DECISIONS

Jennifer Lerner shows how emotions play a role

After the Flood
Alumni aid in recovery

Outside In
A new vision for Washington, DC, schools

1,000 Words
Photos record world travels
Dear reader,
I suspect people in every generation feel they live in historic times, but this moment certainly feels unique in my lifetime. As 2008 comes to a close, we are facing a multitude of challenges: Global economic turmoil, terrorism, war, climate change, and immigration all require our urgent attention. At the same time, our mission to train, support, and provide new ideas for public leaders has never been more critical. The recent presidential election highlighted the enthusiasm of this generation for integrating public service into their lives. Among our students, our prospective students, and even our faculty, I have rarely seen such a high level of excitement and engagement. There is no doubt that our society is facing some extremely difficult problems, not the least of which is the challenge that the current economic climate presents to any university. But we remain committed and energized as a school to developing, through our research and training, the leaders who will help to solve many of these problems.

Later this month, Barack Obama will be sworn in as the 44th president of the United States. President-elect Obama has repeatedly spoken on the importance of public service, and his candidacy and election galvanized a renewed spirit of service in young people in particular and our nation in general. Several of our faculty are working with the Obama/Biden transition, and more will help the new administration, both officially and in advisory capacities. We are proud of the HKS community’s long tradition of public service.

I look forward to working with you as we renew our commitment to training and encouraging the next generation of public leaders. May we all enjoy a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Dean David T. Ellwood
January 2009

Apples and Oranges

In the Summer 2008 Bulletin, Professor Newhouse compares percentages of uninsured for health care in American states with some other countries and finds there is little difference. Therefore the pluralistic U.S. health care financing system may not be the reason for the high cost of American health care.

This is the proverbial comparison of oranges and apples. Millions of Americans are either not covered by insurance or have inadequate insurance. They go without health care and thus reduce the apparent cost. If coverage here were as broad as in other countries and we continued with our current system, the percentage of uninsured for health care could be much larger. Also, one should take into account the fact that some of the other countries have a lower cost than the United States, which means that even if they spend the same percentage as in our country, they are spending less actual money. Some of the other countries keep their health costs at or below American averages even though they are spending less actual money. A little under a sixth of the U.S. population is uninsured, and a consensus estimate is that the uninsured get about half as much care as the fully insured. Thus, insuring this group would increase the share of uninsured by less than a twelfth. Even that is overstated because whatever insurance plan the uninsured would receive would not likely be full coverage and because the uninsured are almost all non-elderly, who are disproportionately less expensive.

Elijah B.Z. Kaminsky

For more information on the topic, please visit the website of the KSG Bulletin or the Harvard Kennedy School of Government’s Office of Career Advancement.
ARREN CIKINS 1954 remembers how his decision to attend the Kennedy School — then the Littauer School — was met with skepticism by peers and mentors alike. His closest friends from his undergraduate days at Harvard were going into medicine, business, and law. His father had dreamed of his becoming an engineer, and one of his government professors wondered aloud: “Why go here? Make a lot of money, then go into public service.”

But he never doubted his career choice. His ambition, he says, began as a boy, living in Dorchester, Massachusetts, listening to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the radio talk to the American people.

“It was always my intent to serve the public; I was committed to making a difference,” says Cikins, ’78, who grew up in a devout Orthodox Jewish household. Nothing, it seemed to him, could be more important than the work of the public servant.

Looking back, Cikins says he has no regrets. His career, spanning more than 50 years and including work with all three branches of government, overlapped with many of the country’s pivotal events.

In his first full-time job after the Kennedy School, he served as legislative assistant to Arkansas Congressman Brooks Hays when Hays intervened in Governor Orval Faubus’s attempt to block the integration of Little Rock’s Central High School — an effort that would later cost Hays his seat.

Cikins served with Hays in the Kennedy White House after first serving as Hays’s assistant when he was appointed Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations. At the Commission on Civil Rights in 1964 Cikins helped bring about the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He followed with stints at the United States Agency for International Development (usaid), where he sought to attract highly qualified minorities, and at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (eeoc).

A self-described moderate liberal, Cikins fought throughout his career for those who had no voice. And he did it, he says, by looking for the similarities he shared with his colleagues rather than the differences. In his 2005 memoir, In Search of Middle Ground, Cikins writes, “My style was always one of outreach. I believed in bipartisanship, bridge-building, compromise, and civility. Confrontational approaches were an anathema to me.”

He put this advice to great use and success as a two-term elected member of the Fairfax County (VA) Board of Supervisors, on which he served from 1973 to 1980. Local politician Gerry Hyland, who worked with Cikins, noted in a profile in the local newspaper: “Warren is viewed as a person who cares and who works toward consensus. The will of the group is going to prevail above his own point of view.”

It is in the compromises, he says, that the work gets done, repeating often a truism he attributes to Hays, his former boss and mentor: “Half of something is better than all of nothing.”

As a senior administrator at the Brookings Institution, where he spent more than 15 years, Cikins continued to promote outreach and collaboration by establishing, among many programs he created there, a highly successful annual seminar on the administration of justice, which sought to resolve differences between the three branches of government, and the Newly Elected Members of Congress seminar, an effort that helped bring new members of Congress up to speed. Towards the end of his career at Brookings, he devoted much of his energy to bringing greater attention to improving criminal rehabilitation.

In his 2001 class report marking the 50th anniversary of his graduation from Harvard, Cikins wrote that he considered his work in improving the criminal justice system, in cooperation with Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger, one of his greatest accomplishments.

Quoting Dostoyevsky, Cikins noted in his memoir, “Civilization will be judged by how it treats its wrongdoers.”

Cikins’s personal life reflects these same values. He remains close to his friends from high school at Boston Latin, many of whom went on with him to Harvard. Recently with his wife of 44 years, Sylvia, Cikins celebrated the 80th birthday of his longtime Kennedy School friend, Mark Cannon 1953, a Mormon and political conservative. And Cikins regarded Hays, whose Baptist faith ran as deep as Cikins’s did in Judaism, as one of the most influential and inspirational people in his life. They remained close until Hays’s death in 1981.

Of the many accolades recognizing his contributions to public service that he received over the years, from prominent figures that include Supreme Court Justices Burger and William Rehnquist, a letter he recently received from former New York Congressman and Harvard alumnus Amo Houghton, a Republican, says it most succinctly:

“You were the role model; you’re the person who constantly tried to bring us back toward the center, and I thank you for it — you’re a great example.” — SA
Crisis Management ABCs

**Partnership offers senior educators crisis leadership training**

**AT A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY, a wide range of events can trigger a crisis.** On-campus violence, natural disasters, disorderly protests, and controversial statements or actions can have a lasting impact on its people, culture, and reputation.

Joseph Zolner, director of the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (hgse), recognized that crisis leadership was a growing concern among senior administrators at colleges and universities. Zolner invited Leonard and Howitt to teach a session at the Institute for Educational Management, and Honan invited Leonard to the particular blend of the expertise that Harvard Kennedy School has together to develop new curriculum materials. The resulting collaboration, Crisis Leadership in Higher Education, is slated to debut in March 2009. The program will focus on helping senior leaders in higher education develop the skills — gathering critical information, adapting to unique circumstances, and prioritizing actions and responses — needed to respond to and manage crises effectively. Leonard, Howitt, Honan, and Judith Block McLaughlin of the **hgse Graduate School of Education (hgse)**, recognized

noting that these are settings “that are deliberately designed to be open and diverse and are therefore potentially volatile and difficult to control.”

The resulting collaboration, Crisis Leadership in Higher Education, is slated to debut in March 2009. The program will focus on helping senior leaders in higher education develop the skills — gathering critical information, adapting to unique circumstances, and prioritizing actions and responses — needed to respond to and manage crises effectively. Leonard, Howitt, Honan, and Judith Block McLaughlin of the Harvard Graduate School of Education (hgse) are working together to develop new curriculum materials.

Zolner is enthusiastic about the partnership. “It’s a terrific opportunity to give educators the leadership development needs of the higher ed community.” — MK

Remembering Good Friends

**Hale Champion**

Friends, former colleagues, and family members of Hale Champion, former executive dean, former executive dean, lecturer, and good friend of the Kennedy School, noted his service to the university with a moving eulogy.

Hale played a vital role in the creation of Harvard’s Kennedy School. Hale anchored the effort in real-world experience. — MK

**John Montgomery**

Last spring, Harvard Kennedy School mourned the loss of John Montgomery, one of the school’s early pioneers. An expert in international development who served in more than 80 countries as an international development advisor, Montgomery was Harvard’s first professor of public administration.

“Jack had it all,” said Steve Kelman, Harvard Kennedy School professor of public management. “He was an outstanding practitioner and a serious scholar. He showed a deep interest in Asia long before it became popular.”

Throughout his career he consulted for numerous organizations, including the Agency for International Development, the World Bank, the Department of Agriculture, the Ford and Rockefeller foundations, UNICEF, the Asian Center for Development Administration, the UN, the Southern Africa Coordinating, and several foreign governments. He joined Harvard in 1965 and was the Ford Foundation Professor of International Studies Emeritus.
Who Do You Trust?

For the past several years, in studies conducted in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and most recently in Jordan, behavioral economist Iris Bohnet has been looking at the various factors that motivate individuals to trust.

Can you describe the focus of your most recent work?
One of the questions Mohamad Al-Issis, a candidate in public policy, and I examined in Jordan this past summer was whether individuals are more willing to trust if we (partially) insulate them against losses in case things go badly. In many ways, that’s the way the West is fostering trust. Our contract law makes it cheaper for people to trust others as it offers damages for the betrayed party in case of breach.

And what did you find?
Insurance does not increase trust in Jordan. In fact, the more vulnerable people made themselves when trusting, the more their trust was returned. In Jordan this also meant individuals were more likely to reward the trust of women and Palestinians who are part of more disadvantaged groups and thus more vulnerable.

What is the significance of this finding?
What we’re seeing is that instruments, such as insurance, that decrease the costs of betrayal also affect the likelihood of trustworthiness. This leaves people with a difficult optimization problem: it is cheaper to trust when insured but insurance also makes betrayal occur. It also suggests that we have to be careful when exporting Western institutions to other parts of the world. They may work quite differently there.

As the new faculty director of the Women and Public Policy Program (wapp), can you talk about your plans for the program?
My goal is for wapp to be a knowledge center on gender and public policy and leadership. We’ve created a new structure consisting of four areas: gender and decision making and negotiation, gender and policy, gender and politics, and gender and security. Some of our research is focusing currently on how to overcome stereotypes and on whether “counter-factual positive experiences” might change people’s beliefs about what they and people like them can accomplish even in areas stereotyped to “not be for them.” — Iris Bohnet

To read more about Bohnet’s work, go to www.hks.harvard.edu/research/working_papers/index.htm.
Footprint

What They Did Last Summer

Each June, with classes finished, exams completed, and quantitative analysis safely behind them, about 400 Harvard Kennedy School students head for summer internships. For students the internships are a chance to use those skills they worked so hard to acquire during their first year. It’s also often a chance to explore new directions. For many students the internships provide a first opportunity to work outside their home countries or their first professional experience in government.

It’s also a chance to be reminded of financial realities. Slightly fewer than one in four students receive awards from HKS’s two largest internship funds, the Harvard International Development Internship Fund (hidif) and the Summer Internship Fund (sif). The funds total about $190,000 a year, and their awards average around $2,500. Other students find funding elsewhere, or fully paid internships (see graphic).

The eight to ten weeks students typically spend in internships vary greatly in content. But whether working with organizations like unicef or Google or the Center for Microfinance, or in places from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to Lusaka, Zambia, they find ways to put to the test across the world the school’s tradition of academic excellence, technical preparation, and commitment to solving public problems.

The map on this page was created using surveys completed by students following their internships and compiled by the school. Roughly half of returning students provided information.

“Footprint: What They Did Last Summer”

From The Charles

WHO

AMY MORAN MPP 2009

Location: United States
Internship: Policy Development and Research Division, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Boston, Massachusetts
Sponsor: Rappaport Fellowship

“I spent three months working with Sitawi in Rio, a start-up social enterprise in Brazil providing consulting and low-cost capital to other social enterprises. Speaking Portuguese with an Irish accent was certainly a challenge, but spending time in Brazil was hugely rewarding for me, not only because it is at such an interesting juncture as a country, but also as a contrast to my previous international development experiences in Africa.”

WHO

CHRISS TRIMBLE MPA/ID 2009

Location: Ireland
Internship: Haiti and DR/ICA
Sponsor: Harvard International Development Internship Fund

“I spent three months working with Sitawi in Rio, a start-up social enterprise in Brazil providing consulting and low-cost capital to other social enterprises. Speaking Portuguese with an Irish accent was certainly a challenge, but spending time in Brazil was hugely rewarding for me, not only because it is at such an interesting juncture as a country, but also as a contrast to my previous international development experiences in Africa.”

WHO

KENZO ASAH MPA/ID 2009

Location: Chile
Internship: Center for Microfinance, Institute for Financial Management and Research, Chennai and Ahmedabad, India
Sponsor: Summer Internship Fund

“My experience in India was fascinating. The job was very interesting. I helped in a research project on the impact of access to microfinance on the economic lives of poor families led by Professor Rohini Pande from the Kennedy School. The institution in which I worked is a very interesting one that specializes in cutting-edge research. Moreover, the possibility of traveling around India, getting to know its beautiful people and lively culture, marked me profoundly.”

WHAT

Sector: first-time experience in sector

- International organizations: 24%
- Government: 17%
- Nonprofits and NGOs: 28%
- Private sector: 20%

WHERE

Location: first-time experience

- Washington, DC: 19
- Boston: 16
- New York: 12
- Monterey: 9
- Developing countries: 58
- Industrialized countries: 31
- Home country: 10

How

Funding: number of students

- Paid: 68
- Partially paid: 21
- Unpaid: 85
- Outside funding: 80
Imagine if You Can
Human rights, countries, collective ownership

ON A TYPICAL DAY at the Kennedy School, as students study the management of a state, as speeches are delivered by heads of state, as faculty members advise national leaders on matters of state, Mathias Risse is likely to be questioning something more fundamental. Should there be states at all? What obligations does a state have toward its citizens? And what does it owe those living outside its borders?

The questions that Risse, associate professor of public policy and philosophy, ponders are the basic questions of political philosophy: whether the state is the best form of organized government and what that means for us as individuals and our relationship to one another. But his novel approach is being formulated at a time when those questions are more relevant than ever.

Globalization is exposing much of humanity to the same political and economic forces, making borders less relevant, increasing the power and coerciveness of international organizations, and imposing vastly different opportunities on people.

In that context, the state not only needs to be acceptable to its own citizens, it also needs to make itself acceptable to citizens of other countries, Risse argues. “Principles of justice need to apply not only within, but also across states,” he writes.

One central component of Risse’s argument is the concept of collective ownership, an evolution of a once crucial concept in political philosophy: that the earth had been given to mankind in common.

That idea gained great currency among European thinkers in the 17th century, at the beginning of another type of globalization, when European naval powers began to explore and project their power across the world. But it was soon eclipsed by the rise of the nation state, whose cornerstone of inviolable sovereignty has ruled supreme for much of the past three centuries.

Risse’s starting point is equal entitlement to resources, and from there flows a notion of human rights and global responsibility designed to protect those entitlements.

The state, then, according to this view, is an area fenced off from outsiders and exercising power over those inside. It has a responsibility to make sure that people inside its borders are able to pursue those entitlements. But what of people elsewhere?

“It’s not just that the state has to do right by those who live in it,” says Risse. The state also has to be able to explain to immigrants at its border why they can’t get in because it is exercising power over people by forcibly keeping them from entering.

In other words, a wealthy, sparsely populated country must justify closing its borders to people escaping a crowded, poor one.

The approach raises many questions that cannot yet be answered: What is the value of resources we are entitled to? How do we calculate potential wealth? How can one country’s obligation towards others be satisfied?

But it also reorients the language of rights, so long rooted in the language of human dignity. “The dignity approach to human rights makes it easy to explain why everyone should have human rights but not why people over there should worry about these people here, whereas my approach can explain that,” Risse contends. “Keeping these people at a distance comes at a cost.”

That obligation, Risse is careful to point out, extends not only across space, but through time to future generations, providing “philosophical foundations to the idea of sustainability.”

But collective ownership does not imply a world without borders. Instead, Risse sees it as an alternative to “the too ‘standard’ views: that principles of justice either apply only within states or to all human beings regardless of their state membership.”

Changing the state system, he also argues, is too fraught with risk. “This question doesn’t have much of a strong answer except to say ‘we have it now, we understand things about the state system, we don’t entirely know what the global order would be without states.’” — RDO

...the fact that Edith did the jobs, and did them so well, laid the groundwork for those of us lucky enough to be born a generation later...
Science of DECISIONS

At the Kennedy School, the art of decision making is brought into the lab.
Jennifer Lerner’s favorite emotion — intellectually speaking — is anger.

Partly that’s because anger courses through American political rhetoric: capturing the attention of media and citizens and conferring higher approval ratings for leaders who display it. Partly it’s because anger’s stark effects on judgment are measurable in a controlled lab setting, where Lerner — director of the Harvard Decision Science Laboratory and professor at the Harvard Kennedy School — does much of her research.

But it’s also because anger as a topic of philosophical inquiry has smoldered in scholars’ minds for thousands of years. “Anyone can become angry — that is easy,” wrote Aristotle in *Nichomachean Ethics*. “But to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way — that is not easy.” At the Kennedy School, Lerner hopes to apply fundamental research on the hidden mechanisms of decision making to help leaders recognize their own cognitive and emotional biases, avoid those pitfalls, and set up environments that can help whole organizations avert individuals’ failings. As she put it, “I want to add data to Aristotle’s speculation.”

The science of decision making is relatively new, operating at the nexus of psychology, economics, and neuroscience. And Lerner, 40, is one of its pioneers. Small, trim, her hair pinned up in a practical style, she is often mistaken for a student. A standard part of her academic “uniform,” as she calls it, are a prim pearl necklace and set of earrings handed down from her mother. The combination of outward composure and animating passion seems typical of Lerner. She punctuates careful explanations of theory with a deep, ironic laugh and her main area of inquiry, exploring how emotions color and often skew judgment and decision making, has ruffled a discipline long in thrall to the rational ideal of *Homo economicus*.

Lerner’s publications have been cited in scholarly articles more than 2,000 times. In 2004, she won the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, from the National Science Foundation. But Lerner has reached far beyond academic outlets to communicate her ideas, having presented in such public forums as the National Academy of Sciences, the World Economic Forum in Davos, and several United Nations summits. Lerner has authored *Policy Analysis for the Twenty-first Century*, available through the Harvard Kennedy School.

Lerner’s work rests on the tenet that most people can’t fathom why they make the decisions they do. As President John F. Kennedy himself observed: “The essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer — often, indeed, to the decider himself.”

First at the University of California at Berkeley, then at Carnegie Mellon University, Lerner shined light on that disconnect. She’s best known for teasing apart the effects of specific emotions on judgment and choice — particularly when the emotion is “incidental,” meaning it has no inherent relevance to the decision being made. One study showed that, contrary to expectations, volunteers who were sad and self-absorbed (after watching a tear-jerker video clip) dramatically increased the amount of money they would pay to acquire something (in the experiment, a sports water bottle); the finding, which Lerner dubbed the “misery is not misery effect,” brings psychological insight to theories of consumer behavior.

At the Kennedy School, she plans to broaden her field of investigation while continuing to explore the biological substrates of emotion — linking, for instance, fine muscle movement in the face to secretion of the stress hormone cortisol. “My ultimate question is: How does the mind work?” Lerner said. “People ask, ‘How can you study trust, emotion, ethics, and morality in a lab?’ They think I’m being too reductionistic.”

Some of the fiercest skeptics are CEOs and other powerful alumni — often those who have learned, through escalating career challenges, to trust their “gut,” not to the decider himself observed: “The essence of ultimate decisions they do. As President John F. Kennedy himself observed: "The essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer — often, indeed, to the decider himself." Lerner’s work rests on the tenet that most people can’t fathom why they make the decisions they do. As President John F. Kennedy himself observed: “The essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer — often, indeed, to the decider himself.” First at the University of California at Berkeley, then at Carnegie Mellon University, Lerner shined light on that disconnect. She’s best known for teasing apart the effects of specific emotions on judgment and choice — particularly when the emotion is “incidental,” meaning it has no inherent relevance to the decision being made. One study showed that, contrary to expectations, volunteers who were sad and self-absorbed (after watching a tear-jerker video clip) dramatically increased the amount of money they would pay to acquire something (in the experiment, a sports water bottle); the finding, which Lerner dubbed the “misery is not misery effect,” brings psychological insight to theories of consumer behavior.

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Another experiment demonstrated that volunteers primed to anger reduced the amount of government assistance in a hypothetical case, while those primed to sadness chose to increase government largesse. Lerner has also delved into the physiological underpinnings of emotion — linking, for instance, fine muscle movement in the face to secretion of the stress hormone cortisol.

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Some of the fiercest skeptics are CEOs and other powerful alumni — often those who have learned, through escalating career challenges, to trust their “gut,” not to observe their mind. “I had one person say to me: ‘What does this have to do with public policy?’”

What does her work have to do with public policy? “Emotion is a huge driver of human behavior,” Lerner said, her voice rising. “And a lot of the problems that we have in the world today come from non-rational human behavior. We have technological solutions that aren’t working — because of human behavior. We have the technologies that we need to improve national security — but not the human performance to carry them out. We have energy solutions — but not the political will to enact them.”

world. And many of our enrolled students will go on to lead governments or multinational corporations. In one capacity or another, they will have international influence. I get to reach people who are in a position to structure the decision environments of their governments. I cannot think of another place in the world where I could do that.”

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At the Kennedy School, where the seismic impact of good and bad decisions is well appreciated, Lerner feels she is in her element. What can she do here that she can’t anywhere else? “A lot,” she replied. “We have approximately 3,000 executive education students come through each year — over and above the enrolled students. The executive ed students are often leaders of governments around the
looked dumbstruck. “It’s like saying you’re going to have the Maker. “ Though the de-fanged, it’s anger. So if any emotion needs to be contextually relevant, it’s organizational leadership. Indeed, research shows that the effects of being in power don’t matter in those cases. It’s not so much about finding people with the right personal characteristics as it is changing the judgment and decision context. “

A WAY WITH WORDS

SELECTED TITLES from Jennifer Lerner’s academic publications:
- Misery Is Not Misery: Sad and Self-Focused Individuals Spend More (2009)
- Sober Second Thought: The Effects of Accountability, Anger and Authoritarianism on Attributions of Responsibility (1996)

In her own life Jenn Lerner has had plenty of reason to harbor a sense of grievance and anger, but apparently has avoided those sentiments. At the age of six, she was diagnosed with lupus, a chronic autoimmune disease that can affect the joints and almost every major organ in the body. Typically lupus causes joint inflammation, fever, and fatigue. For Lerner, the condition has brought ceaseless pain, advanced osteoporosis, and problems with her eyes, lungs, hands, feet, and knees. She takes daily medication to ease the worst symptoms.

Lupus is notoriously capricious, with unpredictable flare-ups and remissions. Though Lerner suffers flare-ups, she has not been lucky enough to experience a remission that would allow her to eliminate the array of medications needed to manage the illness. Over the last 24 years, as a result, she has made extraordinary accommodations to move forward in her career. She’s conducted graduate seminars in her home, where she would lecture from a horizontal position on her couch. She’s held meetings with students while undergoing intravenous infusions. She has given lectures from a wheelchair. Confined to hospital beds, she’s plotted out future lab experiments.

“I have an extremely strong will,” she said. “But I don’t think I could do it if it were just a matter of will. Here’s the way it works — it’s actually very simple: Work is a treat for me. Work is a balm. And I feel really lucky to have my work. It is a distraction from pain and fatigue.”

Building the Decision Research Laboratory as a Harvard-wide enterprise, Lerner will collaborate with Associate Directors Iris Bohnet, professor of public policy, mks; David Laibson, professor of economics, Harvard University; Chair of the Advisory Board Max Bazerman, professor of business administration, Harvard Business School; and Honorary Chair of the Advisory Board Howard Raiffa, professor of managerial economics emeritus, mks. At the lab, Lerner intends to broaden the scope of her questions to a vast range of public policy issues. She wants to know how sadness and disgust affect decisions on whether to donate the organs of a deceased loved one. She will continue to study the physiological underpinnings of emotion. And as part of a recent $60,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, she will study high-level decision makers — from governments, militaries, nongovernmental organizations, and corporations — to explore whether their knowledge and leadership experience protects them from decision-making biases. When are such leaders, for instance, willing to make “tough calls”: taking actions that improve things in the long term but impose costs in the short term? Do angry leaders focus so much on winning battles that they lose the war? Does anger prompt risk-taking? These and related questions will focus her work in the school’s Center for Public Leadership, where she has brought Professor David Gergen in as a consultant to the grant, bringing real-world experience to the formation of theory-driven hypotheses.

“Most people at the Kennedy School start with the policy problem. I’m unusual here in that I start with: How does the mind work?” Lerner said. “We’re studying basic processes that underlie countless decisions in daily life — in medicine, business, finance, law. There are many different places where I could be. I feel very lucky to be in the place where it will do the most public good.”

Madeline Drexler is a Boston-based journalist and author, specializing in science, medicine, and public health.

“ANGER IS ONE OF THE EMOTIONS THAT IS MOST LIKELY TO SEEP INTO JUDGMENTS AND DECISIONS WITHOUT OUR REALIZING IT.”

To say that you can exclude emotion… “ She looked dumbstruck. “It’s like saying you’re going to exclude oxygen from co2.”

At the Kennedy School, students and faculty often approach Lerner — the only tenured psychologist in their midst — with a commonplace question: “What should I do when I’m really mad and have to make a decision?”

Lerner can quickly tell them what not to do. For example, “The idea that you can hit a punching bag and feel better: That’s wrong. Generally speaking, aggression leads to more aggression. Another thing that doesn’t work is telling people: ‘Don’t be mad.’”

What does work, Lerner has found, is altering the environment in which angry people make decisions. The technical term is: “predecisional accountability to an audience with unknown views.” In one study, volunteers who were primed to anger (by watching a video) were asked to render a judgment in a fictional tort case. When asked to explain their decisions to a well-informed audience whose views they did not know in advance, their anger did not lead them to be more punitive — as it did when they weren’t asked to justify their decisions. Being accountable created the conditions by which they could consciously monitor their thinking and perceive the issue with more nuance and complexity.

In other words, context matters. The environment in which a decision is made turns out to be more important than the decision. Traditionally experts assumed that good decision making stemmed from individual personality traits — some people naturally made smart choices, others did not. They assumed that great leaders were great decision makers. And they assumed that the smarter the decision maker, the better the decisions.

Lerner takes the opposite tack. “What we find is that there are situations that affect all of us in similar ways, leading us to be biased, and that personality doesn’t matter in those cases. It’s not so much about finding people with the right personal characteristics as it is changing the judgment and decision context.”

Which takes her back to anger. “Anger is a more positive emotion in the States than it is in cultures that are more interdependent and collectivistic,” she explained. In America, anger pervades political culture and many styles of organizational leadership. Indeed, research shows that the effects of being in power resemble the effects of being angry. If any emotion needs to be contextually de-fanged, it’s anger.

One of Lerner’s best-known papers is titled “Portrait of the Angry Decision Maker.” Though the 2006 article was not connected to the Bush presidency, the picture she paints almost uncannily describes President George W. Bush’s behavior leading up to the invasion of Iraq. Lerner is careful to say that scientific findings about decision making in general can’t be proven deterministic in any specific instance. Still, the Bush Administration’s process in going to war in Iraq mirrors her findings about angry decision makers: “Not feeling you need more information. Underperceiving risks. Being prone to taking risks. Attributing causality to individuals rather than situations. Simplistic thought.”

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After the Flood

By Robert O’Neill

In the aftermath of a catastrophe, the Kennedy School network mobilizes to help an alumna

Linn County is a neat rectangle cut from Midwest prairie in the eastern part of Iowa. It’s the second most populous county in the state, with 200,000 residents and the state’s largest manufacturing center. The Cedar River flows from the northwest to the southeast, cutting through Cedar Rapids, the county seat, on its way from Minnesota to the Iowa River and then the Mississippi.

Four times in the past 160 years, including during the great floods of 1993, the river has reached a flood level of 20 feet, 8 feet over the flood limit.

In summer 2008, the area was anticipating another big flood. Heavy winter snowfalls and an unusually wet and cool spring had left the area waterlogged. Experts were calling for flood levels of 22 feet. Instead, they got 31.

The surging Cedar River swept through Cedar Rapids and much of southeast Iowa, uprooting homes, businesses, and people.

Linda Langston (right) in the Linn County emergency operations center during the June 2008 flood that inundated much of Iowa.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LINDA LANGSTON
square blocks, or the largest natural disasters in the country's history, Langston found works, as well as her own extensive experience, in the midst of one of it was just one of those ‘Thank God!’ moments. “

Faculty chair of the State and Local program.

When she couldn't reach her computer and then reached out on her Langston reconnect with her online Executive Education friends' group

Harrington decided to visit Langston with a load of soda and snacks. It was a small gesture, but the only one she could make.

“...I will need help, and I don’t even know what that help looks like, “

Then the phone rang. It was Linda Kaboolian, public policy lecturer, and in the middle of all that, a fellow alumna of the 2007 Senior Executives in State and Local Government program called. Karyn Dest Harrington HKSEE 2007 was in the state attending a conference. Her employer, Coca Cola, was donating supplies to the community. But Harrington decided to visit Langston with a load of soda and snacks. It was a small gesture, but the only one she could make.

Langston remembers thanking her, feeling bad she had no time to give her, and then passing the food and drink along to volunteers filling sandbags. As the water rose, the offers of help from fellow HKSEE alumni began to trickle and then pour in.

“...I will need help, and I don’t even know what that help looks like,”

Langston remembers telling fellow alumni. Those alumni helped Langston reconnect with her online Executive Education friends’ group when she couldn’t reach her computer and then reached out on her behalf to Harvard Kennedy School faculty.

On June 20th, Langston was meeting with government officials and business leaders. Much of the county was under water, including many business leaders. Much of the county was under water, including

Infrastructure crumbled as roads were closed by the surprising waters.

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When Harrington arrived at Langston’s home in Linn County, she found it was surrounded by water. The worst was yet to come. The water kept rising, and it was clear that things were going to get much worse.

“...The day she called she said: ‘Here are some names, and they will be

Then the phone rang. It was Linda Kaboolian, public policy lecturer, and in the middle of all that, a fellow alumna of the 2007 Senior Executives in State and Local Government program called. Karyn Dest Harrington HKSEE 2007 was in the state attending a conference. Her employer, Coca Cola, was donating supplies to the community. But Harrington decided to visit Langston with a load of soda and snacks. It was a small gesture, but the only one she could make.

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Plucked from the nonprofit education world to become Washington, DC, schools chancellor last year, Michelle Rhee ’97 has taken the city by storm in her first year on the job. She closed 23 schools, laid off close to 100 employees in the district’s central office staff, and fired 250 teachers who lacked proper certification. She restructured 27 of Washington’s remaining 120 schools and challenged the teachers union to give up tenure rights in exchange for a salary plan that would boost salaries to as high as $122,000.

Feeling pressure to perform, Rhee says, can motivate. It certainly motivates her. “Every day, I feel pressure because I have 47,000 kids in my purview,” says Rhee, 38, the mother of two children who attend the Washington, DC, schools, in an interview in early August. “I want every educator to feel that pressure. What we are doing is incredibly important, and if you are going into a classroom, you need to produce for the kids.”

Rhee now oversees a budget of close to $1 billion. The students, overwhelmingly from poor black families, have a long way to go. The 2007 National Assessment for Educational Progress ranked the Washington, DC, district dead last, behind all 50 states, with just 12 percent of its eighth-graders proficient in reading and just 8 percent up to par in math.

Rhee’s selection in 2007 made her the latest big-city schools chief to come from outside the education establishment. Like Joel Klein in New York City and Arne Duncan in Chicago, Rhee had served neither as a principal nor district administrator. She also lacked the traditional academic credentials for such a position. But Rhee had made a name in education circles as founder of the New Teacher Project, a nonprofit she developed as she left the Harvard Kennedy School that addresses the issues of teacher quality and teacher shortages in inner-city schools.

Through that work, she came to the attention of Washington Mayor Adrian Fenty, who had just been granted control of the district schools by the city council. He turned to Rhee, vowing to back her bold initiatives to turn around a district viewed as one of the nation’s most troubled.

At first, Rhee balked, unwilling to give up her role as a social entrepreneur for the demands of heading up a sprawling government bureaucracy. She feared Fenty wouldn’t support her in the face of the community uproar she knew could erupt. But Fenty insisted she had his support, promising Rhee he was the only one in his administration who would tell her “No.”

“I told him he didn’t want me for the job because he was a politician and he was interested in keeping the noise down and keeping people happy,” says Rhee. “I asked him what he was willing to risk. He said, ‘Everything.’”

BY DAVID MCKAY WILSON

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID DEAL
After years of standing on the outside, it was her chance to be on the inside, at the top. “My gut instinct was that I needed to do this, in order to change the face of public education,” she told a gathering at the Kennedy School in September. “I wanted to show that it was possible for poor and minority kids to achieve at the same level as their wealthy white counterparts.”

Education Trust President Kati Haycock, who has known Rhee for a decade and chairs the New Teacher Project’s board, says that Fenty’s unwavering support, along with Rhee’s steady drive to do what’s best for kids, has helped move the reform agenda forward. “Michelle is very courageous and very smart, but she also has a very courageous mayus,” says Haycock. “What she is trying to do is take a system that has been systemically mis-educating mostly low-income black kids and turn it into a system where they are getting quality education in every classroom. And she’s in a big hurry to do it.”

Rhee, the daughter of South Korean immigrants, grew up in the suburbs of Toledo, Ohio, aware of the poverty downtown. Her father, a physician, would remind her she was blessed to grow up in an upper-middle-class family and that the poor kids in Toledo were no less deserving. After graduating from Cornell, she joined Teach for America, the nonprofit that sends college graduates into inner-city schools. She calls it “the defining experience of my life.”

Rhee taught at Harlem Park Elementary School, one of Baltimore’s lowest-performing schools. Her first year was miserable, as the kids were out of control. “The whole school was just running.” She recalls. “We had to create a system where they are getting quality education in every classroom. And she’s in a big hurry to do it.”

Rhee has weathered the storm as an outsider in a city of insiders.

She’s a Korean-American running a school district that’s predominantly African-American. And she’s an outspoken critic of the alliance between the Democrats and teachers’ unions in a city where Democrats rule the urban political roost. “The Democratic Party has been extraordinarily weak on education and education policy, and its ties to the labor unions have got to be broken if we are going to transform the public education system in this country,” says Rhee.

Rhee’s national stature has been burnished by the continuing coverage of her tenure by the Lehrer News Hour, where veteran education journalist John Merrow had produced six segments of “Leadership: A Challenging Course” during Rhee’s first year in office. In December, Rhee was on the cover of Time magazine.

“She’s very engaging, yet reserved, and very direct,” says Merrow. “She says what she means and means what she says. That kind of candor is refreshing.”

Rhee’s biggest battle in her second year involves her plan to raise teacher pay while eliminating tenure, which has been the heart of teacher contracts across the nation. In Washington, teachers can be granted tenure after two years on the job. Rhee’s plan would create two tiers of service. Under the “red” tier, teachers would retain tenure rights in exchange for a 28 percent raise over five years, the Washington Post reported. Pay for teachers in the “green” tier would rise from $46,000 to as much as $90,000 by 2010. Teachers with a decade on the job could see their pay more than double to $122,000.

By giving up tenure, teachers would subject themselves to annual evaluations based on the performance of their students, which would determine salary increases.

“It’s going to be a game-changer,” said Rhee. “The bottom line is that teacher union contracts are one of the big problems we have in public schools. I don’t want to demonize the union. These contracts are signed by two parties, and those who have signed these contracts are just as guilty. But I’m not going to sign my name to a document that puts the rights and privileges of adults above the best interests of kids.”

The contract had yet to be resolved by mid-September. First, Rhee was still wooing foundations to help provide the funding to so dramatically raise teacher pay. The teachers union was also decided split on the proposal. The Washington Teachers’ Union is a local of the American Federation of Teachers, whose president, Randi Weingarten, collaborated with Rhee when both were working in New York City. Rhee was setting up a fellowship program to attract teachers to the city while Weingarten then led New York’s teachers union.

“If this whole notion that you scare people into better teaching will generate great headlines and make you look like a warrior, but it never works,” says Weingarten. “The DC schools will improve when there’s cooperation and collaboration between teachers and administration.”

But Rhee maintains new work rules would help instill a culture of accountability among the district’s adults, as well as its students, who need a credit-to-graduation formula including three lab sciences and math courses up through Algebra II. This past summer, her staff auditioned the transcripts of each incoming 12th-grader to make sure they were on track to graduate. The audit found hundreds of students scheduled for classes that would not lead them to graduation, including several signed up to take algebra classes they had already passed.

Rhee gets her hackles up over such mismanagement, especially when it is students who suffer. A high school diploma is the minimum credential for a young adult entering today’s job market. “Nobody was paying attention to the fact that they’d already taken algebra,” says Rhee. “How can we hold the kids accountable until we do our job? We have to hold the adults accountable too.”

David McKay Wilson is a New York-based freelance journalist.
Harvard Kennedy School has a uniquely international makeup, and that is certainly a part of the student internship experience, as every summer hundreds of students travel far and wide, driven by their passion and their curiosity. Many of the photographs in these pages, taken by HKS students, will be featured in the 2009 “1,000 Words” calendar. Proceeds from sales of the calendar help support the Summer Internship Fund. To purchase a calendar contact martha_foley@harvard.edu.
RETURNING HOME
Shanghai, China.
Maria Agustina Mascitti, mph/id
spouse

THE MALAM AND HIS DAUGHTER
Daggo, Niger. Malam Sadik is a religious leader in a small, mud hut village and leads the children in Koranic readings and prayers every evening.
Laura Bacon, mph 2009

ANGKOR
Siem Reap, Cambodia.
Monks walking in front of Angkor Wat, Cambodia.
Liewi Liu, Lee Kwan You Fellow

LaUNdERING
Kolkata, India.
The color of the city’s street culture may not be so evident to weary residents.
Esther Hsu, mpa/mba 2010

THE UNdRESSING OF THE PRIEST
Moldova.
In a ritual of the Christian Orthodox Church, a priest reads prayers to bring health and drive away bad spirits from those under the cover.
Alexander Culiuc, PhD in Public Policy

TIBETAN SOLDER
Rwanda.
A soldier protecting mountain gorillas from poachers in Volcanoes National Park.
Joseph Koo, mph 2009

DALAI LAMA
Leh, India.
A group of exiled Tibetans waiting to see the Dalai Lama.
Joseph Koo, mph 2009

SOLDIERS
Yerevan, Armenia.
Soldiers stand around rockets in advance of the annual Independence Day Parade.
Varoujan Avedikian, mph 2009
"These global public goods distinguish themselves from other issues of concern because they endanger all countries, whether rich or poor, small or big, and all their people, and they cross borders freely," said Ban, a former South Korean foreign minister. "They cannot be resolved without action by all."

Ban said terrorism, combined with the spread of weapons of mass destruction, represent the most serious threat to international peace and security. And he called on the United States and Cuba as the Caribbean island nation transitions from the rule of Fidel Castro towards an uncertain future. Questioned during a Forum appearance in September by several audience members whether Cuba or the United States could do more to improve ties, Gutierrez defended the United States' policy of isolating Cuba, which includes an economic embargo and limits on travel there.

"I think we're all sacrificing," said Gutierrez, who fled Cuba with his family as a boy in 1960. "We're all sacrificing for the day when Cuba will change."
in print

The Character of Harms
Operational Challenges in Control
Malcolm Sparrow MPA 1986

Controlling corruption is not the same as promoting integrity. Reducing crime is not simply the flip side of promoting public safety. The difference is not just one of vantage point or semantics, but instead marks a critical change in approach, writes Malcolm Sparrow in The Character of Harms: "Scrubbing the harms themselves, and discovering their dynamics and dependencies, leads to the possibility of sabotage," Sparrow argues. "Cleverly conceived acts of sabotage, exploiting identified vulnerabilities of the object under attack, can be not only effective, but extremely resource-efficient too."

But when people gather around a specific identified harm, what is it exactly they are gathering around? Some piece of a more general harm to be reduced? Who decides which piece, and how best to define it? Who decides which component of a risk to address? Who decides if the focus should be on reducing the probability of some class of events, or changing their distribution, or limiting their consequences?

Sparrow, faculty chair of Harvard Kennedy School’s Executive Education program on Strategic Management of Regulatory and Enforcement Agencies and faculty chair of the saw program, aims to provide practitioners working in harm reduction with a set of guiding principles and the institutional and conceptual framework needed to accommodate that new approach.

"Practitioners very much want to understand what happens to the nature of managerial decision making, forms of organizational accountability, and the character of their relationships with the regulated community, when an agency tilts its focus towards the central purpose of harm reduction and away from functional, programmatic, or process-based traditions,” Sparrow writes.

To hear Sparrow discuss his work, visit www.hks.harvard.edu/research-publications/obt/index/sparrow-character-of-harm.

One Economics — Many Recipes
Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth
Dani Rodrik

Development is working, Globalization is working. But the advice on offer from development and globalization experts is not. “We thought we knew a lot about what governments needed to do. But…reality has been unkind to our expectations,” writes Dani Rodrik, Rafiq Hariri Professor of International Political Economy, about the intriguing paradox at the heart of his new book, One Economics — Many Recipes. "If Latin America were booming today and China and India were stagnating, we would have an easier time fitting the world to our policy framework. Instead, we are straining to explain why unorthodox, two-track, gradualist reform paths have done so much better than sure-fire adoption of the standard package.”

That standard package refers to the Washington Consensus: a neoliberal approach characterized by policies such as privatization, trade liberalization, fiscal discipline, and, Rodrik argues “simple rules of thumb, regardless of context." The path toward the neoliberal goals of sound growth — goals such as global integration, sound money, institutions and property rights, which Rodrik endorses — can be traveled in any number of ways. China, which has lifted 400 million out of extreme poverty since 1980, has done so by steering clear of orthodoxies, changing the system at the margins, building support for reforms, and avoiding large disruptions.

To read more on Rodrik, including his blog, visit http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~drodrik/
Suzi Sosa joins forces with the Kennedy School to extend markets to the poor

“IT IS EASY TO THINK that the greatest value you will ever get from the Kennedy School is in the years that you spend as a graduate student here,” remarks 2001 alumna Suzi Sosa. “But, in fact, I’m seeing now that the greatest benefit I will have is through this long-term partnership with the school.” As founder and president of the SaroGroup, the philanthropic investment arm of the SaroGroup, Sosa recently made a $3 million seed capital grant to the Center for International Development to create The Empowerment Lab. “Our SaroGroup companies seek to empower underserved individuals through products and services that transform their lives. As I thought about our work in the global context, I recognized that the systemic change we are seeking to create would require partnerships with both researchers and policymakers, and the Kennedy School is without a doubt the best place to do that.”

To mark its official launch, The Empowerment Lab hosted the first annual Global Empowerment Meeting on September 22 and 23 at the Kennedy School campus. This event, which included leaders from business, government, academia, and nonprofits, focused on the question of how to expand the reach of financial markets to underserved communities. “We often take for granted one of the greatest privileges we have in the developed world: freedom of choice. In most parts of the world, markets do not function well, leaving people with fewer choices for more expensive products and services of inferior quality. This affects not only consumer goods, but also health care, education, and basic infrastructure,” says Sosa. The Empowerment Lab will fund interdisciplinary research to explore the most complex questions around why some individuals have been perpetually excluded from mainstream markets. In addition, through events like the Global Empowerment Meeting, the lab will create strategic partnerships with global leaders who can translate applied research findings into direct business and policy applications.

Commenting on the impact of the Sosas’ generosity, Professor Ricardus Hausmann, director of the Center for International Development, said, “The Sosas share the center’s commitment to global empowerment and are willing to invest their resources, tremendous talent, and vision in making a difference.”

Sosa cites the Kennedy School’s global network of partners, including alumni, as one of the most important reasons for their decision to invest in this project. “This is an incredible place where research, policy, and practice meet. For the complex questions of extending the reach of markets, it is critical to leverage the expertise and experience of each of these perspectives.” In addition to the seed capital given to launch the lab, the SaroGroup Foundation is also agreeing to fund a cutting-edge data warehouse to which organizations and companies can donate data for use by researchers in The Empowerment Lab. “Many important research questions are not explored because of lack of data,” says Sosa. Businesses, nonprofits, and governments all generate information that could be used for research and lead to discoveries about the reasons for exclusion and systemic poverty. “We often don’t think about how we could make our data available for research, though in doing so we could create invaluable findings for all humankind.”

Citing the Kennedy School motto, “Ask what you can do,” Sosa hopes more alumni will consider how they can create long-term partnerships with the school. “Few of us realize how many resources we have at our disposal and what an impact we could have if we collaborated with the school.”

In addition to her role as founder and president of the SaroGroup Foundation, Sosa is also chief of staff of SaroGroup Labs, a global business incubator and accelerator. She served as a presidential management intern in the U.S. Department of Commerce, and before that as a short-term policy advisor for the prime ministers of Bermuda and Lebanon. Sosa and her husband, Roy, live in Austin, Texas, where they are community leaders in entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

Fellowship will help develop international leadership

TONY TAMER, cofounder and managing partner of H.I.G. Capital and a member of the Harvard Kennedy School Dean’s Council, helps businesses grow. He knows a solid foundation is the key to success. And that is what he believes HKS strives to provide its students — a firm intellectual and practical foundation that gives them the tools and leadership skills to make a significant difference in the world.

With over 45 percent of the student body drawn from countries outside the United States, the school is also a truly global community with an environment that encourages cultural exchange and fosters lifelong bonds. Tamer’s concern for the citizens of the Middle East and Africa also intersects with the HKS mission to educate, support, and inspire the next generation of world leaders. For prospective students from poorer countries, however, financial constraints can be insurmountable. Recognizing a unique opportunity to help potential leaders from the poorest countries in the Middle East and Africa — such as Lebanon, Jordan, Tanzania, and Ethiopia — attend HKS, Tamer and his wife, Sandra, have endowed the Tamer Fellowship Fund.

Tamer’s concern for the citizens of the Middle East and Africa also intersects with the HKS mission to educate, support, and inspire the next generation of world leaders.

“For the rest of our lives we’re alumni, and I believe the more we are engaged as continuing members of the community, the better it’s going to be for us and for the Kennedy School.” — Suzi Sosa MPA/ID 2001

“Not only will Tamer Fellows benefit from a Harvard Kennedy School education, each will also bring to the HKS community a unique perspective that will enrich the experience of their classmates.”

“Tamer’s concern for the citizens of the Middle East and Africa also intersects with the HKS mission to educate, support, and inspire the next generation of world leaders. This new fellowship will play a vital role in the Kennedy School’s mission of attracting the best students from around the world and giving them the ideas, inspiration, and opportunities they need to realize their dreams of making a difference in the world,” said Dean David Ellwood. “Key to this mission is our ability to offer financial aid at a level that will allow our students, especially those from developing countries, to pursue their highest ideals and deepest convictions. We are deeply grateful to Tony and Sandra Tamer for helping make this possible.”

For more information: hks.harvard.edu/tamerfellows
Uncommon Thread

FOR CAROL CHYAU AND MARIE SO (both mpa/id 2006), a yak is more than a hairy, one-ton animal. It’s an undeveloped asset, numbering in the millions, that can bring change to the mountainous areas of Western China that have missed out on the country’s stunning economic success story. The nomadic people who have herded yaks for centuries already know that it’s an extremely useful creature, of course. They use it as a pack animal, eat its meat, and make dairy products from its milk; use its dung to build walls for their homes and burn the same material for heat; and turn its fibrous coat into tents and clothing. What they probably didn’t know is that patrons of fine restaurants in Hong Kong and Shanghai would pay good money to dine on yak cheese (a bit like sharp cheddar in consistency and flavor), or that in cities as far away as New York, San Francisco, and London, customers would buy clothing and accessories made from the finest hand-combed yak down.

That’s where Chyau and So come in. The pair met at the Kennedy School. Chyau, a native of Taiwan, came directly from the University of Pennsylvania, where she studied abroad in Chile and Peru and wrote her senior thesis on microfinance. So, a native of Hong Kong, left an engineering career (her last project was the Beijing Olympics’ swimming pool). They began to talk seriously about their shared passion for using business skills in a way that helps other people. “We were attracted to the idea of bringing private sector business efficiency to social enterprise,” says So. “It’s a concept that doesn’t always go over easily, So acknowledges. When she and Chyau speak to new herders about coming into the business, they often find they have to do quite a bit of explaining. “If you go to rural areas in China, people often expect free stuff,” says So. “We try to show them the difference between a one-time deal and something more sustainable that they can create by using their own resources. It’s a paradigm shift; the government doesn’t always understand what we’re doing, and we’re learning as we go too. It can be very challenging.”

No day is the same, she adds. From April to October, Chyau and So are often in the field, exploring new areas for development, training villagers in proper shearing techniques, or surveying households to measure the program’s impact. Given that they’re working with nomadic herders who don’t follow a set schedule, this can take a while — but it’s an essential part of the process. “Otherwise you’re just talking, right?” So remarks. “We focus on income generation, but also on what is done with the money. We do our best to educate people on the value of investing in an education for their children versus buying a radio or alcohol, although we can’t dictate how the money is spent.”

Recently the pair took a short break from their field work to attend an Echoing Green Fellowship conference at Duke University. “The fellowship awards a two-year, $90,000 grant to social entrepreneurs,” Chyau explains. Shokay has scaled up quickly, working with 15,000 people this year compared with 3,000 last year. In 2009, they expect to break even and expand their reach into new communities. After an initial product launch with yarn, hand-knitted scarves, and throws, the business has branched out into pillows, children’s clothing, and accessories like hats, gloves, and scarves through Harvard Student Agencies.

Despite these early successes, the demands of Shokay, the cheese business, and building the Ventures in Development nonprofit can be overwhelming at times. “My brain every day is divided into 90-minute slots,” says So. “The driving factor is the level of satisfaction that comes from making a difference in someone else’s life.”

“Balancing the double bottom line of financial return and social impact is challenging,” Chyau agrees. “But I love using business skills in a way that helps other people.”

— JH
Chez David

Yoko Makino MPA 1999 successfully bidding for a dinner for six at Dean Ellwood’s home. The dinner, personally prepared by the dean, is one of the highlights of the annual Summer Internship Fund auction, which raises money for stipends for students’ unpaid summer internships in the nonprofit and public sectors (see more on pages 10 and 28). Among the more than 150 items were a handknit sweater by Academic Dean Mary Jo Bane and a tour of New York in an NYPD squad car, courtesy of Police Commissioner Ray Kelly MPA 1984. This year, the event raised more than $54,000. Makino, pictured with guest Shigeru Aoi, a prospective student from Japan, is a founding member of the HKS Club of Japan and also a member of the Dean’s Alumni Leadership Council.

Yoko Makino MPA 1999

Why do you give to Harvard Kennedy School?

I am enormously grateful for what HKS has provided me—the insights, analysis, focus, and friendships. The fact I doubt seriously that many of the career opportunities I have encountered would have occurred without HKS. In short, HKS remains for me the gift that keeps on giving. That each year I give a substantial amount to HKS in return seems a natural step for me, and one I will continue to make a priority.

Joe Caldwell MPA 1985

THE LAST WORD

Chez David

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Joe Caldwell MPA 1985

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

What inspired you to attend HKS?

While the first 30 years of my career were spent in government— the latter of those as legal counsel at the Supreme Court of the United States and assistant to Chief Justice Warren Burger — those years did not include active participation in politics. So on leaving the Supreme Court, I was thrilled to become submerged in government and politics at the Kennedy School.

Could you describe your experience at HKS?

Every day was exciting, informative, and gratifying — from the enormous talent of the faculty through the shared experiences of the extraordinarily gifted students. Each night posed the difficult choice of reading several hundred pages from insightful authors, or sitting in the Forum to listen to, and talk personally with, world leaders and notable figures on global issues.

Where has life taken you since HKS?

After graduation, I put my HKS insights to work right away. I joined a law firm in Washington, DC, where my practice included representing clients in several disputes connected to politics, political figures, and civil rights. It has also included serving as an advisor to a U.S. senator concerning U.S. Supreme Court nominations. While at the firm, I volunteered as legal counsel for Sharon Pratt Dixon’s campaign for mayor of the District of Columbia and became her chief of staff and legal counsel after she won the election. (In that post, I quickly hired a HKS faculty member to study some of DC’s more intransigent problems.) After returning to the firm, I joined, and became the eventual co-chair of, the National Lawyers Council of the Democratic National Committee.

To learn more about what you can do to support Harvard Kennedy School, visit www.hks.harvard.edu/about/giving.

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For more information
ON THE WEB → www.hks.harvard.edu/about/alumni/reunions
E-MAIL → ksgreunions@ksg.harvard.edu
CALL → the Reunion Help Line at 617-496-9959

Calling all volunteers If you are interested in being a part of your Reunion Committee, contact:
Carolyn Hogan, Associate Director of Reunions
E-MAIL → carolyn_hogan@harvard.edu
CALL → 617-495-0549