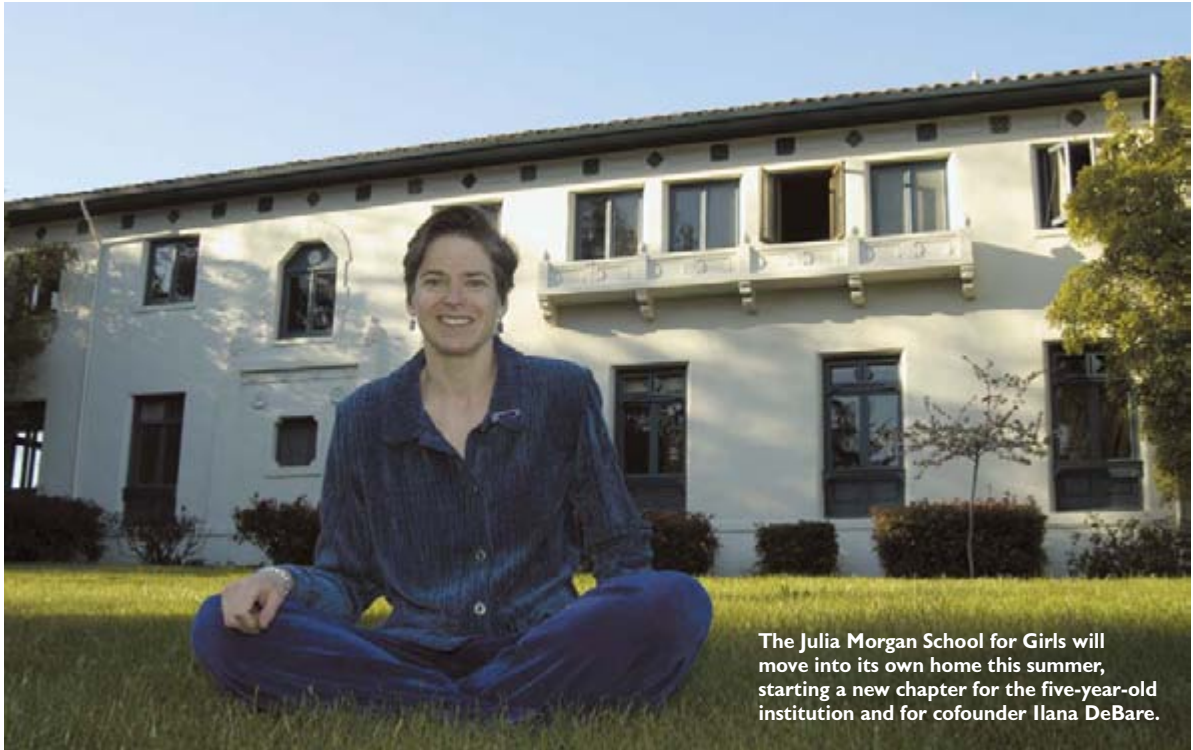


## ALUMNI

# Where the Girls Are

*As a new mother, Ilana DeBare '80 took a second look at single-sex education.*



The Julia Morgan School for Girls will move into its own home this summer, starting a new chapter for the five-year-old institution and for cofounder Ilana DeBare.

ILANA DEBARE '80 has an odd confession to share. Until a few years ago, she'd never set foot in an all-girls school. In fact, she says, if her own parents had ever tried to send her to one, she'd probably have run away from home.

Because she grew up in New York City, where she attended a private coed high school, she knew a bit about prestigious single-sex institutions like Brearley, Chapin, and Spence, but she had no desire to join their ranks. "The whole girls' school thing seemed kind of precious," recalls DeBare, who now lives in Oakland, California. "I had the impression they were snooty and elite. Beyond that, they didn't register on my consciousness much."

How, then, did DeBare, a long-time newspaper reporter, wind up spending a good chunk of the past decade not only writing an exhaustive history of such

schools, but actually helping found a successful private middle school for girls?

"Good question," DeBare muses over tea in her living room days before the publication of her book, *Where Girls Come First: The Rise, Fall, and Surprising Revival of Girls' Schools* (J.P. Tarcher). About five miles down the road, 146 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders are midway through their morning studies at the Julia Morgan School for Girls—which didn't exist until a parents' group led by DeBare launched it in 1999.

DeBare's campaign—part of a nationwide renaissance for all-girls elementary and secondary schools—was prompted in part by the birth of her own daughter 10 years ago. But the story really starts in Cambridge in the late 1970s.

AS AN UNDERGRADUATE, DeBare, an English concentrator, took a British literature

survey course that included just two women writers: Jane Austen and Virginia Woolf. Later, she took an American literature class that mentioned only Emily Dickinson and Harriet Beecher Stowe. "I had the sense there was something missing," she says now. She had the same sense when she read Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, the classic novel chronicling the Beat Generation icon's cross-country travels. "I had a love for and an excitement about the book," she recalls. "But I also felt a deep betrayal because the adventure excluded women" except as sexual playthings. These experiences prompted her to help launch *Seventh Sister*, a feminist magazine, and to join a student committee working to add women's studies to the College curriculum.

After graduation, DeBare headed west and earned a master's in journalism at

Berkeley. She spent the next 15 years as a reporter at the *Sacramento Bee* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, covering a variety of beats: politics, government, business, technology. But she continued exploring women's economic and educational issues as well. At the *Bee*, she wrote a prize-winning series that pointed out how, despite the then-booming economy, few women ever achieved top jobs in the high-tech industry—largely because so few women graduated from college with the requisite technical skills.

Along the way, she married Sam Schuchat, a nonprofit-agency administrator; in 1994, she gave birth to their only child, Rebecca. Before their daughter was two, DeBare was already thinking about her future schooling. As she read books on girls' development and education, she became increasingly dismayed by what she learned.

In *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*, clinical psychologist Mary Pipher describes an appearance-obsessed, "girl-poisoning culture" in which many young women submerge their identities to conform with narrow, rigid expectations about appropriate female behavior. That struggle, Pipher says, puts girls at risk for depression, eating disorders, drug use, early sexual activity, and self-inflicted injuries.

"That book really scared me," says DeBare, who also read works by Carol Gilligan, the feminist psychologist and former Harvard professor. "Adolescence is so much more filled with pressure than when we were growing up." For example, she says, young girls may feel compelled to mimic provocative pop stars well before they're sexually aware. Or they may get the message that only boys are supposed to play sports and do well at math and science.

Though her own daughter was still just a toddler, DeBare's research prompted her to wonder about creating an environment where, as her book title suggests, "girls come first," a place where they could learn without competing with boys or worrying about their approval. Even though parents can, of course, reassure their daughters that it's perfectly fine for them to play soccer or excel at geometry and chemistry, DeBare thought such messages might be more powerful—and more permanent—if the girls gave them to each other. "I had the idea of setting up a peer culture that

## Sister Schools

**Castilleja and Julia Morgan** are only about 35 miles apart, but in many ways, the distance between the two California girls' schools seems much greater.

Julia Morgan, in Oakland, opened in 1999. Castilleja, in Palo Alto, will mark its centennial in 2007. Julia Morgan, bursting out of rented space at one college, will soon move into newly leased space on another college's campus. Castilleja, located in a pleasant residential neighborhood near Stanford University, has its own six-and-a-half-acre campus, including a large grassy courtyard, a pool, a sun-drenched art studio, 300 computers with high-speed Internet access, a director's residence, and a



COURTESY OF CASTILLEJA

newly renovated administration center and theater. Castilleja's 415 middle- and high-school students wear uniforms; Julia Morgan's 146 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders wear what they want, as long as their midriffs stay covered. For the 2003-2004 academic year, tuition, books, and fees were \$14,650 at Julia Morgan; at Castilleja, the bill was nearly \$8,000 more. (Both schools offer generous financial aid.)

And yet the schools are indistinguishable from each other in one key way: both are based on passionate belief in the value of single-sex education. "Our mission is to educate strong, independent young women who have a sense of themselves, who are confident and curious and resilient, girls who have a conscience, girls who value their community," says Joan Z. Lonergan, Ed.M. '84, Castilleja's head of school since 1993. She believes that's most likely to happen in a setting that is, as one Castilleja student wrote in a poem published in a school brochure, "completely de-guy-ified." "In a girls' school, there aren't any cheerleaders; everybody's an athlete. All the class officers are women," says Lonergan, herself a graduate of pre-coed Vassar College. "If you're a girl in a physics class where everybody else is a girl, you don't think, 'Well, this is something I shouldn't be doing.'"

Like many contemporary schools, Castilleja emphasizes math and science; nearly all students take classes in both subjects every year. (Course offerings include computer programming and robotics.) One hundred percent of its alumnae go on to college, with Stanford accepting about 20 percent of each year's graduating class. The school routinely hosts visits from well-known women: most recently, former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stopped by. She opened her talk by telling students, "Don't put your hand up. Interrupt if you have something to say." They did.

Lonergan, who met with Julia Morgan's founders during their fact-finding days, cites experiences like that to rebut criticism that girls' schools don't prepare graduates for "the real world." "They're going to fare just fine," she says of her students. "They'll be able to negotiate their way in any environment."

would reinforce the idea that they don't have to be Britney Spears," says DeBare, who has a ready smile and an air of thoughtful determination.

It seemed especially important to reinforce that idea during the precarious pre-teen years, when girls are particularly vulnerable to the pressures Pipher and others

describe. At the time, there were no non-sectarian all-girls middle schools anywhere near DeBare's home. So she set out to start one.

It wasn't something she could do alone. She began talking to other parents, passing out leaflets, holding meetings at people's homes and in libraries. By late 1996,

she had pulled together a group of about 10 local parents hoping to build a day school designed to challenge and inspire adolescent girls. Their individual values varied. One wanted to emphasize art. Others were more concerned about technology and math skills. But they agreed on a common foundation: a student population as racially and economically diverse as Oakland itself, a challenging curriculum, a creative, highly interactive atmosphere, lots of hands-on activities.

To start, they looked at a few other girls' schools in northern California, including two about an hour to the south in Silicon Valley. They toured the prestigious Castilleja School in Palo Alto, which has been educating girls for nearly a century (see "Sister Schools," page 83). They borrowed an 80-page business plan from The Girls' Middle School in Mountain View, another fledgling institution that would open its doors in 1998. They began seeking a suitable site. And, after much debate, they settled on a name: honoring Julia Morgan, a pioneering architect who, among other achievements, reconstructed San Fran-

cisco's Fairmont Hotel after the 1906 earthquake and designed William Randolph Hearst's castle-like estate at San Simeon.

That founding group included, among others, a lawyer, a social worker, an artist, and a nonprofit employee—but, initially, nobody with educational credentials and no wealthy philanthropists. "A lot of times

**"There were no teachers for them to meet, no classes for them to visit, no site for them to visit. It was a leap of faith on their part."**

with a project like this, you have one person with a vision and a lot of money," DeBare says, laughing. "We had a lot of people with a vision and *no* money."

A consultant told them they needed anywhere from \$500,000 to \$15 million to start a small private school, so DeBare expected the effort would require years, maybe even a decade, of planning and fundraising. But other parents—some of whom had already overheard their young

daughters denigrating their own math skills or athletic abilities—wanted to move much faster so that their girls could enroll when they reached the right age.

Group members aggressively sought foundation grants and corporate donations of everything from cash to furniture. Individuals, including many successful women, contributed as well. DeBare's

mother-in-law and a Colorado man with a granddaughter in the area each donated \$10,000. By the time the school opened in September 1999, the group had collected \$144,000—a long way from the rock-bottom minimum they had thought they needed, but enough to rent space at a local Catholic college, hire director Ann Clarke, a long-time middle-school administrator, and open their doors to their first group of 35 sixth-graders.

That number stunned the founders, who thought they'd be lucky to enroll 20 students in the first year. "Remember, we were recruiting kids for a school that didn't exist," says DeBare, who had by then left her newspaper job to develop the school and write a book on the 200-year history of its predecessors. "There were no teachers for them to meet, no classes for them to visit, no site for them to visit. It was a leap of faith on their part."

Enrollment continued to exceed expectations. Plans called for 55 students in the second year and 70 in the third. But by September 2000, the school had 91 students; the next year, with all three grades in place, there were 134. Applications have outnumbered available slots ever since.

That's consistent with the bigger picture DeBare documented in her book. After decades of decline caused largely by competition from coed institutions, all-girls education took off again in the 1990s. More than 30 new elementary and secondary girls' schools have opened in the past decade in locations from Harlem to Seattle, many emphasizing math, science, technology, and leadership skills. Today, more than 45,000 students attend such schools, ac-

### Harvard@Home: Arts On-line

**Whether you're a regular at Arts First** or you've yet to attend, you can experience the event's highlights on-line thanks to Harvard@Home.

Arts First offers audio and video coverage of the University-wide celebration of music, theater, dance, and visual arts. The annual spring event features more than 200 student performances in venues ranging from Sanders Theatre to Harvard Yard, from undergraduate Houses to the University museums.

Harvard@Home's 60-minute program offers excerpts from past performances by the Harvard-Radcliffe Ballet Company, the Harvard Juggling Club, the On Thin Ice improvisational comedy troupe, the Harvard Glee Club, and the Vox Jazz vocal ensemble, among others. In other clips, students perform Roma (Gypsy) songs, Indian classical dance, Scottish fiddle music, and more.

Arts First also features an excerpt from an on-stage conversation between actor John Lithgow '67, the force behind the festival, and international filmmaker Mira Nair '79. Nair, whose works include *Monsoon Wedding*, *Salaam Bombay*, and *Mississippi Masala*, received the ninth annual Harvard Arts Medal at the 2003 festival. Included on the video as well is *Who's That Banging on the Piano?* a 1979 documentary describing the origins of the Council for the Arts at Harvard and Radcliffe.

Arts First is available in RealPlayer, QuickTime, and Windows Media formats at <http://athome.harvard.edu/dh/haf.html>.

Harvard@Home provides desktop access to lectures, speeches, presentations, performances, and other University events. The Web-based project offers more than 30 edited programs on topics in the arts, the sciences, current affairs, history, literature, and math. Programs, which range from 10 minutes to three hours long, are free and available to the public. For more information, visit <http://athome.harvard.edu>.

## Vote Now!

ALUMNI will choose five new Overseers and six new elected directors for the Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) board in this year's election.

To be counted, all votes must be returned by noon on June 4. Results will be announced on June 10, Commencement Day, at the HAA annual meeting.

All Harvard degree holders except Corporation members and officers of instruction and government are entitled to vote for Overseer candidates. The election for HAA elected directors is open to all degree holders. If you have not received a ballot, contact the HAA.

Candidates, listed in order of appearance on the ballot, are:

For Overseer (six-year term, five to be elected):

**Alan Bersin '68.** Superintendent of public education, San Diego city schools, San Diego.

**Helen Blau, Ph.D. '75.** Professor and chair, department of molecular pharmacology, Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, Calif.

**Emily Mann '74.** Artistic director, McCarter Theatre, Princeton, N.J.

**Thomas Stephenson '64, M.B.A. '66.** General partner, Sequoia Capital, Menlo Park, Calif.

**Merrick B. Garland '74, J.D. '77.** Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, Washing-



Bersin



Blau



Mann

## Overseer



Stephenson



Garland



Yale



Fudge

ton, D.C. (Garland, a current Overseer, was elected in 2003 to fill out the unexpired term created by a resignation. He is now running for a full six-year term.)

**Phyllis Yale '78, M.B.A. '82,** Managing director, Bain & Co. Inc., Boston.

**Ann Fudge, M.B.A. '77,** chairwoman and CEO, Young & Rubicam Inc., New York City.

(The eighth Overseer nominee, Scott A. Abell '72, has withdrawn his candidacy after accepting a job with the Faculty of Arts and Sciences; see "Development Directors," page 76.)

For HAA Director (three-year term, six to be elected):

**Ketanji Brown Jackson '92, J.D. '96.** Assistant special counsel, U.S. Sentencing Commission, Washington, D.C.

**Cynthia Torres '80, M.B.A. '84.** Director of marketing, Diamond Portfolio Advisors LLC, Santa Monica, Calif.

**William H. Adler III '61, M.D.** President, Wiltshire Associates Ltd., Severna Park, Md.

**Denise Thal '77.** Vice president and CFO, Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Mich.

**Rebecca Miller Sykes '73.** Associate head of school, Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass.

**Sanjay Patel '83, S.M. '83.** Co-president, GSC Partners, New York City.

**Scott D. Malkin '80, J.D.-M.B.A. '83.** Chairman, Value Retail PLC, London.

**Robert E. Joyce '87.** Director, Credit Suisse First Boston, Boston.

**Deborah Ramirez, J.D. '81.** Professor, Northeastern University School of Law, Boston.

The HAA nominating committee proposes Overseer and elected director candidates each year. The committee's 13 voting members include three present or former Overseers and 10 other alumni chosen by the HAA Executive Committee. Overseer and HAA elected director candidates may also be nominated with petitions signed by a prescribed number of eligible degree holders and filed earlier in the year.



Jackson



Torres



Adler



Thal



Sykes



Patel



Malkin



Joyce



Ramirez

## Director

**"People are always asking how you survive without boys. I don't think it's really a problem."**

cording to the National Coalition of Girls' Schools, in Concord, Massachusetts. The concept also has some surprising backers. In March, the Bush administration announced plans to let public-education systems create single-sex classes, grades, or schools. Under the plan, which is supported in the U.S. Senate by several women from both sides of the aisle, such programs would rely on voluntary enrollment.

Still, the trend hasn't won universal acclaim. The American Association of University Women has long argued that coed schools often shortchange girls, but says the solution lies in equitable, rather than separate, education. The National Organization for Women agrees. "Parents of girls are right to want their daughters to have the best education possible," NOW president Kim Gandy, the mother of two young daughters, wrote in 2002. "But do we want to teach our children that avoiding problems is the best way to deal with them?"

Schools must create an environment in which both boys and girls can and do participate fully in school activities. Sex segregation is not the way to ensure this." The Julia Morgan School, too, had its critics. "They asked, 'Are you starting a finishing school? Why would you want to start such an anachronism?'" DeBare recalls. In response to a fundraising pitch, one founding member's sister wrote a three-page letter opposing the concept as "artificial." Like others, she warned that such an institution wouldn't prepare girls for the "real world," which includes boys. "Some people said '[Girls] need to learn how to be tough—and that means going to a coed school,'" DeBare reports.

THOSE CONCERNED that the Julia Morgan School would resemble some WASPy Victorian institution needn't have worried. For starters, the student body reflects the founders' emphasis on diversity. Forty-six

percent of this year's students are girls of color; 30 percent receive financial aid to help cover the \$14,000 tuition.

The curriculum, developed by Ann Clarke and her staff, is highly integrated. For instance, if students are studying feudal Japan in a history class, they'll also study Japanese textiles, etiquette, and music. There's a strong emphasis on math and financial literacy; in one course, students decide in teams how to divide an imaginary \$500 investment among stocks, bonds, and real estate. And it's as hands-on as the founders wished. In a science class, girls build a simple robot and dismantle coffee pots and pencil sharpeners to see how they work. There are no letter grades; instead, the students receive detailed evaluations.

The school itself is housed on two floors of a former dormitory at Oakland's Holy Names College, at the top of a steep wooded hill overlooking the Bay Area. A construction crew turned dorm rooms into classrooms and offices, but left much of the original plumbing in place; the desk of academic dean Rebecca Field, Ed.M. '94, is actually a sink covered by a piece of plywood. Staffers used chunks of dorm-room walls to build a large art table and filled classrooms with castoff furniture. Incoming students bring and decorate their own chairs.

The students themselves are just as casual; most dress in jeans and sweatshirts. They call teachers, and even school director Clarke, by first name. And they're encouraged to ask questions and express their opinions. "Girls have been taught to please," Clarke says. When students don't seem to be saying what they mean, "you'll hear our teachers say things like, 'Is that what you *really* think—or are you just saying what you think I want to hear?'"

Seventh-grader Shadai Smith, 12, says she went from being "softspoken to outspoken" in her first year at the Julia Morgan School. "I like being able to speak up for what I want," she says. Laura Southworth, a 13-year-old eighth grader, agrees "It's easy to be open here," adding that students generally support each other, rarely gossiping or fighting. And because they have brothers and male friends at home, they don't think a coed school would offer anything more. "People are always asking how you survive without boys. I don't think it's really a problem," Hannah

**Alumni College: Play Ball!**

**An upcoming Alumni College seminar** will explore the financial side of America's favorite sport, followed by a field trip to Fenway Park for an afternoon game. "The Business of Baseball," to be held on Saturday, May 29, will start with panel discussions at the Harvard Club of Boston at 374 Commonwealth Avenue. The morning agenda includes:

**Peter Carfagna** '75, J.D. '79, general counsel for International Management Group, a Cleveland, Ohio-based, sports marketing and management agency, who will discuss the agent's perspective.

**Tom Werner** '71, an owner and chairman of the Boston Red Sox, who will address the owner's point of view.

**Janet Marie Smith**, an architect and team vice president of planning and development, who will talk about Fenway's past and future architectural design.

Later, attendees will head to Fenway to see the Sox host the Seattle Mariners.

Pre-registration is required. To sign up on-line, visit [www.haa.harvard.edu](http://www.haa.harvard.edu) and click on "Alumni College." For more information, e-mail [haa\\_alumnicollege@harvard.edu](mailto:haa_alumnicollege@harvard.edu) or call 617-495-1920.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spiegel, a 12-year-old seventh-grader, says with a laugh.

IN JULY, the school will move into its own building at Mills College, a 150-year-old women's college a couple of miles away. The two-story stucco structure, which encloses an inviting courtyard, was built in the 1920s as an orphanage for Chinese girls; more recently, it was used as a campus conference center. Fittingly, the building was designed by Julia Morgan.

With a 25-year lease, the institution named in the famous architect's honor won't be moving again anytime soon. Last fall, students celebrated by wrapping the building in ribbon, which DeBare, as president of the school's board, cut during a gala dedication ceremony.

But her work is far from finished. The new building is undergoing \$2.5 million in renovations, many required to bring it into compliance with earthquake codes and accessibility laws. The institution still has no endowment and its oldest alumnae are only in high school. So, between trips to promote her book, DeBare is overseeing an ambitious capital campaign. "There's no quiet phase," she sighs. "The most we ever raised before in one year was \$200,000." To date, they've raised about \$900,000.

Meanwhile, her fourth-grade daughter is more than a year away from applying to the Julia Morgan School. But DeBare says she already feels gratified at knowing others choose to send their children to an institution whose culture she helped shape from its inception, one whose traditions are still evolving. And if she could repeat her own adolescence, she'd make one big change: she'd enroll in a girls' school.

~ANNE STUART

## Share and Share Alike

THE Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) has taken a big step toward adding shared interest groups (SIGs) to the list of alumni organizations it serves.

Earlier this year, the HAA board approved a policy enabling the association to support alumni SIGs. "We hope to work with groups such as the Harvard Black Alumni Society and Harvardwood," an entertainment-industry networking group, says Charles Cardillo '91, HAA's

## Commencement Week on the Web

For on-line information about Commencement and reunions, visit:

**Harvard University Commencement Office** ([www.commencementoffice.harvard.edu](http://www.commencementoffice.harvard.edu)): The official Commencement website includes maps, a schedule, a rain program, and other details about the morning and afternoon exercises.

**Harvard Alumni Association Commencement Website** ([www.haa.harvard.edu/class/html/commencement.html](http://www.haa.harvard.edu/class/html/commencement.html)) and **Harvard College Parents Association Website** ([www.fas.harvard.edu/~parents/](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~parents/)): Both sites contain information on Commencement

week activities for graduating seniors and their families.

**Harvard Alumni Association Major Class Reunion Websites**

•25th reunion: <http://classes.harvard.edu/college/1979/>

•35th reunion: <http://classes.harvard.edu/college/1969>

•50th reunion: <http://classes.harvard.edu/college/1954>

**Radcliffe Office of Alumnae Services** ([www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/alumnae/reunions/index.php](http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/alumnae/reunions/index.php)): This site contains a schedule for Radcliffe Day (June 11) and details about Radcliffe reunions.

director of University-wide affairs. "They exist already without our help, but we want to make them feel like they're more a part of Harvard."

Ultimately, the HAA will offer eligible SIGs the same kinds of benefits it now offers College classes and regional alumni clubs: help with operations, membership, and promotions, including website hosting and on-line discussion capability. But first the association must figure out exactly how to apply eligibility criteria, especially regarding political activity.

"Classes convene around a shared experience over a period of time. For clubs, you're gathering people based on regional proximity," Cardillo says. "With SIGs, it's more complicated." That's because, by definition, many SIGs are activist groups. To receive HAA benefits, they must agree to abide by University restrictions on using the Harvard name and logos, and by HAA's policy that the association itself will "remain neutral on all political issues both inside and outside the Harvard community." If SIGs take public positions on any issue, they must make it clear that they don't represent the University or the HAA.

Within the next few months, the HAA will invite a handful of SIGs—for example, the black-alumni and entertainment-industry groups and the Harvard Gay and Lesbian Caucus—to test the policy in a pilot project. Later, the initiative will be extended to other groups as well.

## Comings and Goings

HARVARD CLUBS regularly host lectures, seminars, and social gatherings. Following is a partial list of Harvard-affiliated speakers scheduled to speak to local clubs in May. For details, contact local clubs directly, call the Harvard Alumni Association at 617-495-3070, or visit [www.haa.harvard.edu](http://www.haa.harvard.edu).

On May 1, Marshall Goldman, associate director of the Davis Center for Russian Studies, speaks on "The Piratization of Russia" at the Harvard-Radcliffe Club of Maryland. Michael Ignatieff, Carr professor of human rights practice and director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Kennedy School (see "Harvard Portrait," March-April 2004, page 64), will be the speaker at the Harvard Club of Toronto's gala centennial dinner on May 11. His topic: "The Lesser Evil: Political Ethics in an Age of Terror." On May 13, Richard Cooper, Boas professor of international economics, addresses the Harvard-Radcliffe Club of Worcester on "Prospects for the World Economy: A Glimpse of 2015." On May 20, David Mitten, Loeb professor of classical art and archaeology and curator of ancient art at the Fogg Museum, discusses "Alexander the Great: Man for All Seasons" at the Triad Harvard-Radcliffe Club of North Carolina. Clowes professor of science Robert Kirshner visits the Harvard-Radcliffe Club of Rhode Island on May 25 to discuss "The Extravagant Universe."