SABBATICAL SQUEEZE — When tapped to become the James B. Knapp Dean of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, Katherine Newman jumped at the opportunity—even though it meant doing a long-planned book writing sabbatical in just four months, instead of 12. Newman, a Princeton professor and expert on poverty and the working poor, will spend this summer working on her 11th book. She’ll also spend a day a week preparing for her Sept. 1 start. “It will get done,” she says of the book, “because I am determined that it will.”

LOSS OF A LEGEND — For the first time since 1937, Johns Hopkins University is without a Professor Wolman on its faculty. M. Gordon “Reds” Wolman, an internationally respected expert in river science, water resources management and environmental education, and a beloved member of the faculty for more than half a century, died Feb. 24 at age 85. Reds, who grew up and lived his life at the university, was the son of renowned engineering and public health professor Abel Wolman, who was a pioneer in the development of the chlorination process, bringing clean drinking water to people worldwide.

SIX IN A ROW — Third-year biology major Neha Deshpande is one of 60 students from 54 U.S. colleges and universities to be named a 2010 Truman Scholar. The prestigious award is given each year by the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation to extraordinary undergraduates who are committed to careers in public service. Thirteen Johns Hopkins University undergraduates—including six in the past six years—have earned the honor since the first was awarded in 1984.

SPECIAL DELIVERY — English professor Frances Ferguson was preparing a lecture in the library of Columbia University when a friend e-mailed to congratulate her. She had just been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Ferguson, the Mary Elizabeth Garrett Professor of Arts and Sciences, joins a long line of university faculty members who have been chosen by the academy, including President Ron Daniels, who was inducted last fall.

SCIENCE HONORS — Two School of Medicine faculty members are among 72 scientists nationwide newly elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences. Nancy L. Craig, a professor of molecular biology and genetics, and King-Wai Yau, a professor of neuroscience and ophthalmology, join the organization established in 1863 by Congress and President Lincoln.
• Cool invention—The Applied Physics Laboratory’s 2009 Invention of the Year employs a novel use of mass spectrometry to determine—in a fraction of the time required by current technologies—whether a microorganism is susceptible or resistant to one or more drugs. Based on APL-developed algorithms, this method has potential applications in homeland defense, clinical microbiology, infectious disease treatment, and drug development and testing.

• Taking time for schools—The university is giving faculty and staff two paid days off a year to volunteer in Baltimore City’s public schools. Johns Hopkins Takes Time for Schools is a community partnership to provide Johns Hopkins expertise in targeted areas throughout the school system. The program was created at the request of President Ron Daniels, who has made strengthening ties between the university and the communities it touches one of his main goals. See video. Go to alumni.jhu.edu/JHUUpdate/March2010 and click on University News.

• Students ‘step up’—In April, Homewood undergraduates took time to say “thank you” and acknowledge their place in the Johns Hopkins legacy during the inaugural Student Philanthropy Education Week. A slate of daily events, built around the concept of “filling the big shoes” left by previous generations of students, ranged from an obstacle course challenge completed in oversized sneakers to a smoothie party on the Beach.

• Up, up and away—For the eighth year in a row, a record-breaking number of people applied for undergraduate admission to the schools of Arts and Sciences and Engineering. This year’s 18,455 applicants represent a 14 percent increase over last year. Thirty-eight percent of admitted students have been offered need-based grant funding at the university, up from 31 percent last year.

It’s happenin’ at the Hut

The university community watched with increasing excitement as the restored stained glass windows in the Hutzler Reading Room were reinstalled in Gilman Hall, a sign that work is coming to the homestretch in that magnificent renovation.

134 and counting

This year’s Johns Hopkins University commencement ceremony will be something new. A single ceremony—for all graduates from all academic divisions and all campuses—will take place on Homewood Field on Thursday, May 27, rain or shine. Michael Bloomberg, mayor of New York City and 1964 Johns Hopkins University alumnus, is the commencement speaker.

Spring sports spectacular

In whirlwind fashion, the Blue Jays celebrated four Centennial Conference championships in one thrilling four-hour period May 2. Three of the squads now have national titles in their crosshairs—baseball, and men’s and women’s tennis—while the women’s track and field champions claimed the Centennial Conference women’s cross country title in the fall and finished second at the indoor championships. Athletics Director Tom Calder was able to witness firsthand three out of the four titles. Calder, who has been at the university for 21 years, called the day a rarity. “Four titles in four hours is special.”