

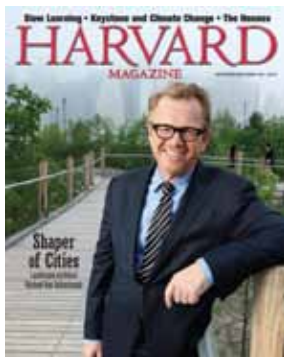
Cambridge 02138

Patience and learning, Edward Everett, House life

KEYSTONE PIPELINE

ALTHOUGH Michael McElroy's recent article, "Forum: The Keystone XL Pipeline" (November-December 2013, page 37) carefully addresses the pipeline issue, especially in terms of carbon dioxide and climate change, it neglects to adequately cover other issues related to the exploitation of this high-carbon, low net-energy resource.

Canadian tar sands, a mix of clay, sand, and sticky, heavy high-sulfur oil, sit below



34 million acres of pristine boreal forest, a natural community the size of New York State, an area which would be destroyed by mining for the oil. To extract one ton of tar sand, four tons of soil and the life it supports are removed; trees are clearcut, wetlands are drained, and rivers and streams are diverted. Net energy is low;

energy economists have estimated that it takes 0.7 barrels of oil to extract, upgrade, and produce just one barrel of oil. Fur-

7 WARE STREET

The New Order

THE CONTENTS of this issue of *Harvard Magazine* appear in a slightly modified order. As always, your letters come first, followed by Right Now—short articles on engaging new discoveries and knowledge (Harvard's forte, as a research university).

But next you will find John Harvard's Journal, the extensive news section, moved forward. It seems logical to bring this content to the front of the magazine, where news items appear in most publications. As Montage—our coverage of creative and performing arts, criticism and reviews—has grown and prospered (it first appeared in the fall of 2006), its contents have increasingly come to involve work by alumni, and so fit naturally near the pages of alumni profiles and news, The College Pump, and (for College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences readers), class notes. Its placement there brings together our diverse reporting on graduates, and mirrors the order of presentation found in many peer magazines.

We hope you find this organization of the contents, which are otherwise unchanged, logical and useful. They will appear in the same order in the mobile app,

for readers using tablets or smart phones, when it becomes available to you for test use in late January.

* * *

FOR ALL the understandable current focus on applied sciences and engineering (a major emphasis of the capital campaign) and on Harvard's campuses in Cambridge and Boston, it is worthwhile, now and then, to recall the University's prowess in traditional fields like the humanities and arts, and its presence around the world. By chance, the November 21, 2013, *New York Review of Books* included sequential essays by a pair of distinguished alumni: the incomparable Walter Kaiser, Higginson professor of English and professor of comparative literature emeritus, former director of Villa I Tatti, reviewing a new biography of Bernard Berenson, who founded that invaluable center for Italian Renaissance studies, in Florence; and the Institute for Advanced Study's G. W. Bowersock, previously professor of Greek and Latin here, writing on Byzantium and citing the crucial strengths of Dumbarton Oaks, the University's center for Byzantine studies (and other subjects; see page 11), in Washington, D.C. Two extraordinary cultural assets indeed, among many stars in Harvard's firmament.

~JOHN S. ROSENBERG, *Editor*

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thermore, the water-intensive processing of the tar sands creates toxic sludge and causes huge releases of other pollutants threatening our water and air, including inordinate amounts of carbon dioxide, thus furthering climate change.

Let's work with nature and appreciate ecosystem services, those which give us our clean air and water and are estimated to contribute \$33 trillion annually, and let's focus our efforts on obtaining energy from the sun and other renewables, thereby keeping us and our natural world and future generations more in mind.

PETER K. McLEAN, Ph.D.
Middletown, Del.

Wow. So now the energy industry owns Harvard. What planet do you expect to live on after the tar sands oil has contaminated this one?

I am ashamed of you.

LANA RUEGAMER EISENBERG, A.B.E. '65
Bloomington, Ind.

PRESIDENT OBAMA has declared that approval of the Keystone XL (KXL) pipeline is premised on "that so doing would be in the nation's interest. And our national interest will be served only if the project does not significantly exacerbate the problem of carbon pollution." In support of the president's position, the article concludes that "the incremental pipe-line emissions would represent an increase of 0.06 percent to 0.3 percent in total greenhouse gas emissions for the U.S.—significant, though scarcely game-changing."

The increment in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from mining the Canadian bitumen/tar sands is not as small as the article implies. The author relies on the well-to-wheel assessment of the net emissions of GHG, a method of evaluation favored by the oil/gas industry. A more accurate representation of GHG emissions would use the well-to-tank evaluation, resulting in a considerably higher assessment.

Further undercutting the oil/gas industry's figures is that the contribution to GHG from the inevitable destruction of large areas of the Canadian boreal forest and wetlands that overlay the bitumen/tar sands is not mentioned, even though the destruction of thousands of living trees would transform that area from a GHG sink into a GHG emitter.

Presidential approval of the pipeline

could be critical in determining to what extent oil extraction occurs—despite the proponents assuring the public that disapproval would have no effect on the rate of extraction because the oil would be transported cross-border via rail. But rail-line is a far less reliable means for oil to reach its destination than via pipeline. Between May 21 and October 19 there were six derailments of Canadian oil-carrying trains out of a total of 13 derailments. There must be a reason for TransCanada's intensive lobbying for the new 36-inch pipeline component linking Hardisty, Alberta, to Steele City, Nebraska. It is shocking that this projected pipeline would traverse the most productive area of the Ogallala aquifer.

Given the well-documented threat of irreversible global warming, it is irresponsible to argue that small increments in GHG emissions are acceptable. The U.S. should be the leader among industrialized nations in decreasing our planet's carbon footprint, rather than acceding to any increase contributing to the fatal 2°C temperature rise.

In final analysis, however, whatever the president and the Department of State decide may be moot. A bipartisan House of Representatives proposal would fast-track approval of cross-border oil links applications by shifting approval from the State Department to the Commerce Department. That would trigger a flood of GHG emissions from bitumen/tar sands crude oil from Canada into the U.S., contributing to temperature rise, and hastening "game over" for life as we know it on this planet.

MARIAN HEINEMAN ROSE, Ph.D. '47
Bedford, N.Y.

ADVOCATING for the Keystone Pipeline, Michael B. McElroy manages to avoid any discussion whatsoever of how it will impact wildlife and wildlife habitat. At the least, such an astonishing omission makes his analysis incomplete and his conclusion suspect.

JOHN R. NELSON '68
Gloucester, Mass.

AFTER MAKING a creditable case for President Obama to deny approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline, Michael McElroy disappointingly comes to the opposite conclusion. There are, however, several additions to the denial column that should be considered.

McElroy states more than once that in terms of climate impact "it makes little difference where the oil is consumed." But

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the national-security aspect of allowing the pipeline to be built concerns decreasing the U.S. dependence on non-North American sources of oil. Bringing tar-sands oil to the Gulf is no guarantee that it will remain onshore. In fact, Canadian energy minister Ken Hughes said recently, "[F]or Alberta, the strategic imperative is that we get our [petroleum] products to the ocean, so that we secure global prices for our products....The solutions are additional pipelines to the West Coast, to the East Coast, [and] to the Gulf Coast."

The Ogallala Aquifer, which lies in the path of the Keystone XL Pipeline, also deserves consideration. One of the world's

largest aquifers, it runs under eight states in the Great Plains and provides much of the drinking and irrigation water to those states. An oil spill in this area could devastate this vital and irreplaceable resource.

First Nations people on both sides of the Canada/U.S. border are vigorously fighting the pipeline. They are trying to protect their sovereign lands from this unwanted incursion, having already experienced the consequences of the tar-sands oil extraction. Native peoples in these areas have elevated rates of cancer and other diseases as a consequence of tar-sands-related pollution of water, air and soil. They realize that a huge pipeline to the Gulf would increase worldwide demand, which would increase extraction and thus increase environmental degradation.

Canada's boreal forest, currently the largest intact forest on earth and home to innumerable species of plants and animals, is being clear-cut for tar sands extraction. The Mordor-like expanses dotted with toxic pools of sludge created by this process, while heartbreaking, are also extraordinarily short-sighted. These forests, like the Am-

azon in the southern hemisphere, are both vegetative lungs and carbon sinks, something desperately needed in our attempts to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Finally, while McElroy quotes preeminent climate scientist James Hansen in his first paragraph, he does not use Hansen's most telling quote about the tar-sands exploitation: "If Canada proceeds, and we do nothing, it will be game over for the climate."

Vote no, Mr. President, the world is watching.

CAROL SOTO
San Francisco

SPEAK UP, PLEASE

Harvard Magazine welcomes letters on its contents. Please write to "Letters," *Harvard Magazine*, 7 Ware Street, Cambridge 02138, send comments by e-mail to yourturn@harvard.edu, use our website, www.harvardmagazine.com, or fax us at 617-495-0324. Letters may be edited to fit the available space.

McELROY presented a fair and logical article with statistics on the Keystone XL Pipeline, in contrast to the general media. My general question, however, for all those fighting against the pipeline, is: What right do we have as Americans to tell citizens of a foreign country, Canada, what they can and can not do with their tar sands? It is their business, not ours. If we don't buy it, China will.

ROBERT B. YOUNKER, M.B.A. '61
Rockville, Md.

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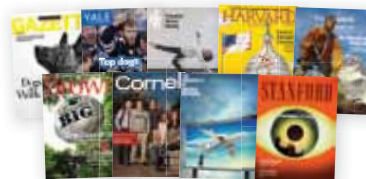
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THE POWER OF PATIENCE

THANK YOU for publishing the insightful article, “The Power of Patience,” by Jennifer L. Roberts (November-December 2013, page 40). As a minister I regularly notice how bad most of us are at aging and dying, which is the one part of life we all have in common (regardless of occupation, race, income level, age, gender, or graduation year).

I regularly look to the humanities for a deeper understanding of how to be a better human and world citizen. Yet even with my very oldest members, some raised in homes without indoor plumbing and in the days of “party” telephone lines, observations about one’s own aging and dying process are woefully absent. Regardless of the year of our birth, it seems to be in our human nature to rush away from our spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional experiences.

Eleven months is a long time to wait for feedback, but even today this is a realistic timeline. “Delays can themselves be productive.” The body and mind shift over long periods of time. Are we paying attention? Do we note when our memory

In Your Service

We salute two outstanding contributors to *Harvard Magazine* for their work on readers’ behalf during 2013, and happily confer on each a \$1,000 honorarium.

Art historian Jennifer L. Roberts—Agassiz professor of the humanities and chair of the committee on degrees in American studies—sparked wide discussion with “The Power of Patience” (November-December, page 40), her probing essay on teaching students to decelerate and to immerse themselves in their subjects in pursuit of deep learning. It is fitting that we recognize her work with the Smith-Weld Prize (in memory of A. Calvert Smith ’14, a former secretary to the Governing Boards and executive assistant to President James Bryant Conant, and of Philip S. Weld ’36,



Jennifer L. Roberts

a former president of the magazine), which honors thought-provoking writing about Harvard.

Nathan Heller ’06, a past *Harvard Magazine* Ledecky Undergraduate Fellow, now a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, crafted a richly reported and wonderfully composed feature on Porter University Professor Helen Vendler’s long collaboration with Arion Press, one of the country’s most distinguished fine-book publishers, in “A Nearly Perfect Book” (September-October, page 34)—the latest of his many excellent articles in these pages. We take special pleasure in awarding him the McCord Writing Prize, named for David T.W. McCord ’21, A.M. ’22, L.H.D. ’56, in recognition of his legendary prose and verse composed for these pages and for the Harvard College Fund.

We warmly thank both. ~The Editors



COURTESY OF NATHAN HELLER

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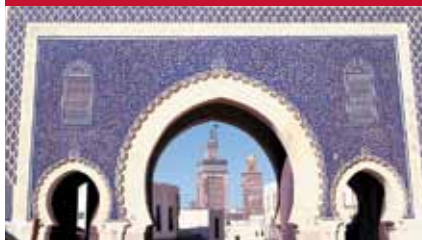


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LETTERS

changes, fatigue increases, energy accelerates, spirit moves? Contemporary life might control us with its tempo, but only if we choose to let it. We can text up to the moment of our death, but in doing so, we can also render ourselves oblivious to the meaning and experience of the one precious life that each of us carries.

I suspect that if we all ruminated on being “too liney,” we would lead deeper, richer lives that result in more peaceful deaths.

REVEREND SHARON K. DITTMAR, M.Div. '97
Cincinnati

BREVITY AND CONCISION dominate the pace of modern life. Jennifer Robert's timely plea for immersion and slowed awareness in deepening learning aims to wind back the tidal wave of the “frenetic motion of the mind” (my phrase) that has become the norm in today's college students. The distracting allure of hastily skimmed over data channeled through the portable lit screen militates against deep and meaningful engagement.

What is more worrying is that the habit of superficial grazing and casting a wide net on Google has been shown to permanently imprint itself upon the neurocircuitry of formative brains. Learning styles that favor putting down deep roots are being selected out by societal and technological pressures. The burgeoning trend for authoring abbreviated cultural commentary tailored to suit the modern distractible sensibility could reflect this seismic shift. Imagine trying to distill the epic historicity of *War and Peace* into tens of easily digestible pages, or faithfully rendering the essence of all Shakespeare's plays in an evening's sitting. Rather than being exhausted taking numerous promiscuous bites from the whole of our burgeoning cultural menu, we'd do better to select the few offerings that still allow thoughtful assessment in the midst of leisurely contemplation. Fast culture, like fast food, promises a quick fix but is unlikely to make a lasting impression.

DR. JOSEPH TING
Brisbane, Australia

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, UNITE!

ARRRGGGHHH! I am getting too old to fight this fight but here goes. I was heartened to open my mailbox to Michael Van Valkenburgh on the cover of *Harvard Magazine* (November-December 2013, and page 32).

My mature restraint is exhibited when I

HM Many correspondents weighed in on the



Keystone XL pipeline, among other issues. Read additional letters at <http://harvard-mag.com/letters-14>.

hold back from trotting out all the reasons why “The Urban Landscaper” was an unfortunate title. Geez, landscape architects everywhere are thrilled that Van Valkenburgh heads the multi-discipline team to redesign the arch grounds here in St. Louis.

If you only knew how diminished we all feel when referred to as “landscapers.” Now that I've gotten this off my chest, I might even read your article.

D. ANNE LEWIS, M.L.A. '82
St. Louis

Editor's note: We take the point. But a magazine headline is not a title in a professional journal. The cover reads, “Landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh.”

EVERETT AS “COTTON WHIG”

THE AUTHOR of the piece on Edward Everett (Vita, November-December 2013, page 44) lets his subject off too easy by referring to him as a “pragmatic Whig.” Everett was, in fact, a so-called Cotton Whig, a derisive term applied to members of that party who cared little about the “turbulent issue” of the extension of slavery and who were said to represent an alliance of “the lords of the loom” with “the lords of the lash.”

The eminent Civil War historian James McPherson, in his great book *Battle Cry of Freedom*, points out that the Constitutional Union Party, on whose ticket Everett ran for vice president in the 1860 presidential election, was created for the sole purpose of denying the presidency to Abraham Lincoln. McPherson wrote that “the Constitutional Unionists did not expect to win the election.” “The best they could hope for,” he wrote, “was to carry several upper-South states and weaken Lincoln sufficiently in the lower north to deny him an electoral majority.” Then, according to McPherson, the House of Representatives might elect John (please turn to page 79)

LETTERS

(continued from page 10)

Breckenridge of Kentucky as president, or failing that, Everett's running mate, John Bell of Tennessee. Or Everett himself might become "acting president" if elected vice-president by the Senate.

Lincoln was the true pragmatist in the 1860 election, for he knew how to win an election, and how to win a war. And unlike Everett, Lincoln also knew how to make a really good speech and to keep it short.

LEONARD S. ELMAN, J.D. '55
New York City

CASTLE FREEMAN JR. tosses off the comment that Edward Everett "with a scholarly friend" traveled to Germany to prepare for a professorship of Greek at Harvard. Some friend! George Ticknor, according to Wikipedia, pioneered the teaching of modern foreign languages at Harvard and advocated the creation of departments, the grouping of students in divisions according to proficiency, and the establishment of the elective system. He was not just along for the ride with Everett!

HERBERT L. MAGER JR. '64
Oakland, Calif.

Editor's note: The Vita format often requires pruning interesting, even important, information to arrive at the specified length. Even had we known that Ticknor was Everett's traveling companion, we might have asked the author to excise him to keep something else in the article. But having learned the name of that companion, we revisited the Vita of Ticknor (January-February 2005, page 48) and found, tit for tat, no mention of Everett there. We're glad Mr. Mager has brought the two men together.

HOUSES, RENEWED

IN CRAIG LAMBERT'S otherwise excellent article, "Learning, and Life, in the Houses" (November-December 2013, page 46), there is a factual error that should be corrected. He wrote that "The only true counterpart to Harvard's house system as a way to lodge, feed, and educate upperclassmen is an analogous arrangement at Yale." Rice University has had a residential college system since the 1950s that is in every essential analogous to Harvard's and Yale's. Each college at Rice has a master and co-master who live on campus in a residence connected to the college (my wife and I were co-masters of

Will Rice college). We ate with the students and advised them on both academic and social matters, with the assistance of two resident associates, usually other faculty members. As at Harvard, the colleges encourage theatrical productions, concerts, and art exhibits, as well as athletic and purely social events. Each college has a slate of elected officers and a legislative body. The colleges also sponsor specialty courses. Loyalty to one's college is fierce, as it is at Harvard. When I joined the faculty at Rice, I was greatly relieved to find a system so like the Harvard houses (I had been a tutor at Eliot House) instead of the Greek system, which has been problematic for so many colleges and universities.

EDWARD DOUGHTIE, PH.D. '64
Strafford, Vt.

I HAD THE VERY GOOD fortune to have been a resident tutor at Adams House between 1949 and 1952. I was a teaching fellow in General Education (in the late Sam Beer's unforgettable Social Sciences II) and a graduate student in sociology. I was 23 years old when I began, and (like my fellow tutor, Bernard Bailyn) had come to Harvard from Williams College with its charms, character, and great teaching tradition. Richard Wilbur (from Amherst), the poet, was a resident fellow from the Society of Fellows and the faculty fellows were a scintillating bunch, including Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Edwin Reischauer, and Morton White. I was closest to the undergraduate members of the house in age, but all of us learned at least as much from them as they did from us. Diana Eck is right. Then, as apparently now, the houses were sites of community, extended families, and in any case, indispensable alternatives to the ferocious anonymity of a very competitive university.

NORMAN BIRNBAUM, PH.D. '58
University Professor Emeritus
Georgetown University Law Center
Washington, D.C.

HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES

I READ THE ARTICLE concerning the distinguished new president of Morehouse College, J.S. Wilson Jr., with interest and growing perplexity ("Morehouse Man, Redux," November-December 2013, page 72). The status of the historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) was covered in some detail.

It was reported that 9 of 10 young African-American men and women choose to

matriculate in "white" schools of higher learning rather than an HBCU school. Is this wrong? Are these young people not saying they do not want to attend a *de facto* segregated school? Was not the concept of "separate but unequal" schools the basis for the fight largely won by civil-rights activists not that long ago? Was that drive not also to encourage ethnic mixing and thus lessen interracial tensions? Do HBCUs foster that desirable end? Should each of Wilson's three children have selected an HBCU rather than Harvard, Stanford, and Princeton, where they were enrolled? Should we bemoan the passing of St. Paul's College in Virginia, any more than we should bemoan the transformation of Harvard College? It was largely a school to train white male Protestant preachers in its early days. Times change and societal needs and *desiderata* evolve with them.

Is there still a role in higher education for HBCUs? If so, what is it precisely?

GIULIO J. D'ANGIO, M.D. '45
Philadelphia

Editor's note: Leaders of HBCUs could address these questions. But some thoughts prompted by the profile likely occur to any reader: Certainly for students of color attending college, wider opportunity is welcome—although opinions vary about whether all such students thrive in whatever institutions they choose to attend. But HBCUs' role is presumably still important in an era when a large portion of the cohort they serve is not achieving *any* higher education. And the competition for their students from institutions with greater financial resources, occurring *de facto*, has perhaps not been accompanied by an explicit discussion of their role in the society.

ERRATA AND AMPLIFICATIONS

THE online "Extra" indicator in the profile of Michael Van Valkenburgh inexplicably misspelled his name, which appeared correctly elsewhere in the article.

James MacGregor Burns's *Fire and Light*, the November-December 2013 Open Book (page 18), was published by the Thomas Dunne Books imprint of St. Martin's Press.

Jon Bartel '63 of Goleta, California, alertly noted that Vita subject Edward Everett was appointed U.S. Secretary of State in 1852, not 1849. Millard Fillmore, who appointed him, did not become president until 1850.