

graduate students in biodiversity techniques and hoping to open a small local museum of fauna, “so they don’t have to rely on researchers like me to tell them what they’ve got.”

EVERY DAY IN THE FIELD, Jackson and her guide, Etienne Bokobela, waded into the forest’s waters—chest-deep in some places—to check the fishnets they used to catch snakes that swim along the surface. “It was like Christmastime,” she says. “You get to see what you’ve got.” One day something was thrashing about furiously. Using all her strength, Jackson lifted the net and saw a snake whose head and neck were as thick as her forearm.

They had a water cobra (*Boulengerina anulata*) that turned out to be six and a half feet long. The 24-inch tongs she used to grab snakes from the water were useless; her hemostat wouldn’t open wide enough

to go around its head. She threw a snake bag at its mouth and “while it had its teeth in the bag, I went in, lightning fast, and grabbed its neck and held on tight, because it was wet and slippery,” she recalls. “If it had gotten out even a centimeter, it would have bitten me. Cobras are not as fast as vipers, but they are more clever.”

Once she had it by the throat, Bokobela cut off the netting with his machete. They carried the creature back to camp, emptied out the largest plastic supply bin they had, threw in a cloth doused with chloroform, and Jackson pushed the snake in, head-first, and shut the lid. “I was trying at that point to slow it down a little bit so I could take it out—I wanted a picture of a live snake, not a dead one,” she explains. “And that’s a dodgy decision to make, because they can recover quite quickly once they get some clean air in their lungs.” She got her photograph—

and measurements. Then she killed the snake, removed a piece of its liver for DNA sequencing, injected the carcass with formalin, wrapped it in toilet paper (they were out of cheesecloth), and stored it in a plastic bag.

Jackson says convincingly that she feels no fear while working. “It doesn’t occur to me. People are frightened by different things,” she explains. “It is just in my character to be brave and reckless and independent.” On her apartment wall hangs a poster of the great British admiral Horatio Nelson, whom she has revered since she was 10. “He conquered Napoleon on the seas and he did it by ignoring orders to retreat and forging ahead,” she says. “He lost an eye and an arm, but he won the battle.”

Jackson’s recent spoils include the water cobra, a species of frog she thinks has not been mentioned in the literature since 1924, and a roadkill snake possibly

Ballots, Please

This spring, alumni vote for a new group of Harvard Overseers and for elected directors of the Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) board.

Ballots should arrive in the mail by April 15 and must be received back in Cambridge by noon on June 2 to be counted. Results of the election will be announced at the HAA’s annual meeting on June 8, on the afternoon of Commencement day. All holders of Harvard degrees, except Corporation members and officers of instruction and government, are entitled to vote for Overseer candidates. The election for HAA directors is open to all alumni.

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

Arne S. Duncan ’86. Chicago. CEO, Chicago Public Schools.

Sandra Faber, Ph.D. ’72. Monte Serena, Calif. Professor of astronomy, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Leila T. Fawaz, Ph.D. ’79. Cambridge. Professor of history and diplomacy, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts.

Ricardo H. Hinojosa, J.D. ’75. McAllen, Texas. U.S. District Court judge.

Henry W. McGee III ’74, M.B.A. ’79. New York City. President, HBO Video.

Ann Moore, M.B.A. ’78. New York City. Chairman and CEO, Time Inc.

Emily Pulitzer, A.M. ’63. St. Louis. President, Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts.

Robert N. Shapiro ’72, J.D. ’78. Cambridge. Partner, Ropes & Gray, Boston.

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

Neal Baer, Ed.M. ’79, A.M. ’82, M.D. ’96. Toluca Lake, Calif. Executive producer, NBC’s *Law & Order: SVU*, Universal City, Calif.

Jeffrey Behrens ’89. Newton, Massachusetts. Principal, Adviza Consulting.

James Bell ’89. Greenwich, Conn. Executive producer, *Today Show*, NBC News, New York City.

Mary McGrath Carty ’74. Belmont, Massachusetts. Executive director, The Lenny Zakim Fund, Boston.

Linda Hotchkiss ’74, M.D. ’78. Grosse Pointe, Michigan. Physician, Trinity Health Organization.

Patrik Johansson, M.P.H. ’01. Washington, D.C. Physician; instructor of social medicine, Harvard Medical School; Kerr White visiting scholar, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; native investigator, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.

Linda Kartoz-Doochin, M.B.A. ’79. Nashville. Community volunteer.

Linda Niessen, D.M.D. ’77, M.P.H. ’77, M.P.P. ’82. Dallas. Vice president, clinical education, Dentsply International.

Christina Tchen ’78. Chicago. Partner, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP.

The HAA nominating committee proposes Overseer and elected director candidates each year. The committee’s 13 voting members include three current or former Overseers and 10 other alumni chosen by the HAA executive committee. Overseer and HAA elected-director candidates may also be nominated by means of petitions signed by a prescribed number of eligible degree holders and filed by a set date early in the year.