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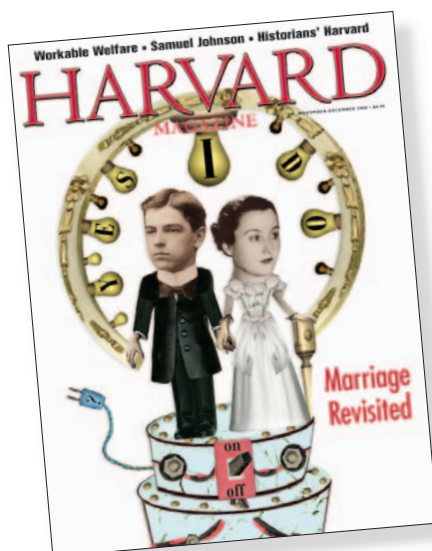
*Welfare and work, money managers' pay, plagiarism*

## MATRIMONY'S PROGNOSIS

HARBOUR FRASER HODDER in "The Future of Marriage" (November-December 2004, page 38) provides an excellent overview of recent trends in marriage and family formation, but she does not sufficiently examine the *meaning* of matrimony in contemporary society.

As a sociologist studying marriage among college-educated young adults, I concur with Peter Gomes's assertion that the reasons people marry have largely remained the same over time. Yet today's young adults, especially the college-educated, are more likely than their predecessors to feel and to express intense marital ambivalence; they are torn between two courses of action—marriage postponement and marriage pursuit.

The most common reason for marriage deferment is not disinterest, but fear—fear of getting hurt or being betrayed; fear of falling out of love or missing out on finding the "truest soul mate"; fear of losing independence and a sense of self; and fear of the institution of marriage itself.



As children of divorce, virtually half of today's young adults have felt and experienced the emotional strife associated with marital dissolution. Hoping to avoid similar strife in their own lives, many children of divorce are highly cautious about marrying in young adulthood. In addition, given America's current culture of individualism, many young adults

## THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

THE MIDDLE EAST and western Asia are again, as ever, at the center of the world: the birthplace of recorded history between the Tigris and Euphrates, the home to religions and the wars conducted by their adherents, the vortex of the petroleum economy, and the framing terrain for the recent American presidential campaign waged over Afghanistan, Iraq, and terrorism.

Those issues resonate, unsurprisingly, throughout the extended Harvard community. In this issue, three features touch on aspects of this twenty-first-century cauldron. A profile of Daniel Pipes '71, Ph.D. '78, examines the politics and sharp polemics waged over the character and consequences of what he calls "militant Islam." A separate portrait presents journalist Mark Danner '80, who has long sought truth in dangerous places, and has now reached into, and up from, the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison. And discussants on campus address the consequences of Saddam Hussein's genocidal, environmental war on the Marsh Arabs, and what might be done to recover the fragments of their vanquished "Eden."

~The Editors

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worry about making the personal sacrifices that seem requisite for marriage.

But contrary to what professor of sociology Martin Whyte suggested, many young adults *do* feel a sense of urgency or a sense that marriage is necessary. Most of those I interviewed yearned for the partnership and security marriage affords. Some sought marriage to start a family or adhere to religious beliefs, whereas others primarily desired the social status and practical benefits associated with marriage.

ELIZABETH DROGIN '99  
Berkeley, Calif.

ALL OF THE FAMOUSLY LEARNED scholars quoted by Hodder wholly omit the one driving force for same-sex marriage—legally mandated spousal benefits.

Spousal benefits started as sort of a welfare program to prevent creditors from evicting a poor widow from her home, and to prevent a man from leaving his property to someone other than his wife and children. The reason the wives were benefited was because most of them raised six children, followed their hus-

bands to every job move, and could not ever learn a skill to be self supporting. Spousal benefits were extended to males, just to be fair.

People in same-sex marriages cannot have children, so they can both work. There is no rationale for same-sex partners to get the 1,000 provisions in the Internal Revenue Code favoring spouses.

The real push for gay marriage is mandatory inclusion under the law for new gay spouses in health and retirement plans, especially without having to meet any health qualifications. Since gay men are highly susceptible to AIDS, gay marriage will require employers' health plans to pay the devastating costs of a voluntarily incurred health problem for the new gay spouse of the employee. All the rest of us will pay higher premiums to include people who could have obtained their own insurance. Small plans could fold if required to accept whatever sick partner a gay person might marry.

These eminent scholars are either unaware of the dominant reality in the movement, or are so dishonest in their presentation as to try to convince us of the cor-

rectness of views that omit the real issue. It is all about the money, honey.

JONATHAN D. REIFF '60  
Edmond, Okla.

HODDER IS INACCURATE in stating, as to same-sex marriages, that "the U.S. Constitution requires states to honor precisely such acts performed in other states."

There is no United States constitutional provision that speaks precisely to this issue. The full-faith-and-credit clause is highly relevant, but the case-law makes it clear that this provision does not require a state to apply out-of-state doctrines that are repugnant to its public policy.

SCOTT FITZGIBBON, J.D. '70  
Professor, Boston College Law School  
Boston

#### WELFARE AND WORK

READING "Understanding Welfare Reform," by Scott Winship and Christopher Jencks (November-December 2004, page 34), I wonder why the authors didn't deal with the most straightforward reason for the precipitous decline in welfare rolls

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following the 1996 law. The law imposed a work requirement, and many of the recipients couldn't meet that requirement for a simple reason. They couldn't be in two places at the same time. They were already working in the underground economy.

Most middle-class people have no idea of the size or pervasiveness of the underground economy. I certainly didn't until I took an early retirement and decided to build my own house in a rural area. I served as my own contractor and, with assistance, did all of the masonry, framing, trim, and landscaping. In the process I must have turned away two or three times as many people as I actually wound up hiring—largely because I wouldn't pay them under the table. They weren't all on government programs, but many were. And, for what it's worth, most struck me as good, hard-working people.

JAMES CAPRIO '59  
*Green Valley, Ariz.*

THE AUTHORS REPEAT the conventional wisdom that welfare reform was a success, simply because it did not cause the economic devastation some had feared. It did succeed in driving women off of welfare (the "stick" they allude to), but it did not succeed by any measure in lifting women and their children out of poverty. True, incomes rose marginally, but again, as they point out, this was in a generally rosy economic period and did not take into account the costs of work—child care, transportation, and so forth.

Welfare reform was based on the faulty premise that raising children—including such chores as cooking, cleaning, helping with homework, attending to medical needs, and financial planning—is not "work" (unless someone pays for it, of course).

Judging the results of welfare reform

#### A NOTE TO READERS

*Harvard Magazine*, created by alumni in 1898, is published by Harvard Magazine Inc. A professional staff chooses, reports, and edits its contents on readers' behalf. Publication is sustained by readers' voluntary contributions, advertising revenue, and University funds.

President Lawrence H. Summers has asked to address alumni directly in these pages as well; the editors welcome his regular column, on page 83.

merely by looking at family income is a crude way to evaluate the true effects on welfare recipients and their families. One major issue not even considered in this article is that welfare reform drove women out of education and training programs, including higher education, which have been traditionally the main way they have moved out of poverty.

As a community-college professor (North Shore Community College, in Lynn, Massachusetts), I have had the privilege of teaching hundreds of wonderful women on welfare through the years, and seen them go on to well-paying jobs as nurses and legal secretaries, or to four-year colleges, M.A. and even Ph.D. degrees, often receiving full merit scholarships, as they are among our most motivated students. Not only did they rise out of poverty, but they and their families gained a self-esteem that could not have been achieved by working a minimum-wage job at McDonald's. As a result of state and federal welfare "reform," our college went from a high of more than 800 welfare recipients one year, to a low of around 150. Women were literally weeping in the hallways because they were being forced to end a successful nursing program with a semester to go (to name just one example) in order to take a minimum-wage job. Studies have shown that the children of women who go to college are more likely to go to college themselves.

Six years ago, Erika Kates (currently research director of the Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy, at UMass Boston) and I formed a group called Welfare Education and Training Access Coalition, composed of welfare recipients throughout the state, teachers, and advocates. Our goal was to restore access to education and training. Finally, this year, we met with partial success when education was allowed to count as "work," at least in Massachusetts. Still, the federal law permits only 12 months of "job training" to count.

It is sad to see this misguided measure, embraced by Democrats as well as Republicans (who now want to make "the stick" even harsher), touted as a great success. To me, only men who know little of the real lives of women on welfare and little of the real "work" involved in child rearing, could call it so.

SUSAN JHIRAD '64, Ph.D. '72  
*Medford, Mass.*

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## SUPPORT FOR FRATERNITY

IN HIS REPORT on Professor Jason Kaufman's book *For the Common Good? American Civic Life and the Golden Age of Fraternity* ("Anti-social Societies," November-December 2004, page 14), Garrett Graff neglects to mention the fact that most of the societies described in the report were and are chiefly involved in charitable work. Across the river from Cambridge is a Shriners Hospital specializing in the treatment of burns, for example, one of many Shriners hospitals in the country. Count me as one who prefers voluntary charity to the compulsory wealth redistribution by government evidently espoused by Kaufman.

One can argue my personal conviction that high taxation for sustenance of those who won't (not can't) support themselves is immoral, but it is irrefutable that societies such as the Shriners, Lions Club, Rotary, and Knights of Columbus are more efficient at getting the donations they solicit into the hands of the needy than our bloated government bureaucracies are with our taxes.

The vast majority of charitable societies remaining in operation now do not discriminate at all in membership. They are not to be tarred with the same brush as the few that do.

DAVID BROWN, CSS '90  
Pittsburgh

*Jason Kaufman replies:* Having read Graff's comments on my book, as well as letters in response from several *Harvard Magazine* readers, I would like to add two points of clarification regarding my research. First, my work is historical in method and sociological in outlook. My aim was not to malign fraternalists' motivations, only the social repercussions of their actions. Second, my account of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century fraternal organizations does not pertain to contemporary groups like the Kiwanis, Rotary, and Lions clubs. As I state in the book, these so-called "service clubs" represent a second generation of post-fraternal voluntary groups explicitly designed to avoid some of the shortcomings of their predecessors. While I personally believe that private charity is an economically inefficient way to address public problems such as poverty and sickness, I nowhere accuse members of these groups of the kinds of discrimination practiced by their

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predecessors. Some of the more traditional fraternal orders have also reformed their otherwise discriminatory membership policies, though I provide telling examples in my book of their reluctance to do so. In sum, readers should not take my book as a swipe at all fraternalists or service clubs; it simply is an effort to balance the historical record concerning this American social movement.

#### SPEED-READING GENIUS

ADAM KIRSCH'S ARTICLE on Samuel Johnson ("The Hack as Genius," November-December 2004, page 46) underplays one of Johnson's most notable achievements: predating Evelyn Wood by more than two centuries in the invention of speed reading. According to Kirsch, Johnson and William Oldys read through "more than 35,000 volumes" in "only a little more than year." This averages to about 45 volumes per person per day! And later, Johnson managed to look into and see the merit of *The Vicar of Wakefield* (224 pages in a modern edition) while Goldsmith's landlady apparently sat there stewing, awaiting her rent. These prodigious

achievements surely warrant explicit commendation.

DAVID FALK, Ph.D. '59  
Greenbelt, Md.

#### UNCONVINCING PINES

ARE YOU SURE those are white pines behind Benning Wentworth, royal governor of New Hampshire, trees alleged to reflect the source of his wealth as Surveyor of the King's Woods ("Vita," by Castle Freeman, November-December 2004, page 36)?

DAVID PUTNAM '86  
Hartland, Vt.

Castle Freeman replies: They *don't* look much like white pines, do they? Nevertheless, the state of New Hampshire, which owns the Wentworth portrait, so identifies them on its Internet site devoted to the pictures collected at the State House in Con-

cord ([www.state.nh.us/nhdhr/glike-ness/wentbenn.html](http://www.state.nh.us/nhdhr/glike-ness/wentbenn.html)). Several explanations suggest themselves. The portrait's painter, Joseph Blackburn, worked in the Boston-Portsmouth area for about 10



Wentworth with trees, a detail of a 1760 portrait

years, but he was born and seems to have lived mostly in England. It is possible that he had no clear idea what a white pine tree looked like. Another possibility is that the mysterious trees are not pines at all, but sugar maples, and that we have here evidence of an (entirely undocumented) attempt by the canny Wentworth to organize an early corner in what has become the best-known export of the state of Vermont—maple syrup.

#### MONEY MANAGERS' PAY

I AM DISTRESSED TO LEARN ("Compensation Flap Continued," September-October 2004, page 10) that the

COLLECTION OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, GIVEN IN MEMORY OF STAFFORD AND MARGARET WENTWORTH BY HIS DAUGHTERS, ANNE WENTWORTH MORRIS, MARGARET WENTWORTH WHITING, AND CONSTANCE WENTWORTH DODGE (1989.30.2)

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this magazine.

tober 2004, page 64) of the widespread alumni objections to the salary and bonuses of Harvard's endowment-portfolio managers. Of course the fact that these people are paid a large multiple of any University salaries, even those of the president and deans, is irritating (some would even say unethical)—but not more so than the absurdly low pay, also determined by “the market,” of elementary-school teachers. All around us we see badly run businesses reducing costs without regard to the resulting effects on gross and net revenues, and damaging themselves. This is exactly what would happen if Harvard avoided the enormous compensation of these money managers. The net income available for the University's purposes would be reduced (and actual costs would rise, according to treasurer D. Ronald Daniel's letter). What is the good of that?

ERIC WOLMAN '53, PH.D. '57  
Potomac, Md.

#### OF THE WRITING OF BOOKS

THE EDITORIALISTS of the *Harvard Crimson* are correct to criticize Professor Charles Ogletree Jr., who apologized in September for the errors made that resulted in the unattributed inclusion in his recent book of six paragraphs from another person's book, and to note that even inadvertent plagiarism by a student is expected to result in severe punishment (“Where Credit Is Due,” November-December 2004, page 62). Imagine the outcry if a student were to argue, “I didn't cheat on the exam; rather, the student I hired to take the exam for me cheated on the exam.” The academy is in a sorry state when professors not only can't be bothered to write their own books, but they also apparently can't even be bothered to read their own books.

ROBERT H. HENRY '99  
Ithaca, N.Y.

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