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March ClassACTions Newsletter

Madness in March most often is associated with college basketball, but if we go by the “angry” meaning of the word, these days there is much to be mad about. Here are some of the entries in our brackets: persistence of poverty; misery born of war in the Ukraine; ravages of climate change; assaults on democracy; stubbornness of Covid; attacks on LGBTQ rights; racism in the justice system; substandard medical care; and anxiety and depression among young adults. This list is formidable, but it’s not too late to whittle it down and mitigate its effects! Please join us as we attempt to change the world and limit madness to fun and games.

BRIDGE WORK

The Bridges of ClassACT HR73—no, this is not the title of a major movie sequel starring Meryl Streep and Clint Eastwood. Rather, these Bridges are 11 worthy organizations, each with a tie to a sponsor classmate, whose work spans the globe and whom ClassACT HR73 has designated for special-relationship status. To quote the statement on the ClassACT HR73 website: “As ClassACT has evolved, we have been broadening the definition of Bridges—beyond just ‘Projects’ to embrace a variety of opportunities to connect classmates, who find value in conversations that do not necessarily fall within a well-defined project framework.” In other words, these are now not one-offs, but ongoing and deepening partnerships.

You can see a list of all our Bridges [here](#). It is a diverse list. Some are well-established; the United Nations Association of Greater Boston, sponsored by **Richard Golob**, was incorporated at about the time we graduated from Harvard. Some are relatively new: the Sports Analytics Club Program, whose sponsor is **Bobby Clayton**, wasn’t even developed until about six years ago.

But all are world-changers, and all have been enriched by classmates.

How does an organization become a Bridge? The process is surprisingly informal. “The Bridges choose us, rather than the contrary,” says ClassACT Board member **Leigh Hafrey**. “We advertise what we can offer and they determine whether that matches an organizational need. Both ClassACT HR73 and the Bridge benefit from the connection: It gives them needed technical support and visibility and company, and gives us a concrete manifestation of the ClassACT mission in action.”

Elaborates Board member **Stan Mark**: “Often the partnership we form with a Bridge comes from a personal relationship with a Board member. In rare cases a Bridge Partner would seek us out; usually, the decision over whether to link emanates from an informal, casual conversation about what a classmate is currently doing. From that conversation a vision is developed as to how ClassACT can help the Bridge move forward. Both parties benefit as ClassACT HR73 serves as a matchmaker—fulfilling its mission—by facilitating pro bono work from one of our classmates who has volunteered his/her expertise to help the Bridge avoid self-inflicted growing pains while at the same time saving precious organizational dollars.”



Photo from kidscareeverywhere.org

Here's a textbook example of how it works. Classmate **Ron Dieckmann** heads the Bridge organization KidsCareEverywhere, whose purpose is saving children's lives in under-resourced health systems by empowering physicians with state-of-the-art medical software. “Our mission takes us around the globe, and we have conducted more than 100 projects in 24 countries in South America, Asia and Africa,” says Ron. “We have benefited greatly from our Bridge affiliation through invaluable connections with global health leaders and from ongoing advice about operations from ClassAct HR73 Board members. Our site trips absolutely require strong support and ongoing collaboration with local and national health-care leaders, and we seek these human connections through Harvard colleagues and health system leaders. Highly successful software projects in Costa Rica, Ghana, and Bangladesh

arose from high-level contacts provided by ClassACT HR73 members. Our active 2023 collaboration with Bangladesh emerged through discussions with ClassACT HR73 Benazir Bhutto Leadership Program fellow **Laila Khondkar**, whose nonprofit group Shishurai Shob is coordinating a site visit from KCE in November 2023.”



Classmate **Ellen Faran** in 2017 became president at the Cole Resource Center in Waverley, Massachusetts. CRC is an education and recovery community of peers and family members, dedicated to helping people affected by mental health challenges lead full and healthy lives. In August 2022 CRC became a Bridge. “CRC’s connection as a Bridge resulted from a conversation that I had with [Board chair] Marion Dry back in May 2022,” says Ellen. “She was well aware of my retirement engagement in mental health support and I was telling her about my work—and challenges—with this little nonprofit. She thought immediately of the potential for a Bridge partnership and the rest is history. This might be summarized as ‘the class of 1973 network’!”

Ellen quickly looped in to that network. “My first two connections with classmates, thanks to your referrals, [were] outstanding,” she reported to Marion and Stan. “**Fred Bartenstein**’s comments and questions on this stage of a nonprofit organization’s growth were insightful. One hour with Fred completely sharpened my thinking about our next steps. **Lenny Easter** immediately grasped our legal issues and knew exactly what was needed for improving our policies and practices. He is great at explaining the purposes and protections that underlie the legal specifics. Lenny generously offered to handle the updating of our very outdated corporate documents himself and that process is well underway. Thank you both for making all this happen! The support of the ClassACT community is actually transformative to my motivation for this work. Lonely no more.”

The formal criteria for sponsoring an organization as a Bridge, and the method of doing so, can be found [here](#). Speak up! When it comes to changing the world, there is no Bridge too far.

Register here!



Graphic by **Rick Brotman '73**

In his 2016 book *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*, Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson (1929-2021) proposed the designation of half of Earth's surface, both terrestrial and marine, as a natural reserve to safeguard the remaining biodiversity of the planet, including ourselves. Today about one-sixth of land and one-twelfth of marine areas receive (on paper) protection of the kind Wilson envisioned. Tough economic, social, political, and psychological forces work to impede any further expansion of protection.

During ClassAct HR73's initial forum called "Half Earth: Conserving Biodiversity from the Deep Sea to Mt. Everest" held in October 2022, panelists discussed from a variety of scientific, geographical, disciplinary, professional, and ethical viewpoints the merits and feasibility of protecting the planet. Since that first forum, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity has now set as a priority protection of 30% of the planet by the year 2030, and many governments and states are adamantly calling for Wilson's 50% trajectory. How either of these goals will be achieved is not clear.

The second, follow-up ClassAct HR73 Forum entitled "Protecting Half-Earth: Opportunities and Obstacles" will again bring together a variety of expertise and perspectives to address how Half-Earth can unfold in the future, focusing on the challenges of conserving the planet. Assuming that 50% protection is imperative, panelists will address questions such as: What are the drivers of environmental change? How do we define a protected landscape? What are the pathways to achieve this goal in order to overcome local, subnational, and global hurdles? How do we harness the forces at work in the world today to achieve Half-Earth? What do we do with the 50% of the planet that will not be protected? Answers to these topics are at the core to realizing Half-Earth.

Each panelist is well versed, highly experienced, and greatly motivated to

solve the pressing environmental issues facing all of us in today's world. From major conservation NGOs and foundations to biodiversity research institutes and environmental science programs, all panelists have a direct connection to Harvard either as faculty, students, or alumni.

The panel of experts includes **Kiani Akina, Class of 2025** and an Environmental Science and Public Policy Major at Harvard College; **Jason Clay '73**, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, Markets and Food, and Executive Director, Markets Institute for the World Wildlife Fund; **David Foster, Ph.D.**, Director Emeritus, Harvard Forest, Harvard University; and **Cristián Samper, Ph.D.**, Managing Director and Leader for Nature Solutions at the Bezos Earth Fund. **W. John Kress '73, Ph.D.**, Distinguished Scientist and Curator Emeritus, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, who moderated the first ClassACT HR73 “Half-Earth” panel last fall, will lead the discussion of the second panel on April 17 as well.

ClassACT HR73 invites everyone to register for the “Protecting Half-Earth: Opportunities and Obstacles” Zoom Forum, which aims to scope the challenges we face in the protection of Nature.

CLASSACTORS CHANGING THE WORLD

W. JOHN KRESS AND PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY



*Click here to view video created by **Rick Brotman '73***

The occasion of our upcoming 50th reunion has given classmate **W. John Kress '73**, Ph.D.—Distinguished Scientist and Curator Emeritus, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution—ample opportunity to reflect on the changes the decades have wrought in his field, particularly as they pertain to learning about biodiversity. “When I started at Harvard,

undisturbed habitats were plentiful,” says John. “Today they are not plentiful by any means. Time now grows short for fully documenting biodiversity.”

Moreover, the means of accomplishing documentation are different. “The professors and grad students that I hung around with could not wait to get into the field,” says John. “Not so today. Today, graduate students and professors and even museum curators like myself devote the vast majority of our time in the lab....Spending so much time in the lab separates us as scientists and as citizens from experiencing nature directly where it lives.”

All along, John has pursued the goal set forth by revered Harvard biology professor E.O. Wilson: “The only way to keep life going was by setting 50 percent of the planet as a protective zone, long into the future,” says John. “He called this idea Half-Earth.” Wilson, says John, “taught me that life is unbelievably complex, that it is easily perturbed, but that it goes on. And I have taken that to heart each day.”

Watch the video above to hear John Kress’s thoughts on his field, Half-Earth, and the future. And register for our April 17 Forum, “[Protecting Half-Earth: Opportunities and Obstacles](#),” which John will moderate.

UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP SUBCOMMITTEES

As an outcome of the first forum on protecting our planet utilizing EO Wilson’s Half Earth concept, three subcommittees were formed and are working tirelessly. They are:

- **Biodiversity Treaty Ratification Action Group (BTRAG) headed by John Kress '73**
 - This group is strategizing ways and planning to make a major effort to urge the US Senate to ratify the Convention of Biodiversity treaty which was signed by President Clinton in 1993. Without ratification the US will not have a voice in the framework or implementation of the treaty’s goals. [Find the statement here.](#)
- **Land Trusts Group headed by Michael Mayer '73**
 - This group is exploring ways to engage alumni and collaborate with existing Harvard resources to provide information and urge actions to help local, national and international land trusts. In addition, the group is discussing ways to promote ecorestoration as a part of land trust conservation, and leverage its impact through collaboration with like-minded environmental funding resources, the Land Trust Alliance, and others.

- 50th Symposium Group headed by **Jesse Ausubel '73** and **Marion Dry '73**
 - This group is planning for a symposium at our 50th reunion that will share progress on ClassACT environmental efforts relating to roles of land trusts in conservation and to ways to speed the US Senate toward ratifying the global Convention on Biodiversity. It will also report on “Biodiversity of the Charles River and Boston Harbor then and now” contrasting aquatic life in the area in 1900, 1970, and at present.

For more information about any of these efforts, contact our administrative assistant Kate at kfreed@classacthr73.org.

BENAZIR BHUTTO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM UPDATES

MEET AND GREET WITH LAILA KHONDKAR AND LEIGH HAFREY

May 2, 5:30-7:30pm
St. Botolph Club
199 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, MA 02116



In May, ClassACT HR73 will present two programs featuring the Benazir Bhutto Leadership Program Fellows. On Tuesday, May 2, from 5:30-7:30pm in Boston, we will host a live event featuring this year's Benazir Bhutto Leadership Program Fellow, **Laila Khondkar**. This reception will begin with social time, wine and light refreshments, followed by a conversation between

Laila and ClassACT HR73 Board member **Leigh Hafrey**, discussing her past work, her time at HKS and her hopes for the future. Find more info about Laila [here](#). We will plan time for questions from those attending.

CONVERSATION WITH BBLP FELLOWS
MODERATED BY **PETER GALBRAITH '73**

Saturday, May 20th, 9-10:30am ET
On Zoom



On Saturday, May 20, from 9-10:30am ET,, former US Ambassador to Croatia, classmate and BBLP Steering Committee Member **Peter Galbraith** will lead a discussion with all five of the fellows: **Roohi Abdullah, Natasha Jehangir Khan, Laila Khondkar, Zeina Majdalani** and **Nadia Rehman**. Join us to hear about their work and their thoughts about women's leadership. There will be ample time for attendees to ask questions and participate in the discussion.

Mark your calendars and look for invitations in your inboxes in the coming weeks.

LATINOS - AN EMERGING SWING FACTOR IN US POLITICS

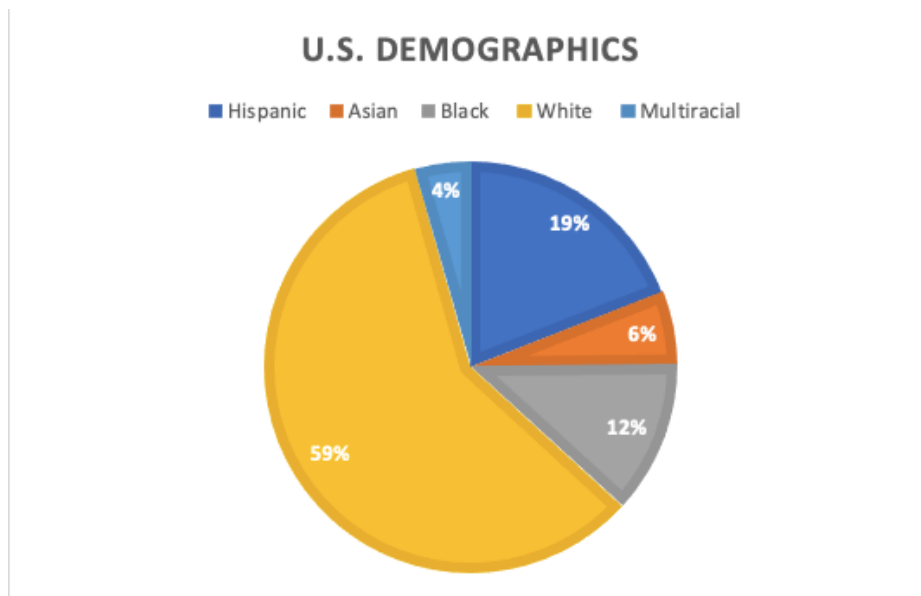
By **Ryan O'Connell '73, Jim Harbison '73, and Marilyn Go '73**

Did you know that one in five Americans is Latino? And that one in six eligible voters is Hispanic? Latinos/Latinas, now the second-largest ethnic

group in the U.S., are becoming a major force in national politics and a dominant factor in several key states.

(For ease of reference, we will refer to Latinos rather than Latinos/Latinas and use “Latino” and “Hispanic” interchangeably).

Hispanic Americans constitute 30% of the eligible voters in California and Texas, where they outnumber eligible white voters, based on the 2020 Census (Pew Research Center, [Key facts about U.S. Latinos](#)). Hispanics represent 20% or more of eligible voters in six states, including hotly contested states such as Arizona (24%), Florida (20%), and Nevada (20%), as well as New Mexico (43%), a Blue state. One politician who might benefit from Latinos’ growing political clout is Democrat Ruben Gallego, H’ 2004, who is running for the Senate in Arizona against the incumbent, Sen. Kyrsten Sinema.



Source: U.S. 2020 Census Data, as reported by Pew Research Center

The number of Latinos rose almost 20% from 2010 to 2020, and they accounted for half of the population growth in the U.S. during that period. As Hispanics have moved to regions throughout the country, they have become an important factor in several other “battleground states.” Latinos represented 5% or more of eligible voters in “purplish” states such as Georgia, Pennsylvania and Virginia, based on 2018 data from Pew.

Although that percentage may seem low, bear in mind that elections in those states are often won by tiny margins. The number of Latinos is smaller, but growing, in states such as Michigan, North Carolina and Wisconsin, where the electorate is split roughly 50/50.

Like other Americans, Latinos are not a monolithic voting bloc, of course. Puerto Rican Americans and Mexican Americans generally lean Democratic.

Cubans and Venezuelans, many of whom fled oppressive far-left regimes, tend to favor Republican candidates. We will discuss the political views of Latino subgroups in greater detail in another article.

We have referred several times to “eligible voters”. Unfortunately, many Hispanics have not registered to vote, so they don’t participate fully in our democracy. However, numerous organizations, such as Voto Latino and Mi Familia Vota, focus on registering Latino voters and fighting voter suppression, on a national level and in specific states.

For a more comprehensive list of such organizations, please see [Voting Activism Opportunities](#) on our website.

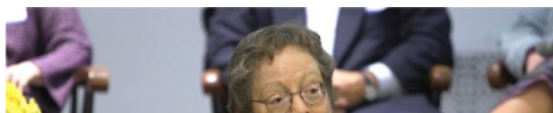
IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING

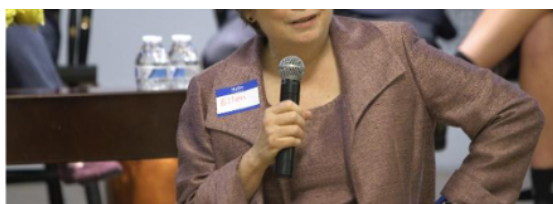
ELECTION VOLUNTEERING



There will be an election on April 4 to fill a vacant seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court. This election is officially nonpartisan. However, its outcome may determine control of that Court, as the two candidates have divergent political views and the court is very divided. Join efforts of [Native Vote](#) or [Center for Common Ground](#), both 501(c)(3) non-partisan organizations, to encourage Wisconsinites to vote by staffing phone banks, writing postcards and/or sending texts. Information on this election is available in this [Voter Guide](#).

VOLUNTEER AT THE COLE RESOURCE CENTER





Ellen Faran '73, Sponsor of Cole Resource Center

ClassACT HR73 is looking for volunteers who might be interested in helping the Cole Resource Center further its mission of helping people affected by mental health challenges lead full and healthy lives in their communities. Our classmate **Ellen Faran** is leading our Bridge Partner and welcomes volunteers with or without any mental health experience. All you need is an interest in helping out with no minimal time commitment. Please contact our assistant Kate Freed at: kfreed@classacthr73.org to learn more.

JUSTICEAID SPRING CONCERT: A CELEBRATION OF NINA SIMONE

Monday evening, May 22, 2023



“We have to think about [elections] in the short term and the long term.”

LaTosha Brown, Founder, Black Voters Matter

For the next two years, in the leadup to the 2024 elections, JusticeAid will focus on voter rights and racist voter suppression, through the work of their 2023-2024 grantee partner Black Voters Matter. Black Voters Matter (BVM) believes in working directly with local communities to define agendas and implement solutions that create meaningful change. BVM’s three main areas of focus are voter engagement and increasing voter registration, policy advocacy to expand voting rights and voter access, and organizational development and infrastructure training for community-based organizations.

Insuring all citizens are able to exercise their constitutional right to vote

requires a 365-day commitment. Check out this [video](#) featuring BVM's LaTosha Brown on leveraging the Midterms for the long term.

Learn more about Black Voters Matter [here](#).

Monday, May 22nd **JusticeAid Spring Concert: A Celebration of Nina Simone**

Mark your calendars for a rockin' concert celebrating the music, artistry and social activism of Nina Simone on Monday, May 22nd at the City Winery in NYC and in support of Black Voters Matter. Details to follow!

REVVING UP FOR THE REUNION



HR73 Classmates at pre-reunion event in New York City

The pre-reunion festivities continue to roll on! November featured Pre-Reunion gatherings with added ClassACT events in Boston and New York City. After a holiday break, the scene shifted to San Francisco, where on February 8th **Tom Volpe '73** hosted a banquet at the University Club. Some 20 classmates and guests also were treated to a tour of the DeYoung Museum's exhibit (four days before closing) on Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs, led by **Ron Dieckmann '73**.

Meanwhile, keep an eye out for email invitations from HR73 50th Reunion with full details for the following regional pre-reunion events.

- Minneapolis, MN: Tuesday, March 28, 2023
- Los Angeles, CA: Sunday, April 2, 2023
- Charleston, SC: Saturday, April 22, 2023 (includes a morning tour of the yet to be opened [International African American Museum](#))
- Washington, DC: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 (includes a ClassACT-sponsored afternoon tour of the [National Museum of African American](#))

[History and Culture](#))

You will receive emails inviting you to these events from HR73 50th Reunion.

For more information about our 50th, check out the [reunion website](#).

To RSVP, contact Abby Fischer at abby_fischer@harvard.edu.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that ClassACT HR73 is sponsoring two symposia during our reunion in Cambridge (5/30-6/2). One will be on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Conservation, moderated by classmate **John Kress**. The second will be on the Future of Democracy. It will feature classmates **E.J. Dionne** (moderator), **Roger Ferguson**, **Al Franken**, **Bill Kristol**, and **Patti Saris** plus **Danielle Allen**, James Bryant Conant University Professor at Harvard University and the Director of the Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics.

WHITE PONY EXPRESS HONORED



White Pony Express driver Dario Guzman and volunteer James Quintana unload a truck full of nutritious surplus food for recipient organizations that distribute it throughout Contra Costa County to those in need. (Courtesy of Lauren Militello)

Kudos to White Pony Express! As reported by the Bay Area News Group (BANG) and the [Mercury News](#), among other local outlets, the ClassACT HR73 Bridge Partner—which was founded 10 years ago in Pleasant Hill, California and redistributes quality perishable food to those in need—has won awards from two nationally recognized groups that monitor philanthropies. Charity Navigator has conferred upon WPE its highest ratings: 100% and four stars. Meanwhile, the organization Candid awarded WPE its platinum seal of transparency, its highest accolade.

“We are honored by the recognition from Charity Navigator and Candid,” WPE executive director Eve Birge told BANG. “This is a reflection of the heartfelt dedication of our founder [Dr. Carol Weyland Conner], volunteers and staff team. Together we have built a gold standard, a replicable food rescue organization that will eliminate hunger when taken to scale.” Congratulations to all concerned, including classmate sponsor **Emily Fields Karakashian**.

Interested in helping ClassACT HR73?

ClassACT HR73 is built on classmate participation and we are interested in having every classmate as a member of our ClassACT community. If you are interested in learning more about ClassACT HR73 and how you can be involved, please visit our [website](#) or send us an [email](#).

While encouraging the sharing of time and willingness to work together, ClassACT HR73 also welcomes financial support. To support our work in this way you can donate below.

[Donate Here](#)

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[Class Achieving Change Together \(Class ACT\), Inc.](#)

