Continuing the Journey

RABBI EVERETT GENDLER DIRECTS HIS STEPS
BY THERESA PEASE

When Phillips Academy's first Jewish chaplain processes onto the platform in front of Samuel Phillips Hall next month to offer Hebrew words of benediction at commencement, it will be for the last time. Rabbi Everett E. Gendler's 19 years at Andover have been but one leg on a holy journey that has taken him all over the world. At 66, he will retire this spring to follow other roads.

In his spiritual meanderings, Gendler has traveled the hills of Tennessee, where with a work unit of the American Jewish Society for Service he helped weed a leech-filled lake. He has walked with members of the American Friends Service Committee from whom he learned the effectiveness of a nonviolent approach to social transformation, and with Mexican peasant villagers, from whom he learned the power of the connection between religion and the forces of nature.

In the 1960s, he marched repeatedly with members of the Top of page: On a Berkshire hill, Rabbi Everett Gendler waves a palm branch in celebration of the autumn feast of Sukkot, the Festival of Tabernacles. (Photo by Mary Gendler)
some 200 Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Shintoists, American Indians, Quakers, Catholics and Christians of many other denominations from around the globe. There were even children of Nazi Jews, the rabbit says, noting, “Their encounters with the direct effect of holocaust victims were among the most moving. Their quest for understanding, recognition and forgiveness was indescribable.”

The four-day convocation began on the first night of the Feast of Lights, as the Gendler carried on her 50 boxes of Hanukkah candles, as well as 1,800 pieces of metal, glue and 250 tongue depressors from which each participant could make a menorah, or holiday candelabrum, to light the darkness around the former Nazi death camp.

The parallel event in Hiroshima, Gendler hopes, will take the world’s attention away from current debates about whether dropping the A-bomb was necessary or justifiable, and refocus it on “what it means to cause the immediate incineration of 100,000 people.”

Andover

Bookshelf

Cattle Boat to Oxford: The Education of R.I.W. Westgate by Sheila Margaret Westgate

Walker and Company

A teacher of Latin and ancient history at Phillips Academy from 1935 to 1944, R.I.W. “Bill” Westgate was already a great success when he was 16, when he took his first summer job as a surveyor’s assistant in the Canadian wilderness. The letters and other papers edited in this book by his wife were written to his mother, father and two sisters from 1921 to 1927. They are a vivid, humanistic account of rural life, family and friends, as well as the political climate of the time.

Arthur J. Stone 1847-1938: Designs and Silversmiths by Elias Goldschmied

The Boston Athenaeum

One of the last independent silversmiths to make silver by hand, the book beautifully illustrates hundreds of objects and gives a glimpse into the life and work of this important American artist.

Frank W. Benson’s Etchings, Drypoints and Lithographs by John T. O’Brian

Privately published by Hickok Books

Frank W. Benson was credited with having founded the school of the American sporting print as well as being the most accomplished artist ever to work in this genre. This book contains reproductions of Benson’s entire etching and lithography estate, with a detailed history of each work.

Managing in the Age of Change: Essential Skills for Today’s Diverse Workforce by Roger A. Ritter

Irwin Professional Publishing

With the rules of business changing fast, managers need a blueprint for dealing with complex new issues, including managing diversity, implementing change, and promoting a culture of inclusion. This book, Ritter and his co-authors offer insights from 26 top managers on the

Old Age Security in Comparative Perspective by John P. Williamson 60 and Fred C. Pumper

Oxford University Press

In this ground-breaking study of global social policy, John Williamson, professor of sociology at Boston College, and his co-author take four of the most important nations (including the United States) and three developing nations and use them as historical case studies to compare cross-national differences in public pension and welfare state policy. The authors find that except for Sweden there is little support for the argument that the development of old-age security programs is a victory for labor and left parties, but rather that people in developing nations and states have also played important roles in the development of old-age security.

Target Observation Putting, or The Secret Life of Golfers Who Punt by Tony Acciaiuoli

TOP Enterprises

This little booklet will not sit well with “golf widow/wonks” for going spouses will, after reading it, spend more hours at the club perfecting their own technique. According to the author, his technique has saved better than five strokes a round and his long-time partners rave over it. “I don’t know how it works, but it does. All of a sudden I want him as a partner in the club tournaments.”

The Harrison Gray Otis House: an American City Through Time by Robert Campbell and Peter Vanderwarker ’65

Houghton Mifflin

It’s hard to predict what’s going to vex these architectural historians. On one page, they’re chastising Bostonians for spoiling a hallowed sight with too many adaptive reuse; on another, they’re outraged at preservationists for restoring a once-vile part of the bustling cityscape to amene blunders.

Still, it’s fun to walk hand-in-hand through the streets of Boston with Campbell and Vanderwarker, seeing the city through their eyes.

Campbell is the architectural critic for The Boston Globe; collaborator Vanderwarker is an architectural photographer. Together, they are known for their “then” and “now” studies of Beantown, many of which are reproduced in this book.

“Nothing,” they write, “is simple.” In an archive somewhere an old photograph of a scene in Boston is discovered. The photographer goes on to make a new photograph of the same scene as it appears today, taken from the same point of view. The text then comments on the pair of photographs.

That’s where the fun comes in.

The Harrison Gray Otis House, a federal mansion designed in 1796 by Charles Bulfinch, was divested in the 20th century of a first-floor storefront addition. It now serves as the stately home of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. A worthy renovation? Not by our historians’ opinion. Showing 1916 and 1991 photographs of the house, they say emphatically, “The 1916 (old) incarnation is the more lovable of the two. By then the West End had long since become an entry point for immigrants. With scavengers above and a laundry and shoe repair below, the Otis House participated fully in the life of the street.” By comparison, today’s Otis House is “chilly and withdrawn” and “offers little interest or pleasure to the passerby.” Whether or not you agree with their assertion that projects like the Otis House restoration offer “proof that high-style architecture and good cityscape can be very different things,” you’ll never view the city of Boston the same way after seeing it with Campbell and Vanderwarker.

—Theresa Passe