenhop Sox, ’46 (physics), of Atherton, Calif., January 22, at 98. She was hired by Bill Hewlett in 1956 and spent the next 47 years at Hewlett Packard where she developed a corporate payroll system and later managed the retiree benefit administration. Outside of her family, Stanford University was her greatest passion. She was predeceased by her first husband, John Badenhop Jr., ’45, and second husband, Harold Sox, MD ’34. Survivors: her children, John Badenhop III and Nancy Perakis; stepchildren, Harold Sox Jr., ’61, David Sox and Jonathan Sox, ’66; two grandchildren; step-grandchildren; great-grandson; and step-great-grandchildren.

Matthew Henry Walker Wallace, ’47 (graphic arts), of Salt Lake City, April 6, 2021, at 97. He was a lieutenant in the U.S. Naval Reserve during World War II, and was a member of Alpha Tau Omega. After earning a master’s degree in city planning from MIT, he became president of the commercial real estate firm Wallace McConaughy and worked on numerous projects in downtown Salt Lake City. An outstanding athlete, he was a competitive skier, accomplished golfer and avid fly fisherman. He was predeceased by his first wife, Constance. Survivors: his wife, Susan Rilling; children, Annie, John, and Matthew; stepchildren, Kim Ritschel, Ann Rilling and Lynn Rilling; four grandchildren; and stepgrandson.

Willard Ellis Hamilton, ’49 (civil engineering), of Calistoga, Calif., January 13, at 98. He was a naval aviator during World War II and attended Stanford on the GI Bill. Later he worked as the chief engineer for civil, structural and architectural projects at Bechtel. After retiring, he built a home in Napa Valley on a property he called Two Dog Vineyard after his Labradors. He and his second wife enjoyed working in the vineyard, sailing on San Francisco Bay and backpacking in the Sierras. He was predeceased by his first wife of 25 years, Phyllis. Survivors: his wife of 44 years, Anne Hunter; stepchildren, Craig Hunter, Tracey Hunter and Kitty Hunter; grandchildren; and great-granddaughter.

Wesley Allen Kissel, ’49 (psychology), MD ’54, of Bloomington, Ind., April 1, at 94. During a stint in the Air Force, he counseled Korean War servicemen. He had his own psychiatric practice until 1985, when he became the medical director at South Central Medical Health Centers (now Centerstone). He was a distinguished life fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. He was a life master in bridge and a member of the Organists Guild who enjoyed playing at church services. He was predeceased by his wife of 66 years, Mary. Survivors: his children, Steven, Virginia Miele, Margaret Gohn and Carolyn; 14 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Lois Claire Teasdale Poole, ’49 (education), of Woodside, Calif., March 3, at 94. She was a legal secretary at Cross and Brandt and a member of the Young Republicans. She was president of the Stanford’s Women’s Club of San Francisco and hosted tailgate parties for the home football games for 40 years, attending 62 Big Games and three Stanford Rose Bowls. She was the first female junior warden at Trinity and St. Bede’s Episcopal Churches in Menlo Park. She was predeceased by her husband of 49 years, Gordon. Survivors: her children, Elisabeth Poole Parcker, David, ’79, MS ’80, and Edward; and four grandchildren.

1950s

Joanne Humphrey Caldwell, ’50 (education), of Snowmass Village, Colo., January 28, at 93. She was on the polo team. She raised her four children in Pacific Palisades, Calif., and Kenilworth, Ill., and volunteered actively, devoting herself to the Los Angeles Children’s Hospital, Chicago Foundation for Education, Kenilworth Union Church, Chicago Botanic Garden and Chicago Art Institute. She enjoyed tennis, paddle tennis, golf, skiing, gardening and playing the harp. Survivors: her husband, Wiley, ’50; survivors: her children, Dave, Wendy Caldwell von Oech, ’76, Tom and Chuck; six grandchildren, including Athena von Oech, ’03; and eight great-grandchildren.

Diane Porter Cooley, ’50 (social science/social thought), of Watsonville, Calif., March 10, at 93. She was an environmentalist and conservationist whose family helped found Driscoll Berries. In 2001, she donated her family property in Pajaro Valley, Calif., to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County as a conservation easement, a move that set a benchmark nationwide as a way for communities to save agricultural land from development while preserving it as working land. She helped found the Elkhorn Slough Foundation and the Pajaro Valley Arts Council. Survivors include: her husband of seven decades, Don, MBA ’50; and children, Anne Youngblood and Steven.

Frances June Wakeman Erickson, ’50 (physical therapy), of Kirkland, Wash., October 8, at 92. She was an accomplished competitive skier, accomplished golfer and avid fly fisherman. She was predeceased by her first husband, John Badenhop Jr., ’45, and second husband, Harold Sox, MD ’34. Survivors: her children, John Badenhop III and Nancy Perakis; stepchildren, Harold Sox Jr., ’61, David Sox and Jonathan Sox, ’66; two grandchildren; stepgrandchildren; great-grandson; and step-great-grandchildren.

William Henry “Bill” Johnson, ’51 (business), of Pajaro Valley, Calif. She lived in Jerusalem for 10 years while her husband worked for the Lutheran World Federation. In their later years, she and her husband moved to Washington to be closer to family. She was predeceased by her husband of more than 70 years, Wayne, ’49. Survivors: her children, Dianne Schulteis, Karen Alberto, David and Richard.

William Gorham, ’52 (economics), of Washington, D.C., December 28, at 91. He came to Washington in 1962 to join the Defense Department with a focus on troop effectiveness, compensation and the military draft. For 32 years, he led the Urban Institute, a nonpartisan think tank created to measure the success of Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society programs. His leadership put the institute at the forefront of public policy analysis focused on the problems of urban America. He was predeceased by his daughter, Diane. Survivors: his wife, Sarah, Nancy Haiman, Kim Umbarger and Jennifer Ackerman; seven grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Joan Andrews Symon Harrison, ’52 (law), LLB ’54, of Davis, Calif., October 28, at 91. She was on the tennis team and active in student government. She practiced law for 60 years in Santa Clara County, primarily in Gilroy where she shared an office with her husband. She served as legal counsel to Gilroy Unified Schools and Gilroy Presbyterian Church and was chair of the Santa Clara County Planning Commission. She was a champion tennis player. She was predeceased by her husband, Richard. Survivors: her children, Lois Michael and David; and two grandsons.

Everson Field Wadsworth Hoffman, ’52 (international relations), of Altedena, Calif., March 27, at 91. She was the founding development director of the Aman Folk Ensemble. In 1984, she became the director of corporate giving at the Music Center of Los Angeles County. She helped found the Library Foundation of Los Angeles in 1992 and became its first executive director, serving in that role until she retired in 2007. Prior to her work in Los Angeles, she was an active volunteer at her children’s schools. She was predeceased by her husband, Richard, ’50. Survivors: her children, Martha Kauffman, ’82, Jennifer, Craig and Thomas; seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Peter Dunster Costigan Sr., ’53 (political science), MBA ’55, of Ojai, Calif., January 16, at 90, after a short illness. He was a member of Beta Theta Phi. He spent more than 48 years as an investment analyst in San Francisco before retiring from Moors & Cabot in 2003 and moving to Ojai. From 2007 to 2009, he paused his retirement to serve on the Ventura County Grand Jury. He is remembered for his mischievous sense of humor and ready smile. Survivors: his wife of 45 years, Ann; first wife, Carol (Gray), ’54; sons, Carlton, William and Peter Jr., ’79, MS ’81; stepson, Charles Hein; and seven grandchildren.

Roderick Cameron McMicking Hall, ’54 (history), of London, January 12, at 89, of heart failure. He was a member of Kappa Sigma and served as an Army private in Korea. He had a successful career in business, private ventures and housing development, working at the Sotogrande golf course development near Gibraltar, the World Bank in London and U.S. Venture Partners in Menlo Park. He educated others about the Japanese occupation of Manila by creating a historical monument and publishing a memoir. He was predeceased by his wife, Jenny. Survivors: his children, Andrew, Pete, Michael, Barnaby and Benjamin; 13 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and two siblings, including Ian, ’55.

William H. Northway Jr., ’54 (basic medical sciences), MD ’57, of San Carlos, Calif., January 26, at 89, of complications from Alzheimer’s disease. He was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma. As an assistant professor of radiology and pediatrics at Stanford, he discovered a lung condition among premature infants, which he named bronchopulmonary dysplasia. His research paper on the condition prompted neonatologists worldwide to lower the oxygen level and reduce ventilation pressure on infants who were intubated, saving countless young lives. He was predeceased by his son, William, ’87. Survivors: his wife, Linda; son, David, ’86, MS ’95; two grandsons; and brothers, James, ’57, MD ’60, and John, ’62, MA ’67.

Claire Lucine Foster Pelton, ’54 (English), MA ’55 (education), of Los Altos, February 20, at 89, of breast cancer. She was active in student government. For more than 30 years, she taught English at Los Altos High School. She chaired the English department for more than 20 years and founded the College Testing Seminar. She was the runner-up for California Teacher of the Year. She loved dressing in vintage fashions and playing the piano. She loved food. She was predeceased by her husband, Chuck, ’54, MA ’55. Survivors: her daughter, Cathie Lucine Pelton, ’79; stepson, James Burr; three grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Farewells
Eugene Kelly Shank, ‘54 (mechanical engineering), of Santa Monica, Calif., August 8, at 89. He was a member of Phi Gamma Delta and played football and rugby. He began his career in the aerospace industry but found his true calling as a financial consultant and wealth manager. He was a stockbroker with Shearson Hammill & Company, which through mergers and acquisitions became Smith Barney and then Morgan Stanley, where he ultimately retired as a vice president. He enjoyed gardening, fine wine, and military and aviation history. He was predeceased by his wife of 51 years, Jean Lee Fonda. Survivors: his children, Katherine, Peggy, Skip and Mary; and seven grandchildren.

Alice Cosette “Dinky” Wiley Snell, ‘54 (political science), of Phoenix, December 28, at 89. She immersed herself in Arizona civic affairs for 50 years, serving as chair of the Arizona State University Foundation and helping to raise more than half a billion dollars for the university. She was chair of the governor’s task force on juvenile corrections and the first female chair of the Valley of the Sun YMCA. She loved treks to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Survivors: his children, Jami Kane, Todd and Kent; five grandchildren; and sister.

Barbara Louise Berry Corneille, ‘55 (psychology), of Walnut Creek, Calif., January 4, at 88. Dedicated to supporting local charitable organizations, she was a champion of the Accacia Group to benefit Children’s Hospital of Oakland, an avid patron of the Oakland Symphony and an active member of the Lowell W. Berry Foundation board of directors. She was energized by travel, especially visits to Paris, and passionate about animals. She was predeceased by her first husband, James Smith; and her son, Scott Smith. Survivors: her children, Jami Kane, Todd and Kent; five grandchildren; and sister.

Susannah Ronk Chapman Dahill, ‘55 (nursing), of Thousand Oaks, Calif., December 14, at 89. After learning Danish on a freighter crossing the Atlantic, she worked at a hospital in Aalborg, Denmark, then in a plastic surgery unit in Edinburgh, Scotland. She returned to the United States and became director of nursing for Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian in Newport Beach, Calif. She later taught Allied Health courses at Orange Coast College, earning a master’s in educational administration and helping pioneer the development of parish nursing. She was a church leader, crostic puzzler, dream-tracker and animal lover. She was predeceased by her first husband, Earl Corporation in Pasadena, Calif. She was a stockbroker with Shearson Hammill & Company, which through mergers and acquisitions became Smith Barney and then Morgan Stanley, where he ultimately retired as a vice president. He enjoyed gardening, fine wine, and military and aviation history. He was predeceased by his wife of 51 years, Jean Lee Fonda. Survivors: his children, Katherine, Peggy, Skip and Mary; and seven grandchildren.

Rhoda Karen Maxfield Stanley, ’60, MA ’61 (hearing & speech sciences), of Newport Beach, Calif., February 9, at 83, after a long illness. Her life was a testimony to her intellect, energy and enthusiasm for recreation. She served as PTAs president and a member of the Orange County Art Museum support group and of the Assistance League and the National Charity League while managing her husband’s medical practice. She enjoyed golf, bridge, skiing and travel. Survivors: her husband, Jim, ’60; children, Grant, ’87, Richard, ’90, and Brooke Stanley Lawson, ’90; and eight grandchildren, including Talia Stanley, ’22, and Ben Lawson, ’25.

Søren Kierkegaard, serving as associate editor and translator of Kierkegaard’s work for Princeton University Press. He was chair of the Scandinavian Studies Program at Concordia College, a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study and the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, and a Fulbright senior research scholar to Norway. Survivors: his wife; two sons; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and two sisters.

P. A. Max Møllevang, ’62 (political science), of San Marino, Calif., February 26, at 81. He was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, played on the rugby team and enlisted in the Army as a second lieutenant, serving in the 4th Armored Division in Ulm, Germany. With an MBA from Harvard, he embarked on a career in the propane industry. He was executive vice president at Petroline and founder, president and CEO of Pacer Propane. He had a booming voice, a genuine curiosity and a brilliant sense of humor. Survivors: his wife of more than 50 years, Mona (Trombli, ’62); children, Brian, Michelle and Kevin; and four grandchildren.

Rhoda Karen Maxfield Stanley, ’60, MA ’61 (hearing & speech sciences), of Newport Beach, Calif., February 9, at 83, after a long illness. Her life was a testimony to her intellect, energy and enthusiasm for recreation. She served as PTAs president and a member of the Orange County Art Museum support group and of the Assistance League and the National Charity League while managing her husband’s medical practice. She enjoyed golf, bridge, skiing and travel. Survivors: her husband, Jim, ’60; children, Grant, ’87, Richard, ’90, and Brooke Stanley Lawson, ’90; and eight grandchildren, including Talia Stanley, ’22, and Ben Lawson, ’25.

Rune Alf Engebretsen, ’62, MA ’70, PhD ’80 (German studies), of Millers Falls, Mass., December 8, at 82, after a short illness. He was on the soccer team and the track and field team. He translated, wrote, and lectured widely on Henrik Ibsen and Søren Kierkegaard, serving as associate editor and translator of Kierkegaard’s work for Princeton University Press. He was chair of the Scandinavian Studies Program at Concordia College, a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study and the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, and a Fulbright senior research scholar to Norway. Survivors: his wife; two sons; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and two sisters.

James Stanley, ’63, history, of Loma Langa, Calif., February 28, at 80, after a brief illness. She earned her medical degree from UCLA, specializing in psychiatry. During her 40 years of practice, she served as vice president of the San Diego Society of Psychiatrist Physicians and an associate clinical professor of psychiatry at UCSD—and never missed an appointment with any of her patients. She was an avid supporter of the arts, a life member of ZLAC Rowing Club and a lifelong lover of animals, especially Irish setters. She was predeceased by her husband of 26 years, Ronald Crown. Survivors include her sister, Geet Crown; and great-grandchildren.

David Yamasaki Jr., ’57 (economics), JD ’59, of Los Angeles, February 25, at 81. He was a member of the Grand Canyon. Survivors: his children, Robin, Randy and Rusty Dodson.

Robert Lee Johnson, ’56 (basic medical sciences), MD ’59, of San Tan Valley, Ariz., March 18, at 87, of suicide. A 12-year Air Force service and 37 years at the Valley of the Sun YMCA, he served as assistant director of the YMCA’s programs and as a YMCA Eating Club and contributed to the Stanford Daily. He met and married his wife during his medical residency at Yale, after which he became an otorhinolaryngologist, practicing in San Francisco for 45 years. He played tennis for more than 50 years and was a devoted patron of the opera, symphony, ballet, theater, the 49ers, the Giants and all Stanford sports teams. Survivors: his wife of more than 60 years, Barbara; daughters, Stephanie and Bridget; and four grandchildren.

Eric Nelson Fricke, ’57 (political science), of Lompoc, Calif., December 26, at 86. He served as an officer in the Navy, eventually reaching the rank of lieutenant in the Navy Reserve. After earning an MS in business administration, he worked as an accountant for various firms in the Los Angeles area. In 1969, he joined Coldwell Banker and was promoted to controller for L.A. County in 1970. By 1981, he was self-employed as a CPA, based in Long Beach. He loved traveling the world, loved his children and was a devoted father. Survivors: his wife, Grace Dodson; and stepchildren, Robin, Randy and Rusty Dodson.

George Yamasaki Jr., ’57 (economics), JD ’59, of San Francisco, February 7, at 86, of a heart condition. He was an immigration lawyer who helped people with green card issues and served on the San Francisco Human Services Commission for 46 years, making him the city’s longest-serving commissioner. He was active in San Francisco’s Japantown and was known as the voice of the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival. In 1995 Mayor Gavin Newsom decreed a George Yamasaki Day in San Francisco. He played piano in jazz groups for more than 50 years. He was predeceased by his second wife, Anne. Survivors: his children, Paul and Emily; and stepdaughter, Susie Okimoto.

Johan Maxine Balling Rehnborg, ’59, MA ’60 (education), of Laguna Beach, Calif., January 22, at 84. She was one of the early San Francisco Bay Area’s public school teachers and served as a docent at both Laguna Art Museum and Orange County Museum of Art for 25 years. After visiting the Holy Land as an evangelical Christian, she focused on the human dimension of the conflict over land and water. She was a devoted grandmother and taught children at the Shalimar Learning Center in Costa Mesa, Calif. She was predeceased by her son Tucker. Survivors: her son Rod; and three grandchildren, including Jack, ’22, and Zoe, ’26.
Books on Tape Founder Took a Novel Approach

Duvall Hecht was no fan of the radio. In his view, pop songs polluted the airwaves during his multihour commute; he yearned to be productive. “Work was the way to solve all problems,” says his wife, Ann Marie Rousseau. One day, an idea came to him: What if he could listen to books while driving?

His company, Books on Tape, began in 1975 with a reel-to-reel recording device in his living room. Aided by the popularization of dashboard cassette players in the late ’60s, the company became a national phenomenon that gave rise to the audiobook industry. “One customer called our tapes ‘the best invention since sex,’” Hecht told the Detroit Free Press in 1984. Hecht, ’52, MA ’60, died on February 10 of heart failure. He was 91.

Hecht liked to say that “sports and girls” were his main subjects at Beverly Hills High School, where he was voted most popular boy. But, Rousseau says, he was also a voracious reader who entered college “bent on getting every inch out of life.” Before earning his master’s in communication from Stanford at age 30, he’d been a fighter pilot in the Marines, an Olympic gold medal–winning rower, a commercial pilot and a teacher. He later founded the rowing program at UC Irvine, and served in a number of roles, including principal, director of admissions, college guidance counselor, senior thesis adviser and AP government teacher. She was a pillar of her local church, served on several committees and taught a Sunday school class. She supported Covenant College, the College Park Community Food Bank and Christian Schools International. Survivors: her children, Oriana Rousseau, Katrin Bandhauer, Janice Marie Beene Adams, ’71 (sociology), of Washington, D.C., March 3, at 72. She earned a law degree from Georgetown University. She dedicated her life to the work of the Washington Christian Academy, where, over the decades, she served in a number of roles, including principal, director of admissions, college guidance counselor, senior thesis adviser and AP government teacher. She was a pillar of her local church, served on several committees and taught a Sunday school class. She supported Covenant College, the College Park Community Food Bank and Christian Schools International. Survivors: her children, Esther Drake, Naomi, Hannah Wachtler, Agur and Isaac; and 11 grandchildren.

—Kali Shiloh
Nancy Diane Jamison, '77 (psychology), of San Diego, July 9, 2021, at 66, after a battle with glioblastoma. She participated in the glee club and other performing arts. She was a philanthropic leader in San Diego for more than 14 years, serving as the president and CEO of San Diego Grantmakers (now Catalyst) until she retired in 2019. Under her leadership, the network blossomed to more than 150 organizations, funders and impact investors. She was a lover of all things music and dance, and had an infectious sense of joy. Survivors: her husband, Mark Dillon; children, Alec and Susanna; mother, Barbara; and brother.

Roy Karl Skogstrom, '77 (biological sciences), of Pepeekoe, Hawaii, May 4, 2021, at 65. He contributed to the Stanford Daily and the Chaparral humor magazine. He was a physical therapist, owner of Kahua Exotic Tropical Fruits Farm in Pepeekoe, and CEO of Oncologic, a biotech company working on a treatment for cancer. Survivors: his wife, Catherine Marquette; and sister, Susan Skogstrom.

Harriet “Holly” Cornwall Newman, '79 (mathematics), MS '80 (operations research), MBA '85, of Pleasanton, Calif., June 12, 2021, at 63, after a 10-year battle with ovarian cancer. She was a member of the Stanford Historical Society. She worked at the Chevron Corporation for 31 years, starting in the fertilizer division and moving to operations and planning. When she retired, she pursued a lifelong dream of studying classics, history and language by enrolling in Stanford’s Master of Liberal Arts program. She supported the First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto. Survivors: her husband of 43 years, William, '78, MS '79, PhD '85; and sister, Anne Cornwall Boyce.

1980s

Lauren Whitney Freed Scott, '86 (communication), of Menlo Park, February 9, at 57. She was a member of Lambda Nu. She broke through Silcon Valley gender barriers in the early years of the technology boom, working in project and program management at Oracle, Informix and Kennandy. Midcareer, she went back to school for a master’s in library and information science, ultimately returning to Stanford to build databases and implement products for University Libraries. She was a devoted patron of the Stanford Theatre in Palo Alto, an insatiable reader, a lover of the outdoors and all things Disney, and a committed Catholic. Survivors: her husband of 35 years, Larry, '83; brother, Michael Freed; and goddaughter, Tillie.

R. Ryan Stoll, '86 (philosophy and economics), of Menlo Park, February 9, at 57. She was a member of Lambda Nu. She broke through Silcon Valley gender barriers in the early years of the technology boom, working in project and program management at Oracle, Informix and Kennandy. Midcareer, she went back to school for a master’s in library and information science, ultimately returning to Stanford to build databases and implement products for University Libraries. She was a devoted patron of the Stanford Theatre in Palo Alto, an insatiable reader, a lover of the outdoors and all things Disney, and a committed Catholic. Survivors: her husband of 35 years, Larry, '83; brother, Michael Freed; and goddaughter, Tillie.

Jackson Le Roy Schultz, MBA '56, of Hillsborough, Calif., March 10, at 96. He spent 28 years in the Navy, including seven years of active duty. He was a member of Theta Delta Chi and received a Terman Award for his work in computer science, ultimately returning to Stanford to build databases and implement products for University Libraries. She was a devoted patron of the Stanford Theatre in Palo Alto, an insatiable reader, a lover of the outdoors and all things Disney, and a committed Catholic. Survivors: her husband of 35 years, Larry, '83; brother, Michael Freed; and goddaughter, Tillie.

Alley Wandel, '61 (communication), of Stanford, March 9, at 84. She was an accomplished journalist and author, known for her work in the field of public relations and communications. Survivors: her husband, Steve; children, Tim, '64, and Krista; and grandchildren.

Dewey Harper Hedges, MS '70, PhD '73 (aeronautics and astronautics), of Dunwoody, Ga., January 31, at 73, of Parkinson’s disease. He was a captain in the Army. One of the world’s foremost rotorcraft dynamics experts, he spent 16 years at NASA’s Langley Research Center and 35 years as a professor at Georgia Institute of Technology. He also volunteered for the Girl Scouts of Catalonia during his 40-year career as an astronaut and NASA engineer. Survivors: his wife, Marlo; children, Nicole, Brandon and Danielle, '99; three grandchildren; and two sisters.

Ronald Lee Longnecker, MS '61 (industrial engineering), of Louisville, Ky., February 10, at 84. He retired from Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati after 33 years of service. He loved golfing, singing in the Myrtle Trace Choir and served as the HOA president. Survivors: his wife, Laura; children, Scott, '80, and Sally-Ann; grandchildren; and great-grandchildren.

Frank Jameson Rees, MS '64 (aeronautics and astronautics), PhD '68 (applied mechanics), of Montecito, Calif., March 2, at 80. He co-founded Energy Management Associates, a software and management consulting firm. He sold the company to Electronic Data Systems in 1992. In 2000, he co-founded Devastudios, a film graphic design firm whose clients include major motion picture studios and video streaming companies. He volunteered at Stanford Business School and mentored numerous entrepreneurs over the course of his life. He was a professionally accomplished tennis player, a vivacious friend and a mentor with a laser-sharp mind. Survivors: his wife, Marlo; children, Nicole, Brandon and Danielle, '99; three grandchildren; and two sisters.

1990s

Clement Robert “Rob” Austin IV, '90 (American studies), of Chicago, March 6, at 53, of acute myeloid leukemia. He was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon and played on the soccer team. He taught English for five years and coached soccer and baseball, winning Western Reserve’s prize for outstanding young faculty members. After returning to school for an MBA, he began a career in supply chain management, traveling the world for 53 years. Rhoda Welch Johnson, '57, of Pleasanton, Calif., January 17, at 93. He served in the Army, stationed on islands off the coast of Korea. He taught high school math and science, coached the swim team and taught industrial engineering at College of San Mateo’s Adult Evening Program. He later became CFO of several high-growth technology companies. In 2005 he was awarded Avenidas’ Lifetimes of Achievement Award. He was a scuba diver and an adventurer, became proficient in celestial navigation, earned a Coast Guard 50-ton license and mastered the art of welding. He was predeceased by his daughter, Jennifer, '84. Survivors: his wife of 63 years, Lee (Crowell, '56, MA '57); son, Jeff; and two grandsons.

ENGINEERING

Howard B. “Bud” Demuth, MS '54, PhD '57 (electrical engineering), of Boulder, Colo., February 20, at 93, after a fall. In 1956 he joined the IBM Research Laboratory. Later, at Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, he worked on computer simulations of nuclear reactors and helped develop cutting-edge interactive graphics systems. He was professor of electrical engineering at the universities of Tulsa and Idaho, and he led the development of the Neural Network Toolbox for Matlab. He ran his first marathon at age 68. He was predeceased by his first wife, Ruth; and second wife, Joan. Survivors: his children, Katharine, Kimberly, Mary, '79, and Hal; grandchildren; and great-grandchildren.

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academic journals and was elected fellow of four professional societies. He loved singing and playing piano. Survivors: his wife of 50 years, Margaret; his sons, Timothy, Jonathan, David, Philip and Benjamin; 28 grandchildren; and sister, Helene Francoise Netillard, MS ’71 (materials science/engineering), of Grézels, France, September 25, at 77. She began her career as a research engineer in solid state physics with Philips France. In 1976, she joined Valeo, a leading French automotive equipment manufacturer, and was soon named CEO of a manufacturing subsidiary. She later shifted to the executive search business, working for Korn Ferry International in Paris and specializing in automotive, chemical and building companies. When she retired in 2008, she and her husband restarted a small wine business in the South of France. Survivors: her husband, Yves; and son, Philippe.

THEODORE WILLIAM ROGERS, MS ’92 (mechanical engineering), of Alameda, Calif., February 14, at 53, of prostate cancer. He worked at Edge Innovation, where he helped build animatronic creatures for several films, and Asyst Technologies. He spent the past 15 years at Intuitive Surgical, where he was the VP of vision systems at the time of his death. He was an excellent sailor who spent many hours on the San Francisco Bay sailing several different kinds of boats, including International 14’s, a Moth and a J100. He also enjoyed cycling, backpacking and traveling with his family. Survivors: his wife, Anne; daughters, Fiona and Maeve; parents; and four siblings.

HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES

John Edward Haldi, MA ’56, PhD ’61 (economics), of New York City, February 3, at 90. After receiving his PhD, he spent time at the Rand Corporation and then at the Bureau of the Budget in Washington, D.C., setting up the first USPO office of planning and budgeting. In New York City, he founded Haldi Associates, an economics and consulting firm. Among his many accomplishments was drafting the first no-fault automobile insurance law in Hawaii. He was an expert witness in many areas, a junior-rank badminton player and an avid skier. Survivors: his wife, Mary; children, Patricia and John Robert; and three grandchildren.

Donald W. Aitken Jr., MS ’61, PhD ’64 (physics), of Ajijic, Mexico, February 27, at 85. He was an emeritus professor and founder of the environmental studies department at San Jose State University. He co-founded Friends of the Earth and the Smart Earth Network. Survivors: his wife, Jean; parents; and two siblings.

Bret Richmond Williams, JD ’93, of Atlanta, January 24, at 55, of COVID-19. His legal career spanned three decades. He served for more than 16 years as a federal prosecutor in Georgia and New York, and also worked at the U.S. Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency. At the time of his death, he was doing white-collar criminal defense work for corporate and individual clients, while also representing indigent defendants. A prolific writer who published many articles and op-ed pieces on topics including election laws and voter fraud, he was perhaps best known for being simultaneously the smartest person in the room and the most humble. Survivors: his wife of 18 years, Stephanie; children, Dexter and Grady; mother, Addie; and four siblings.

Brian McKibben Kincaid, MS ’73, PhD ’75 (physics), of San Francisco, January 1, at 74. He was an early developer of X-ray absorption spectroscopy and the use of extended X-ray absorption spectroscopy, which is now widely applied to the study of local structure in proteins and other macromolecules and to compounds containing metal ions. He was the director of the Advance Light Source at UC Berkeley and made major contributions during its construction, development and early use. Survivors: his wife, Elizabeth Theil; children, Eleanor and Christopher; and two grandchildren.

PHILIP A. S. SEDIK, PhD ’75 (linguistics), of Washington D.C., March 26, at 82, of Parkinson’s disease. His thesis considered the impacts of language shift in an East African coastal community. He spent his career in international development, leading radio language education and public health/public awareness projects in Kenya, Nepal, Guatemala, Nicaragua, India, Iran, Jaya, Guinea and Morocco. He spoke French, German, Italian, Nepali, Somali, Spanish and Swahili at full professional proficiency and attained basic conversational proficiency in Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, Ewe, Hiri, Malay, Mandarin, Russian and Vietnamese. Survivors: his wife, Enoya; children, Aaron and Chloe; stepson, David; and two siblings.

Antonia Judith Levi, PhD ’91 (history), of Point Roberts, Wash., March 2, at 74. A scholar of Japan, her interests and publications ranged from mid-20th-century Japanese politics to anime, pop culture and science fiction. She also published on rubrics as a tool for educators. After studying in Tokyo, she taught at Amherst College, Loyola Marymount, Whitman College and Portland State University. She retired to become a full-time writer of novels, short stories and poems. Survivors include her brother, Matt, and his family.

LAW

Philip Donnan Irwin, LLB ’57, of San Marino, Calif., January 11, at 88. Upon earning his law degree, he joined O’Melveny & Myers in Los Angeles, where he stayed for his entire 64-year career. He was a nationally acclaimed tax lawyer whose work—especially in the arena of spin-offs of corporations like Dole, Lockheed Martin, Bank of America and Chase Bank. In 2002, he was recognized by the Los Angeles County Bar Association with the Dana Latham Memorial Award for lifetime achievement in taxation law. He was the consummate early bird, chipper even before sunrise, and read the sports page every day. Survivors: his wife, Sandra; children, Jane Irwin Roberts, Wash., March 2, at 74. A scholar of Japan, her interests and publications ranged from mid-20th-century Japanese politics to anime, pop culture and science fiction. She also published on rubrics as a tool for educators. After studying in Tokyo, she taught at Amherst College, Loyola Marymount, Whitman College and Portland State University. She retired to become a full-time writer of novels, short stories and poems. Survivors include her brother, Matt, and his family.

Bess Yount, ’09, of San Francisco, January 1, at 74. He was an early developer of X-ray absorption spectroscopy and the use of extended X-ray absorption spectroscopy, which is now widely applied to the study of local structure in proteins and other macromolecules and to compounds containing metal ions. He was the director of the Advance Light Source at UC Berkeley and made major contributions during its construction, development and early use. Survivors: his wife, Elizabeth Theil; children, Eleanor and Christopher; and two grandchildren.

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END OF CLASSIFIEDS

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END OF CLASSIFIEDS
IT’S 3 A.M. AND I AM STANDING in the basement of my parents’ house in Cleveland, hanging up the heavy handle of the black rotary phone on the wall. The last of my friends on the West Coast has finally gone to bed.

I can no longer press them for their opinions on what I should do when the sun comes up: accept a job as an admissions officer at Stanford or move to New York to be an actor?

Earlier that day, Jean Fetter, the dean of undergraduate admissions, had called me. “We’d love to have you join us, Mary,” she’d said in her silky British accent. After multiple rounds of interviews and an exhaustive vetting process, I was hungry for approval. Her words were velvet cake.

I had asked Dean Jean to give me one day to think about it. So now, here I am, obsessing. It’s a great job that pays well at the college I love. I can see myself, a newly minted graduate, talking with prospective students, traveling around the country, reading applications.

At the same time, I am pulled toward the theater: I love to act. I love improv. I love to write plays. And I love New York.

I am panicking. I’ve asked everyone who knows me well to tell me what to do. My eldest sister says that deep inside, I know what the right path is, and if I just get quiet enough, that knowledge will bubble up to the surface.

Yeah, right.

My parents are solidly in the “take the job offer and run” camp. They were instrumental in my choice of English over drama as a major, citing its practicality and usefulness. (I will later find this highly amusing.)

I am stymied. I can see myself being happy with either choice. In a state of pure ambivalence, I chew on the pros and cons.

Security but predictability? Creativity but uncertainty? Who else is awake? Whom can I call to get his or her two cents?

Two cents.

If it’s true that I can be happy with either path, then why not let chance decide? So I do the only sensible thing: I flip a coin.

I find a dime in my jeans pocket and balance it on my thumbnail. Heads, Admissions. Tails, New York. I take a deep breath and flick it.

Up it goes, flittering like a silver moth drawn to the naked light bulb above my head. Eons pass. It lands in my sweaty outstretched palm.

Heads.

Rats.

Rats?!

In that instant, my passion reveals itself in all its thrilling, frightening glory. I know what I must do. In a few hours, I will break the news to my parents: I’m packing my duffel and heading to New York.

My mother lets out a small, sad sigh and then hugs me—her usual show of disapproving acceptance. But my father reacts in a way I don’t see coming. Tears fill his bright blue eyes, and he says, “I’m so proud of you.”

We come to crossroads every day. Some of them are earth-shattering; others are not. My advice? Bring lots of change with you. ■

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