demia focuses on change, what may be more interesting is the *continuity* of certain aspects of the human experience—our inability to eradicate violence, for instance. (A family emergency kept Bearman away, so Ford professor of the social sciences Robert J. Sampson gave the presentation for him.)

Several of the problems fit neatly into the category Bearman highlighted: problems that are vexingly persistent through time. Ramsey professor of political economy Richard Zeckhauser discussed the difficulty in engineering systems (political and otherwise) that balance the preferences of their constituents. Lee professor of economics Claudia Goldin called for further research on the problem of why women are still paid less than men. Beren professor of economics Roland Fryer drew attention to the racial achievement gap in American education. And Emily Oster '02, Ph.D. '06, focused on the tricky task of getting people to change their health behaviors. Oster, an assistant professor of economics at the University of Chicago, noted that newly diagnosed diabetics who are very obese gain *more* weight in the year following their diagnosis than do similarly sized people who are not diabetic—contrary to the expectation that the diagnosis would cause the first group to take better care of their health and lose weight.

The symposium ended with a call for the public to weigh in on which of the problems were most pressing and which were most worthy of investing effort in solving—and to suggest their own problems to add to the list. Voting was scheduled to close May 31, with the final tally announced thereafter. At this writing, a vibrant discussion of several of the problems was still under way on Facebook. Check back at harvardmagazine.com/hardproblems for updates on the voting and plans to publish the symposium proceedings as a guide for future work in Harvard's large social-sciences faculties and elsewhere.

Yesterday's News

From the pages of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* and *Harvard Magazine*

1935 After the Harvard Athletic Association asks alumni to help underwrite the cost of American participation in the coming Berlin Olympics, Maxwell Steinhardt '11 writes the editors condemning this endorsement as "contrary to our ideals of fair play and equality for all.... Our traditions demand that we do not participate in these games....so that Germany will understand that this nation, at least, does not subscribe to her policies."

* * *

President Conant terms it "almost miraculous" that the class of 1910 has raised $100,000 for its twenty-fifth reunion.

1950 Harvard hosts the first International Congress of Mathematicians since 1936. Besides arcane discussions there are 10 social events, including a "Memorial Hall beer party at which blackboards were supplied so that the guests would have profundity with their pretzels." The Soviet Academy of Science declares its mathematicians are "too busy to attend."

1955 The University will implement a comprehensive health plan for its 10,000 students in the fall, providing complete medical service for a single fee of $56.50.

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To meet the cost of screening increased numbers of applicants (4,000 in 1954-55), the College announces that it will adopt, "with great reluctance," a $10 admission application fee beginning next year.

1965 To the delight of supporters and chagrin of detractors, brand-new Peabody Terrace—designed by the firm of Josep Lluis Sert, dean of the School of Design—receives a First Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects.

1975 On July 1, the Harvard and Radcliffe admissions offices are consolidated, making the class of 1979 the last chosen by separate committees. "From now on, applicants will be reviewed on an 'equal-access' basis"—without regard to the male-female proportions of the class.

1980 The Medical Area Total Energy Plant (MATEP), intended as an energy saver for the Longwood area, opens for operation, "easily the most expensive project ever launched by a university," and riddled with problems from "angry neighbors, lengthy regulatory delays, and a multimillion-dollar overrun in construction costs."

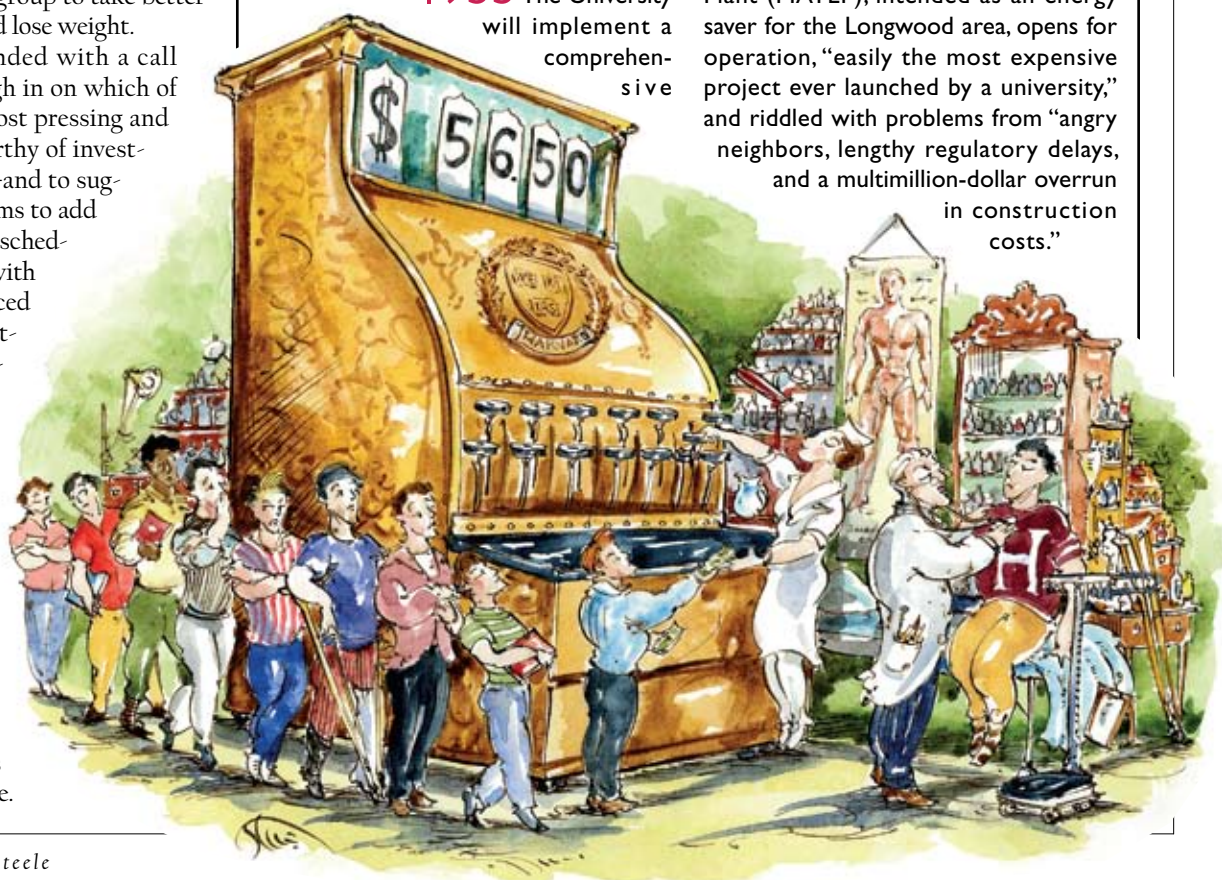

Illustration by Mark Steele

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