



# inner

Pepperberg, Kamensky, Fischer pen hot sellers

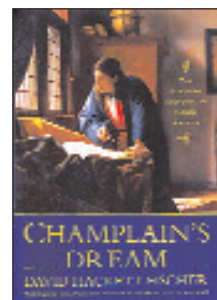
## Brandeis Authors Hit the Bookshelves

If you're the sort of shopper who doesn't consider your gift giving done until you've raided the area bookstores, chances are good that Brandeis authors topped your holiday list this year.

*Alex & Me*, by Irene Pepperberg, adjunct associate professor in psychology; *Blindspot*, coauthored by Jane Kamensky, professor of American history and history department chair; and *Champlain's Dream* by David Hackett Fischer, University Professor and Earl Warren Professor of History, all were tapped for inclusion in the highly selective New England Independent Booksellers Association's year-end gift catalog and, indeed, were among the hot sellers of the season.

In *Alex & Me*, Pepperberg recounts her thirty-year friendship with Alex, the African Grey parrot who contributed heavily to her research on animal cognition prior to his death in 2007. Known to science fans and schoolchildren the world over, Alex had been celebrated for his vocabulary of more than 100 words and his ability to discern colors and shapes and grasp numerical concepts. Since its publication last fall, Pepperberg's compelling story has been garnering both reader interest and media attention. Not only was the tale of this extraordinary human-animal bond the subject of a recent ABC News story, but *New York Times* book critic Michiko Kakutani named it one of her ten favorite books of 2008.

Although Kamensky has published three scholarly history books in the past, *Blindspot* is her maiden work of fiction. Written in collaboration with Kamensky's friend Jill Lepore, chair of the history and literature program at Harvard, the book combines elements of romance, whimsy, politics, arts, murder mystery, word



Page-turners *Alex & Me* (Irene Pepperberg), *Blindspot* (Jane Kamensky), and *Champlain's Dream* (David Hackett Fischer) have been big hits with readers and critics alike.

play, and sex, all set against a richly textured and somewhat bawdy pre-Revolutionary Boston. *Washington Post* critic Carolyn See described the novel as "both frisky and learned" and called it "an engaging way to relearn American history."

Fischer, recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for his 2005 book *Washington's Crossing*, also looks to the past in *Champlain's Dream*. In reviewing the book, *Library Journal* termed it "the definitive biography of Samuel de Champlain: spy, explorer, courtier, soldier, sailor, ethnologist, map-maker, and founder and governor of New France (today's Quebec), which he founded in 1608," while *New York Times* critic Max Boot mused, "Is there a finer student of American history writing today than David Hackett Fischer? If so, I don't know who it would be."

## Anthropologist Wells helps Brandeisians explore their genetic history

Renowned geneticist and anthropologist Spencer Wells visited campus in fall for a public lecture and to discuss the genetic migratory history of members of the campus community who participated in the Brandeis Explores the Journey of Humankind Project.

The Brandeis-based project is part of the larger Genographic Project, a nonprofit, five-year global research partnership of National Geographic and IBM that seeks to chart new

knowledge about the migratory history of the human species and answer age-old questions surrounding the genetic diversity of humanity.

The Brandeis Explores the Journey of Humankind Project was the brainchild of Jules Bernstein '57, a friend of Wells who invited him to Brandeis to discuss his work. Bernstein was struck by the way the Genographic Project highlights the existence of a shared human history.

"Although our outward appearances vary and we have different cultural or religious traditions, all of us share common roots," Bernstein said. "Brandeis is a natural place for this type of exploration because of the university's foundational commitment to advancing social justice, as well as its rich history of interdisciplinary work and the racial, religious, and ethnic diversity of its student body."

# most parts

## Survey Says

### Alumni value career services, volunteer opportunities

Thanks to the more than 17,000 graduates who responded to a survey last spring, the Alumni Association board of directors has clear marching orders as it plans future programs for its 44,000 members.

Alumni continued to rank career services as particularly important. In response, the Hiatt Career Center has introduced several new professional networking opportunities and services for recent graduates and older alumni making career changes. B Connect, the university's online alumni community, will also expand its career-services offerings this spring.

Brandeis history and traditions also proved to be near and dear to the hearts of alumni, with the university's core principles of social justice, academic excellence, and community service continuing to factor heavily in the lives of graduates. In fact, the study showed that Brandeis alumni are twice as likely as alumni from peer institutions to volunteer time and contribute money to their alma mater, and they tend to do so for as many as five non-profits and community organizations.

This year, the Alumni Association has designated Sunday, May 3, as an alumni community-service day. Regional clubs and individual alumni will be organizing community-service projects large and small across the country. (See Page 41 for details).

Respondents stated a clear preference for less paper and more electronic communication, which supports the association's efforts to "go green." Alumni can expect fewer mailings and more e-vites to the 150 events run annually. Online event registration, B Connect, and an up-to-date Web site will become the preferred methods for alumni to stay in touch with each other and the university.

"We're fortunate so many alumni took the time to tell us what is important to them," said Lisa Kranc '75, vice president of the Alumni Association board of directors and senior vice president of marketing at Autozone Inc. "We heard them, and we are working hard to deliver the services they really want and need."

Visit [alumni.brandeis.edu](http://alumni.brandeis.edu) to learn more about benefits and services offered.

### Princeton scholar wins inaugural Gittler Prize

Kwame Anthony Appiah, the Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy and the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University, has been named the inaugural winner of Brandeis's Joseph B. and Toby Gittler Prize.

Appiah, fifty-four, a Ghanaian philosopher, cultural theorist, and novelist, has taught at Princeton since 2002.



The Gittler Prize is the first and one of the largest academic prizes awarded to a U.S. or international scholar for outstanding and lasting contributions to racial, ethnic, and/or religious relations. It honors the legacy of the late sociologist Joseph B. Gittler and his late mother, Toby.

## newsmakers

**Joyce Antler '63**, the Samuel B. Lane Professor of American Jewish History and Culture and Women's and Gender Studies, received the 2008 Emily Toth Award for Best Book in Women's Issues in American Culture and Popular Culture for *You Never Call! You Never Write! A History of the Jewish Mother*.

**Dr. Alfred Goldberg**, professor of cell biology at Harvard Medical School, was named winner of Brandeis's 2008 Jacob Heskell Gabbay Award in Biotechnology and Medicine. The university has given the award annually since 1995 to a scientist whose work has both outstanding scientific content and significant practical consequences in the biomedical sciences.

**Tim Morehouse '00** won a silver medal in the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing as part of the U.S. men's saber team. He becomes the first Brandeis graduate to win an Olympic medal.

**Dave Ortega**, project associate at the National Center for Jewish Film, was named one of twelve national winners of the *New Yorker* magazine's 2009 anniversary cover-design contest. A sample of the winning covers appeared in the magazine's February 9 and February 16, 2009, issues.

**Leonard Saxe**, director of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (coauthor, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Identity*), and **Jonathan Sarna '75, MA'75**, the Joseph H. and Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History (author, *A Time to Every Purpose: Letters to a Young Jew*), were named finalists for 2008 National Jewish Book Awards.