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From the Hill

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Making It Official

COLBY AND KIPP CHARTER SCHOOLS FORM PARTNERSHIP

GERRY BOYLE '78 STORY

The ninth-graders were hard at work at KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate in temporary classrooms—on the second floor of a nondescript brick office building in working-class Lynn, Mass. But when KIPP administrator Caleb Dolan '96 looked around him, he saw a small, rigorous, and supportive educational community.

A lot like Colby.

“You can’t get lost on campus,” Dolan said. “It’s a really warm place. It has that culture and environment. There are people who want to support our kids.”

The connection between KIPP (the Knowledge Is Power Program) and Colby is now more than the affinity of the many alumni who work in the growing national network of charter schools. In November Colby became a KIPP partner, agreeing to encourage the organization’s low-income students to apply to the College and, once they are enrolled, to provide support systems to help them succeed.

Colby joins Tulane University and the University of Houston as a KIPP partner, hoping that the College’s support will help more of the students (50,000 to be enrolled by 2015) to earn a college degree—and bring high-achieving students to Colby.

Ninety-five percent of KIPP students are African Americans or Hispanic/Latino, and 85 percent of the students are eligible for the federal free or reduced-price meals program. Since its founding in Houston in 1994, KIPP, which emphasizes academic rigor and parental involvement, has expanded to include 109 schools in 20 states.

According to Dolan, 85 percent of the first waves of KIPP graduates entered college, but only 33 percent of those students graduated—four times the national average for low-income students but still far short of the schools’ goals. “We made all these promises to families, and it’s not thirty-three percent,” he said.

Dolan, who cofounded Gaston College Prep in North Carolina and is now the KIPP founda-



PHOTO BY JEFF POULAND

Ismael Perez '13, of Houston, left, and Joseph Whitfield '15, of Helena, Ark., attended KIPP schools.

tion’s principal development programs director, said school leaders are considering academic readiness, cultural issues, financial pressures, and lack of general “college knowledge” as reasons students drop out of college.

They are also looking at helping KIPP students find the right fit in a college or university, and, with the partnerships, they are developing relationships with colleges that will support KIPP students once they’re enrolled.

“One of the things we’re trying to do is almost like Posse,” Dolan said, referring to the Posse Foundation program that enrolls students at Colby and other schools in “posses” of 10 to 12 students. Similarly, KIPP is trying “to cluster our kids in schools that will support them.”

Andrea DeAngelo '03, principal of KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate, was a head resident

at Colby and recalls the first Posse students arriving—and the support systems that were in place for them and for all first-years. “When I was a sophomore at Colby, I was a peer mentor and worked with a group of freshmen,” DeAngelo said. “Just seeing the different connections and groups that kids can become a part of—I feel like that’s huge.”

The experience of KIPP students now at Colby (there are three) bears that out, two of them said. Ismael Perez '13 attended a KIPP school in Houston, went on to Loomis Chaffee School in Connecticut (his Houston school offered grades five through eight), and now is a mathematics major with minors in physics and Chinese. Perez studied abroad in India and plans to study in Beijing later this year. In addition he is on the Pugh Community



PHOTO BY MARY SCHWALM '99

Colby alumni at KIPP Academy Lynn, in Massachusetts, include, from left, Kate Riley '07, Andrea DeAngelo '03, Ben Desmond '11, and Caleb Dolan '96.

Board, which does programming for multicultural events, and he sings in the Colby Eight and the Colby Choral.

While Maine and Colby aren't familiar to many Houston students, Perez said he found Maine to be "a community-oriented state" and Colby to be a close-knit community. "It's that atmosphere of everyone working together," he said. "That's something that resonates with a lot of KIPP students."

Another "KIPPster," Joseph Whitfield '15, of Helena, Ark., said the director of KIPP Delta Collegiate schools there, Scott Shirey '98, talked up Colby, as did the school's principal Todd Dixon '06, and Whitfield's cross-country coach, Brian Hurley '03. "All they talked about was Colby, Colby, Colby," Whitfield said. "I was like, 'What is there in Maine to do?'"

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 "It's that atmosphere of everyone working together. ... That's something that resonates with a lot of KIPP students."

Ismael Perez '13

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 It was Colby's academics that convinced him to apply, he said, and he was nervous through orientation, worried that he wouldn't

measure up in the classroom. It turned out that KIPP prepared him well academically, in terms of study skills, time management, note taking, and speaking in class. Whitfield said he may major in anthropology ("the light bulb went on last week") and perhaps join the Peace Corps. In terms of the social transition at college, he said he's watched older Posse Scholars mentor younger Posse students "like a big brother, big sister."

He'd do the same for any KIPP students who come to Colby in the future, Whitfield said. His message: "There's always a support group for you."

Whitfield may offer a support group of his own with some special credibility. He and his roommate were elected co-presidents of the Class of 2015.



Visiting Assistant Professor of Geology Bruce Rueger, standing, in the lab with students doing the Jan Plan on the geology of Bermuda.

A Half Century of Jan Plan

A BOLD EXPERIMENT IN 1962, IT REMAINS A “DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC” OF COLBY

STEPHEN COLLINS '74 STORY DHOKELA YZEIRAJ '13 PHOTOS

Dateline, Waterville—Jan Plan 1962. It was a cold and lonely outpost on the frontier of innovative education.

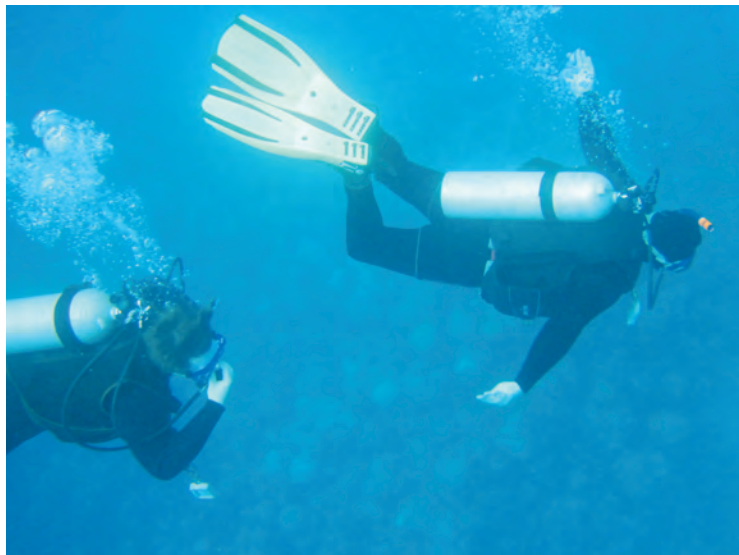
“A month of the college year devoted to independent study by the whole student body, on a diversity of subjects, creates a new outlook on learning.” That’s how the journal *Liberal Education* summed up President Robert E.L. Strider’s 1962 article about the inaugural year of Colby’s pioneering experiment.

Much has changed in a half century, perhaps most notably the global reach of Jan Plan. Last year three dozen students did international internships for credit in 25 different countries. Many more did independent study or research abroad, and among scores of courses offered during

the month, 10 incorporated an international travel component.

Now in its 50th anniversary year, the January Program endures as a “defining characteristic of the undergraduate experience at Colby,” a 2009 faculty review of the program concluded. “Students are overwhelmingly positive about Jan Plan. None want to eliminate it and few have suggestions for improvements,” according to an analysis by then Associate Professor Alec Campbell (sociology).

Colby led the charge up Jan Plan mountain, but it wasn’t lonely at the top for long. Soon more than 400 colleges and universities had some version of the short-term schedule, according to the review. Today 120 schools in the *Higher Education Directory* claim a 4-1-4 (describing the



Students dive to coral reefs during a geology Jan Plan in Bermuda.

typical course loads in each term) calendar. That doesn't include variations like Bates's 4-4-1 "short term" in the spring.

Obscured by 50 years of history is that Jan Plan was proposed as a solution to a nagging scheduling complaint. Professors and students were annoyed that courses in the fall semester were interrupted by end-of-year holidays, which created a couple of disconnected classes in January followed by first-semester exams. "It was a bit of an awkward, listless stretch," recalls Pugh Family Professor of Economics Emeritus Hank Gemery, who started at Colby in 1961.

The 4-1-4 calendar remedied the situation at Colby. Subsequently, particularly in years of oil embargoes and energy crises, other colleges adopted calendars that end first semester before the holidays and then simply stay closed until the last week of January.

But alumni who were on campus at the time recall the thrill of trying something new and so different. "I just remember there was a lot of excitement about it," said Paulette French '63, a student for two years before and two years after Jan Plan started. "We were really thrilled at this opportunity to do independent work."

French spent January 1962 reading and researching works by Albert Camus. She was so energized that she proposed a Senior Scholars project on French literature. Her thesis, "The Insatiable Seeker: A study of the concept of individual freedom in the works of André Gide," won a literary prize in France, which led to a year abroad, which led to a master's degree, which led to a Ph.D. in comparative literature. She traces it to the first-ever Jan Plan. "It led me into academic life more seriously."

Faculty and administration reviews also were positive. After the inaugural term Strider wrote in *Liberal Education* that "faculty reaction ranged from mild approval to vigorous enthusiasm." He quoted a professor who said, "The atmosphere was charged with excitement." A student referendum endorsed the experiment six to one despite students' propensities, Strider wrote, to vote "'no' on any administration or faculty proposal simply on principle."

Part of the faculty's enthusiasm was for the flexibility, Gemery said. "There was real pressure on a new professor," trying to balance teaching

with finishing a Ph.D. dissertation and developing new courses. Initially professors were expected to be on one year and off the next. Faculty members became more research-oriented in ensuing decades, "and Jan Plan is a time for doing a fair bit of that," he said.

A 1972 article in the *Journal of Higher Education* cited Colby and Florida Presbyterian (Florida Presbyterian, now Eckerd, opened its doors in 1960-61 with a 4-1-4 calendar; Colby was first to adapt its existing calendar) as early adopters. Joan Stark of Goucher College wrote, "The task of describing the current national trends among schools which have adopted the 4-1-4 academic calendar is quite like Charles Darwin's attempt to describe the many varieties of finches which adaptively evolved on the Galapagos Islands."

It's just a coincidence, but last year Leslie Brainerd Arey Professor of Biology Herb Wilson took the Ecological Field Study Jan Plan to the Galapagos to see those finches, among other flora and fauna. This year the Sundance Film Festival, Costa Rica, Russia, Belize, and Italy are among destinations for Jan Plan courses.

On-campus courses not for academic credit that are perennially popular include blacksmithing, woodworking, and an Emergency Medical Technician course that leads to Basic-EMT certification. Premed Academy, which includes shadowing area physicians, was introduced last year.

The opportunity for January internships is a big advantage for students, who increasingly need that experience on their résumés when they hit the job market after graduation, said Terry Cowdrey, vice president and dean of admissions and financial aid. Jan Plan is a distinction for Colby, she said. "It's something we talk about a lot."

Anecdotal evidence in 50-year-old memories conforms with written accounts from Strider and Stark: students loved Jan Plan from the get-go. "My friends all bought into it wholeheartedly," said John Chapman '62, a senior that first year. The business administration major spent the month studying Calvinist and Protestant foundations of capitalism, meeting once a week with Professor Walter Zukowski. Both Stark and French still have copies of their first Jan Plan papers.

Five decades later, the College's study of Jan Plan found that a significant cohort of students now take courses for credit in January to fulfill graduation requirements. It fits with the seriousness of many high-achieving Colby students who want to get ahead early. Jordan Lorenz '15 for example.

Lorenz said Jan Plan was "one of the deciding factors" when he was choosing where to attend. With many schools touting exploration and creativity, Lorenz was impressed that Colby was "willing to set aside a whole month for something I want to study," whether or not it relates to major or future career.

He initially signed up to take a philosophy course, thinking it might move him along toward a double major in philosophy. Then, after his mother inquired about his January plans, she asked, "But isn't Jan Plan about doing something different?"

This January Lorenz is in a theater and dance course instead: Solo Performance Workshop: From Folktale to Your Tale, on Stage. He will develop a solo piece and eventually perform it.

Happy golden anniversary, Jan Plan.



For details on Jan Plan courses and reports from interns, bloggers, and researchers see www.colby.edu/JanPlan

Author Uncovered

RAFFAEL SCHECK TRACES POW NARRATIVE TO KEY AFRICAN FIGURE

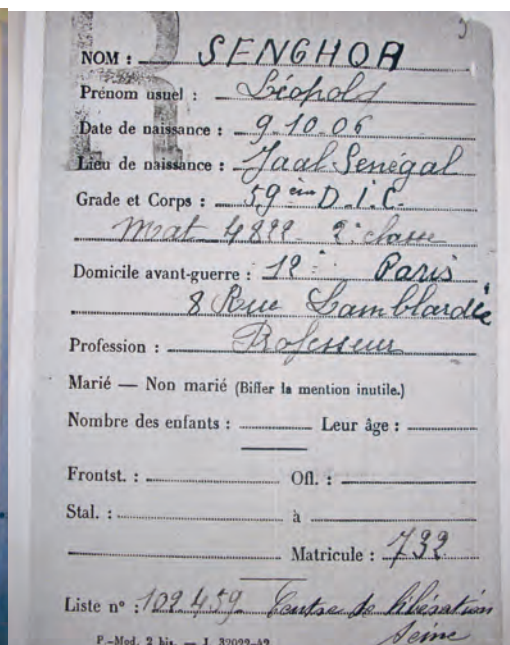
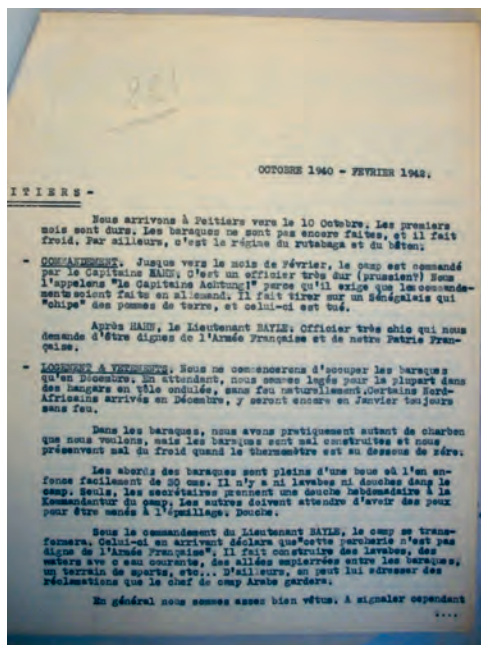
STEPHEN COLLINS '74 STORY

History Professor Raffael Scheck's 2006 book, *Hitler's African Victims*, opened old wounds in Europe and Africa when it revealed that the German army massacred thousands of black African soldiers rather than take them prisoner during World War II. Now he's spawned a new round of news stories, interviews—and controversy—throughout the francophone world with a serendipitous discovery he made doing follow-up research last year. He identified a report on German prison camps written by the most famous successful African statesman of the 20th century.

While working in the French National Archives in Paris in summer 2010, Scheck discovered an anonymous report written by a prisoner of war from Senegal describing life in a German prison camp. Months later he determined, and laboriously verified, that the narrative was written by Léopold Senghor, an intellectual and political giant of French letters and African politics during the 20th century.

Senghor survived the war and gained acclaim as a poet and as the first African in the Académie Française. He became one of the leading intellectuals and philosophers of the 20th century. A cultural theorist even before the war, he was one of three students who developed Négritude, a literary and ideological movement that finds solidarity and pride in black identity and rejects European colonialism and racism in favor of traditional African values and culture.

Senghor was the first president of Senegal when it gained independence, he wrote the Senegalese national anthem still in use, and he is revered as a father of democracy in Africa, both for his leadership of Senegal and for the unusual move of stepping down voluntarily from the presidency in an African nation. "He is



Documents, above, that Professor Raffael Scheck discovered in French archives. At left, the previously anonymous report about conditions at a German prison camp. Scheck determined that the writer was Léopold Senghor, who would go on to become a renowned writer and statesman.

considered an African Gandhi," Scheck said.

Scheck's latest research has been featured in *Le Monde*, as the cover story of the independent newspaper *El Watan* in Algeria, and in radio interviews in Europe and francophone North and West Africa. And, again, his findings are stoking old and simmering hostilities.

Scheck uses the French archives to study original documents from World War II as he researches the plight of French colonial soldiers brought in from Africa to defend France from the Germans. He's allowed to examine 10 boxes of documents per day and will spend

two or three weeks at a stretch going through his maximum allotment each day. But last year, one seven-page typed report arrested his attention for three or four days.

In the document Scheck discovered, Senghor writes about conditions in two Nazi prison camps where he was interned. He dwells on an extensive Nazi propaganda campaign directed at recruiting Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa, and he is critical of North Africans whom he characterizes as collaborators with the Nazis.

Algerians commenting on the *Le Monde* and *El Watan* stories take great offense at being



© VINCENT FOURNIER, JEUNE AFRIQUE

Raffael Scheck in the French National Archives with documents including the anonymous POW's report he later proved was written by Léopold Senghor.

cast as Nazi collaborators by a West African, particularly because they remember the role of West African troops used by the French to repress Algerians during the revolution there (1954-62), Scheck explained. After the story came out in Algeria last summer, bloggers and comments online objected to what Senghor had written. Recalling the West African troops as tools of the colonialists, Algerians described those black soldiers as “terribly frightening,” “abusive,” and “brutal,” Scheck said. “They go so far as to say, ‘The evils of French colonialism in Algeria were much worse even than the Holocaust,’” Scheck said. “Some extremely troubling comments.”

Most African soldiers in the camps were illiterate, Scheck said, so finding an account written by a highly literate black soldier was of great interest. Where most such documents are written in very poor French and complain about conditions, racial tensions, and corruption in the camps, the seven-page typed report Scheck found was different.

When he read that the author had a prestigious French teaching certificate, it was a strong tip that Senghor, the first African so credentialed, might be the author. But confirm-

ing it took longer. “It was a very complicated process. I also read his poetry and I found very close correspondence between some of his most famous poems and what he describes in the captivity report.” Now there is no doubt.

The regional and racial tensions stirred by Scheck’s discovery aren’t the only controversies the document brought to the surface. There are contradictions between Senghor’s description of his life in the camps and the image he curated later as a “resistor of the first hour,” who worked to facilitate escapes. “This report casts doubt on that,” Scheck said.

The Négritude movement as it exists today was heavily influenced by Senghor’s experiences in those camps, said Assistant Professor of French Mouhamedou Niang, who was born in Senegal, studies francophone literature, post-colonial theory, and African philosophy, and has taught at Colby since 2009. And Négritude remains influential still, with ethnographers, anthropologists, and sociologists as well as in literary criticism, Niang said.

Though the boxes of documents in the archives are labeled, Scheck says he’s never sure what he’ll find. He ordered one expecting records about POWs and instead found blue-

prints annotated by French police showing the names and locations of all Jews living in Paris before they were sent to concentration camps.

Scheck, who learned French as a German schoolboy in Switzerland, reads the original documents and does media interviews in French, English, or German. He’s working on a book about French colonial prisoners of war, and the Senghor document is a key piece of that.

“I think it [the discovered material] will change how people see him,” Scheck said. The report shows how Senghor’s relationships with guards and commanders, and his readings of German literature ranging from Nazi propaganda to Cosmopolitan authors like Goethe, revealed the divergent views, attitudes, and beliefs among the Germans. That diversity, Scheck said, “is crucially embedded in this shift that he made away from a very exclusive and somewhat supremacist concept of Négritude toward a much more inclusive concept.”

“This encounter with very different types of Germans, that’s very important for this new concept of Négritude that’s much less stereotyping,” Scheck said. The newly discovered document “fills in the context of what he really experienced that triggered a lot of these changes.”

Q&A

GREGORY WHITE SMITH '73 DISCUSSES CHALLENGES OF *VAN GOGH: THE LIFE*, INCLUDING THE EFFORT TO GET READERS “INSIDE [VAN GOGH’S] SKIN” AND THE DISADVANTAGES OF NOT SPEAKING DUTCH

PAT SIMS INTERVIEW

After a decade of research and writing, Gregory White Smith '73 and Steven Naifeh recently published Van Gogh: The Life, a biography of one of the world's most renowned creative geniuses. Described as “magisterial” by the New York Times, the 900-plus-page volume charts the emotionally disturbed painter's 37-year lifetime, during which he produced a dazzling body of work yet never gained fame, was widely ridiculed, cut off a portion of his ear, and agonized over “the empty stupidity and the pointless torture of life.”

The book posits a new theory—that Van Gogh did not commit suicide but was accidentally killed. Smith and Naifeh, who met at Harvard Law School and are life partners as well as writing collaborators, have worked together on a number of books; their 1989 Jackson Pollock: An American Saga won the Pulitzer Prize for biography. Smith recently spoke to arts writer Pat Sims about the new work.

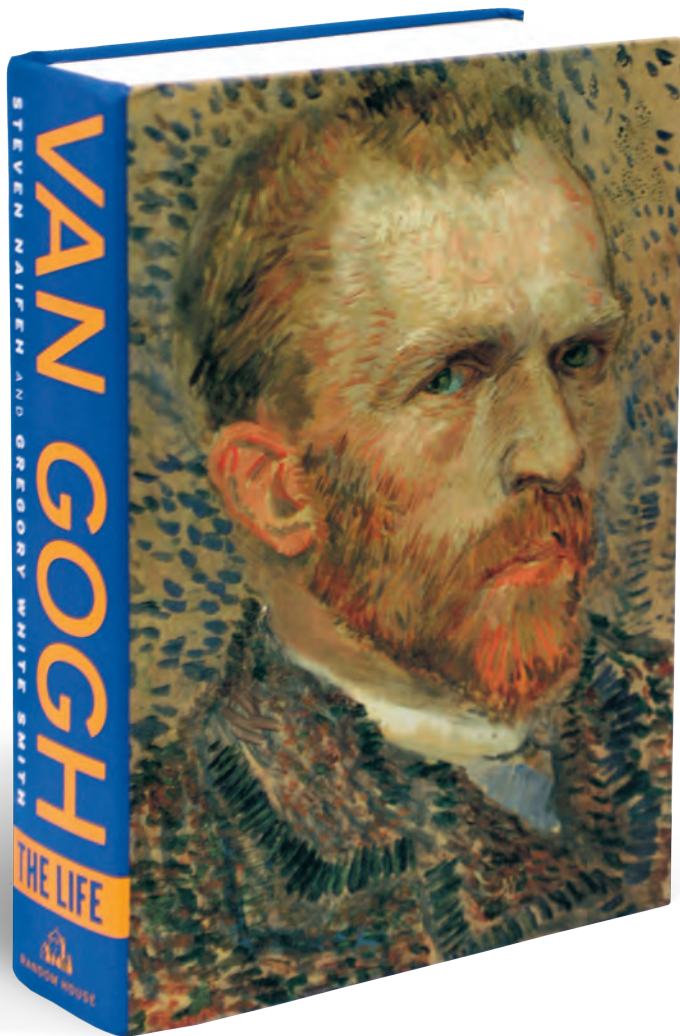
How did you decide to write about Van Gogh?

We came off the Pulitzer for *Pollock* in 1991 and knew we wanted to do another biography of an artist. We had done Pollock feeling artists had not been given the full-out biographies others had—military figures, politicians. We thought, who else is out there? How important was their art? They had to have made a major contribution. The first person we thought of was Van Gogh. What's not to be interested in? The art is phenomenal, he's the most-loved artist in the history of Western art with the best-known art. People know the sunflowers, the starry night, all these images they hang on their walls and in college dorms; he's really ubiquitous. So we decided he's the guy.

“We had done Pollock feeling artists had not been given the full-out biographies others had—military figures, politicians. We thought, who else is out there? How important was their art? They had to have made a major contribution. The first person we thought of was Van Gogh.”

What were some of the obstacles you encountered?

Neither of us spoke Dutch. Vincent wrote mostly in Dutch, and that was the big stumbling block. We spent most of the ten years consumed with getting around that and hired eleven Dutch translators. We were tremendously aided by the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. We also had French and German translators. Steve and I both read a little French, but Vincent was extremely knowledgeable and read German, English, Dutch, and French, so that presented another research problem. We really needed to understand his imaginative world. He read thousands of books—they're mentioned in his letters—all of Zola, Dickens, all the great canon of Western Europe; he loved Beecher Stowe. He committed whole swaths of poetry to memory. In those days people didn't have ways of keeping images, but he had phenomenal memory; he could remember paintings he had seen twenty years earlier—the way the light struck the clouds—in photographic detail. The other thing that struck us was what a sad life he led. People know the broad outlines, they know he wanted to be a parson, they know the ear incident—all those things suggest he had a terribly sad life, and that was one of the great attractions, one of the reasons his art continues to exert such appeal. People know he was unhappy, tormented, but his works are so incredibly joyful, positive, so full of life. I think it's kind of consoling, knowing someone could live that life and create such incredible work.



Did you ever feel overwhelmed?

Like from day one. Absolutely. We had no idea what we were getting into. We spent eight years on *Pollock*. We weren't able to calculate working in multiple languages, and there were almost a thousand letters that Vincent wrote and another thousand his family wrote about Vincent—a huge body of literature. About half had been translated, and we had to translate the other half. It was far more challenging and a taller mountain than we had expected.

How did you divide the work that had to be done?

For most of our joint writing career, and certainly for both *Pollock* and Van Gogh, Steve has undertaken the considerable research duties and I have undertaken the writing. But I have to add: There is no such thing as good writing without good thinking, and the thinking is entirely jointly done.

What's it like working with your life partner?

I don't know how people do it alone. It's sort of funny—when we went to the National Book Award for *Pollock* [a 1990 finalist], the first question was, 'How did you two write a book?' But when we went to the Pulitzers, they didn't ask; they knew Woodward and Bernstein and the way they worked cooperatively. But we were the first people who had been nominat-

ed for a National Book Award for two authors. You get so deeply involved in the tiniest detail, you care deeply whether he was in Antwerp in January or February 1881. If you were alone and swimming in this morass of details, no spouse would be able to summon up the interest required for that kind of obsession, whereas with both, you can bounce information off each other. You can get a genuine conversation going that no one else would talk about. The miracle is that anyone writes this kind of book alone.

Did your legal background help with the research you did on Van Gogh's death?

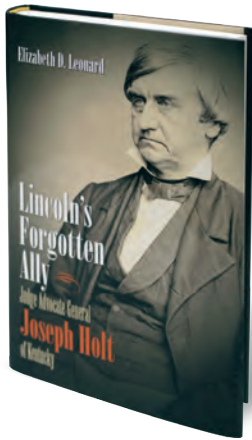
I think it probably did. Law school does teach you a way to think that has to do with reasoning from the facts and a sort of Sherlock Holmesian way of seeing inconsistencies you wouldn't normally see, picking out things that don't fit together, evidentiary things. We were two-thirds into the book and started looking at information and sources, and what kicked in was just general skepticism, which I think is great for any writer to have. Where did they get this information? Did the person just spout something someone else told them? Who is the eyewitness, someone who just thought this might make a nice story? We were able to show many ways in which the old story was unsupported and found new information that did a better job of explaining all the inconsistencies. There was confirmation from a little-known source we came across from digging deep and going to some obscure sources based on our investigation. Vincent was not murdered, he was shot accidentally by local teenagers. Vincent himself had railed so often against suicide, so it never felt right after all the things he had been through—why would he go out and shoot himself? But people like their myths.

Reading this book made me feel at times that I was really inside Van Gogh's head. Was that an effect you intended?

I didn't think people would sit still for nine hundred pages about a painter, many of them concerning his religious beliefs, his wandering and frustrated sexual life, bad relations with his parents. The challenge from the beginning was to make him a sympathetic enough character to make people care. It helped tremendously that he was Vincent Van Gogh. They knew *Starry Night* was coming, *Sunflowers* was coming, these great icons of Western civilization were coming, but you needed more than that to get people caught up, to care that he has to ask his brother for money and that completely humiliates him. There was a sense that there had to be an armature, an emotional story, in order to have people stay interested. When you're talking about things that don't set people's hair on fire, you have to understand [things like] why religion was so important to him; it was incredibly important to his later artistic posture, where his art came from, and what he was trying to do. That was the challenge. You need to get the reader inside his skin.

Nation Builder

AN IMPORTANT PERIOD IN AMERICA'S HISTORY, ILLUMINATED THROUGH THE LIFE OF KEY BUT OVERLOOKED PLAYER JOSEPH HOLT



Lincoln's Forgotten Ally
Elizabeth D. Leonard
(history)
The University of North
Carolina Press (2011)

Gibson Professor of History Elizabeth Leonard's new book raises all kinds of questions about the period of American history surrounding the Civil War, including this one: How could this be the first full-scale biography of Joseph Holt?

Holt, Lincoln's Kentucky-bred judge advocate general, was a pivotal player in the run-up to the Civil War, the implementer of changes put in place during the war, and a ferocious—if not entirely successful—opponent of those who sought to water down those changes during postwar Reconstruction. Holt's was a long and dutiful career, as he served in the administrations of four presidents. But it was as the nation's top prosecutor that Holt became known as the tenacious pursuer of the conspirators who plotted to kill Lincoln.

And yet somehow Holt's life escaped the exhaustive scrutiny of historians and biographers—their loss and Leonard's gain, as she perused Holt's collected letters in the Library of Congress and other locations. The resulting biography is a portal through which readers can witness almost firsthand the simmering forces that boiled over in the Civil War and the political scramble that followed. Leonard, a meticulous and exhaustive researcher, uses Holt's letters to construct a fascinating and detailed account of Holt's life and the ways it reflected this tumultuous period of the 19th century.

We see Holt, the privileged son of a prospering Kentucky family, heading off to college with his family's high

expectations trailing him. Intensely bookish and no sufferer of fools (his grandfather urged him to get some exercise, saying his marathon study sessions would kill him), Holt became a successful lawyer in Kentucky and a political mover and shaker. Though he owned slaves, he early on questioned the morality of slavery and would later lament that President Andrew Johnson's concessions to the former Confederate states were undoing the achievements of the Emancipation Proclamation.

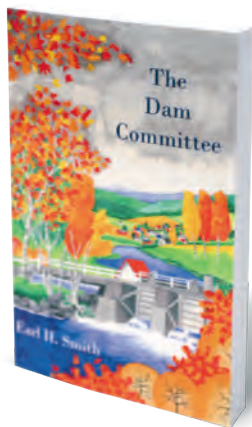
But it was his decision to uphold the execution order for Mary Surratt that caused him to be painted as vengeful and bloodthirsty. Leonard's research shows that he reviewed many postwar pleas for clemency with compassion.

That nuance was lost to many Americans at the time. They read broadsides fired at Holt by ex-President Johnson and rebuttals by Holt in newspapers. The prosecutor was seen by many as a hard-liner, one who would neither forgive nor forget.

Writes Leonard, "... they distilled Holt's eighty-seven years of life and his nearly twenty years of service to the federal government down to his supposedly essential malice toward his native south and its earnest defenders."

Ultimately, though, the man Leonard portrays is complex, often conflicted, proud of his Kentucky heritage, and protective of his extended family there, proslavery though they may have been. But Holt's overriding loyalty, Leonard shows, was to the then-young nation and the achievement and potential it represented.—Gerry Boyle '78

A Small-Town Tale, Affectionately Told



The Dam Committee
Earl H. Smith
North Country Press (2011)

There is something special about a small town, and a little extra something about a small town in Maine. At least that's the way Mainers think of it, including Earl Smith, whose first comic-mystery novel, *The Dam Committee*, affectionately portrays the lakefront community of Belfry, Maine, with its many quirks and foibles.

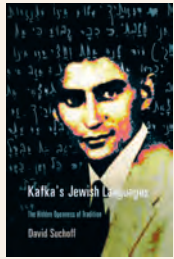
Smith, College historian and emeritus Colby dean, has fashioned an endearing tale of small-town life, albeit one centered around a murder and a suitcase full of purloined cash. The central characters, cronies Harry and Nibber (and an anthropomorphic golden retriever named Winston), find the loot in a snowbank and proceed to surreptitiously and anonymously donate to worthy Belfry causes. This causes an uproar as townspeople speculate about who might be the secret benefactor—and as Harry schemes to unmask the real murderer.

The mystery coexists with the town's regular doings,

which are related with understated charm. There's the dam committee of the title, a political entity that controls the level of the lake, with all of its ramifications. There is the annual town meeting, where the cemetery sexton pessimistically reports that too many people are dying, and the cemeteries may soon be full. And the orchard owner who indignantly asks that the deer-crossing signs be moved from his property. "I think I've done my duty and I want the town to move the signs and let somebody else deal with the damned deer."

As the plot twists and turns, it's clear that Smith, a resident of Belgrade, knows these characters well and is fond of them. As he said in a recent appearance at Colby, "You can't make this stuff up." Sure you can. And Smith has done just that, allowing readers a visit to the place he calls home and to the fictional world he has created from it.—G.B.

RECENT RELEASES



Kafka's Jewish Languages: The Hidden Openness of Tradition
David Suchoff (English)

University of Pennsylvania Press (2012)

After Franz Kafka died, in 1924, his novels and short stories were published in ways that downplayed both his roots in Prague and his engagement with Jewish tradition and language, so as to secure their place in the German literary canon. Now, nearly a century after Kafka began to write fiction, Germany, Israel, and the Czech Republic lay claim to the writer's legacy. In *Kafka's Jewish Languages* David Suchoff brings Kafka's stature as a specifically Jewish author into focus.

Suchoff explores the Yiddish and modern Hebrew that inspired Kafka's vision of tradition. Citing the Jewish sources crucial to the development of Kafka's style, the book demonstrates the intimate relationship between the author's Jewish modes of expression and the larger literary significance of his works. Suchoff shows how "The Judgment" evokes Yiddish as a language of comic curse and examines how Yiddish, African-American, and culturally Zionist voices appear in the unfinished novel, *Amerika*. Reading *The Trial* Suchoff highlights the black humor Kafka learned from the Yiddish theater, and he interprets *The Castle* in light of Kafka's involvement with the renewal of the Hebrew language. Finally, Suchoff uncovers the Yiddish and Hebrew meanings behind Kafka's "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse-Folk," and he considers the recent law case in Tel Aviv over the possession of Kafka's missing manuscripts as a parable of the transnational meanings of his writing.

This new work, says Yale's Henry Sussman, is "diligent, innovative, and supremely intelligent," and adds significantly to Kafka scholarship and Judaic studies.



Ancient Greece from Homer to Alexander: The Evidence
Joseph Roisman (classics), translations by J.C. Yardley

Wiley-Blackwell (2011)

Roisman has published an inclusive and integrated view of Greek history from Homer to Alexander the Great as part of Wiley-Blackwell's "Historical Sources in Translation" series. The volume incorporates fresh translations of original Greek and Roman texts, and it draws on a range of sources to link the political, military, and social history of the Greeks to their intellectual accomplishments. "If you want a thorough and expert introduction to the evidence of ancient Greek history—in other words, to the building blocks of western civilization—read this book," wrote Cornell Professor Barry Strauss.



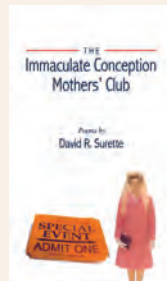
Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law
David M. Freidenreich

University of California Press (2011)

David Freidenreich begins this book with Robert Frost's poem, "Mending Walls," with its oft-repeated adage, "Good fences make good neighbors." In religion, those fences historically have been made of food, food preparation, and mandates relating to both. In these ways, among others, the world's religions used food to define "otherness," to identify "us" and "them."

In *Foreigners and Their Food*, Freidenreich, Pulver Family Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies, explores how Jews, Christians, and Muslims establish rules about the preparation of food and the act of eating. Early on, food becomes a way to differentiate and sometimes link religions. From Judean heroes to the teachings of Augustine to consideration of Muslim hunters using non-Muslim's dogs, the ways ancient and medieval scholars use food restrictions to think about the other are carefully traced.

It is a common theme, from the Old Testament to the Torah to the Qur'an, but Freidenreich breaks new ground as he traces these practices through history.



The Immaculate Conception Mothers' Club
David Surette '79

Koenisha Publications (2011)

David Surette's work might be your best childhood friend's, if you grew up on the streets among the characters of a working-class neighborhood and your buddy became a poet.

He writes about love and marriage and growing old, all in a voice that is authentic and honest, like a longtime friend confiding quietly over a beer.

This latest collection recalls bachelor uncles, tradesman dads with their names on their shirts, rock and roll, the streets of Malden, Mass., turning 50, his long-absentee bookmaker grandfather. "We didn't go to the wake or funeral,/and we go to everyone's./We figured the over and under of whether/it would make my mother happy or sad/and skipped it."

On every page is a poem, a line, a phrase so keenly real you can't help smiling. "I was a willing kid./asked to go somewhere, I said, yes./like a dog on a ride, head out the window."

Ultimately these are the musings of a regular—and observant—guy. In one poem, "Weekend Workshop," Surette writes: "I read my poem./The famous poet/lifted her nose like I had farted and/asked if I was putting on that accent."

He isn't putting on his Boston accent, or anything else, in a collection that is at once decidedly unlitrary and literary as hell. —G.B.



Getting Centered, Finding Strength

MALE ATHLETES TURN TO YOGA FOR A COMPETITIVE EDGE

DASH WASSERMAN '12 STORY JEFF POULAND PHOTO

Hockey player Thomas Kader '14 works out in the weight room. He pushes himself hard in daily on-ice workouts. But when the six-foot-one, 195-pound defenseman wanted more from his body, he turned to—Yoga.

"After hockey season my body's worn down, and I soon found out there were a lot of things I could work on," Kader said, "Yoga opens up a whole new spectrum of what your body can do."

Originating in ancient India as a male-only spiritual practice, yoga became popular in the United States as a form practiced mostly by women. But in recent years on Mayflower Hill, the practice has become popular with male athletes who want to supplement their work on the ice, court, or field. And some find there are both physical and mental benefits. "Most people come to it for the physical exercise and then, lo and behold, they realize there's something more to it," said yoga instructor Laura Meader.

Meader, an assistant director of alumni relations who teaches yoga at the athletic center and downtown, has seen more male athletes—including the entire men's squash team—in her classes. "Male athletes push themselves," Meader said. "They're rock strong and they just can't let go. And if you're tense all the time, you're not focusing."

Kader said he's benefited from the mind-body connection that he has realized through yoga. "It's about making unconscious, fluid movements to the point where it's second nature," he said. "Now I do yoga on my own—in my room or outside by the pond. I feel like I'm comfortable now with how I do it, that I don't need a class anymore. When I do yoga, I'm alone. It's my time."

While Kader has incorporated solitude and yoga into his experience, Meader talks about the benefits of communal practice, like when a whole team is involved: "Being in a group helps you in positive ways. You have shared energy—moving and flowing together—yet still are on the mat," she said.

Among Meader's mixed-gender classes specifically for the squash teams, she has noticed that guys tend to be more receptive to yoga. "I think stereotypes are starting to get broken down," she said. "Male athletes aren't held back."

Squash coach Sakhi Khan said his players have been doing yoga as part of their training for three years, prompted by a suggestion from a few members of the women's team a few years ago. "You get a good stretch in, your balance is tested, and you feel energized at the end of it," Khan said.

He said with yoga his players are more fluid and balanced on the court. "There's a calming effect," Khan said, "and it may even translate to their schoolwork."

Like Kader, basketball guard Kareem Kalil '13 of Southborough, Mass., became interested in yoga when a few former players on the team recommended he give it a try. "I go because I want to be better at



Kareem Kalil '13, a basketball player, at yoga class. Kalil is among a growing number of men who see yoga as a way to compete and live better.

my sport, and through that I've started to enjoy it," said Kalil. Following a yoga session, "I always felt mobile on the court the next day—I'm a lot more able to stay low and stay mobile."

"I'm by far the least flexible person on the team, so I've got a lot of catching up to do," he said. "It's about being more conscious about stress levels—just being more self-aware."

Kalil says yoga helped him learn to breathe properly, improved his muscle stability, and taught him to carry his weight in space. As Meader put it, "Structurally you're more aligned—it helps you everywhere. You can just let yourself go and enjoy something."

There's just one catch for Kalil and other athletes: with training, games, and a full course load, schedules are jam-packed. "It's just difficult because there's limited time [in season]," he said. Yet, with balance he learns in yoga, Kalil manages to attend yoga class once or twice a week. Kader also has found new balance in his life. "I'm doing this because it's helping me. I'm seeing differences that I've never seen before," said Kader, "My thought process started to change. School became different—I had energy in class and sound sleeping [at night]."

With yoga, the ultimate discipline is to conquer oneself, but players find they also come away ready to take on their opponents. "My favorite pose is the warrior because, well, the name explains it. When you're on the ice, you want that mindset," Kader said, "You want to be a warrior. You can't be beat."

Runner **EVA LAUER '15** finished in 26th place as **WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY** placed ninth among 51 scoring teams at the NCAA New England Region Qualifier Championships on Nov. 12 at Bowdoin. Lauer was fourth among first-year runners with a time of 22:06.45. **BEROL DEWDNEY '13** finished 31st in 22:12.94, while **CLAIRE DUNN '13** clocked a 22:51.24 to take 53rd place. **LAYNE SCHWAB '13** (59th), **KATE CONNOLLY '14** (73rd.), **CLAIRE CANNON '13** (85th), and **SOPHIE WEAVER '14** (91st) were Colby's other runners. Dewdney finished sixth at the NESCAC meet at Amherst Oct. 29, helping the Mules finish fifth of 11 teams. Her strong season earned her a place on the All-NESCAC First Team. **ABBY CHERUIYOT '12** placed 26th at the ECAC Division III Women's Cross Country Championships at Williams Nov. 5. Colby finished fourth out of 40 teams. ... With four first-years in the top 100, **MEN'S CROSS-COUNTRY** jumped to 14th place in the NCAA New England Region Championships at Bowdoin Nov. 12. The results, an improvement over last year's 18th-place finish, bode well for the future. Colby placed six runners in the top 100, including **BEN LESTER '15** at 77th, **CHARLIE COFFMAN '15** at 81st, **BRIAN DESMOND '13** at 93rd, **WILL MCCARTHY '15** at 94th, **MATTHIEU NADEAU '12** at 97th, and **JEFF HALE '15** at 98th. **COREY PARK '12** was close behind at 106th. ... **WOMEN'S SOCCER** made the playoffs, falling to Middlebury 2-0 in the NESCAC quarterfinal round at Middlebury Oct. 29. The Mules, the seventh seed in the tournament, ended the season at 7-7-1. The team was backed by goalkeeper **EMILY BROOK '15**,



PHOTO BY JEFF WILLIAMS

Berol Dewdney '13, center, and Eva Lauer '15 match strides at a meet at Bowdoin Sept. 17.

who brought a 1.47 goals against average into the playoffs. Brook had seven shutouts in the season, including wins against Hamilton and Bates, and a close 2-1 loss to Williams. Colby clinched its playoff spot with a 1-0 win on **ALEX YORKE '14**'s goal over Bates in the regular-season finale. **NIKKI PICKERING '12** led the team with four goals and an assist

during the regular season. **CAMI NOTARO '15** had three goals, while **KATE LAXSON '13** had a team-high three assists. ... **MEN'S SOCCER** also advanced to the NESCAC playoffs, falling to Amherst in the quarterfinals. The Mules finished the regular season strong, with a 1-1 tie with Hamilton and a tough 1-0 loss to Williams. **ERIC BARTHOLD '12** led the Mules in scoring with five goals and an assist, with midfielder **ANDREW MEISEL '13** leading in assists. Meisel's offense—two game-winning goals and a two-for-two penalty-kick record—led to a place on the All-NESCAC Second Team and All-New England North First Team. Keeper **BEN JOSLIN '12** had a 1.09 goals against average. ... **FIELD HOCKEY** ended its season with a tough 1-0 loss to Bates, as goaltender **MICHELLE BURT '14** finished the year with 108 saves. Colby was 4-10 overall and 1-9 in the league. ... **FOOTBALL** recovered from an 0-4 start with a three-game winning streak only to lose to Bowdoin in the season finale, 20-10. The result was a three-way tie for the Colby-Bates-Bowdoin title. **CONOR SULLIVAN '12** passed for 102 yards and rushed for another 23, and **CHRISTIAN ROMANO '14** had 11 tackles. **HENRY NELSON '15**, who had seven stops along with **KALU KALU '14**, led the Mules with 59 tackles for the season.

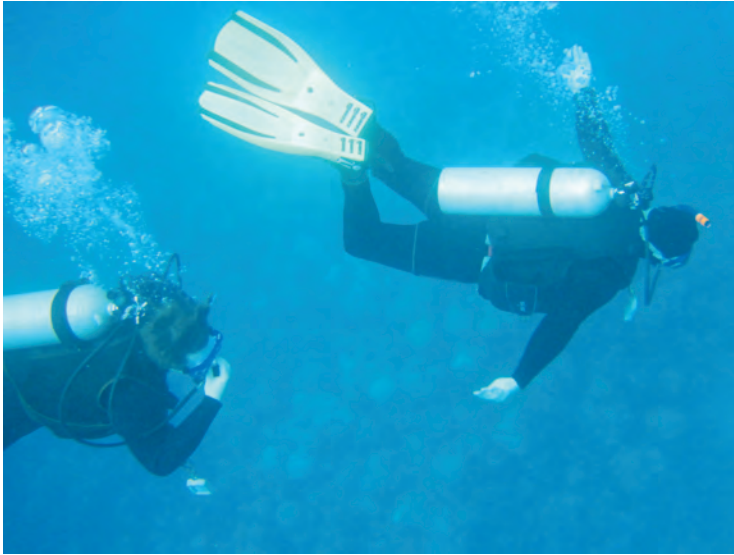
Mestieri Moves On

Football coach Ed Mestieri announced Dec. 3 that he was resigning, and a national search was launched to have a new head coach in place for the 2012 season. Mestieri was head coach of the team for the past eight seasons and spent 23 years in all at Colby, including time as offensive coordinator, offensive line coach, and recruiting coordinator. "I felt it was time for a change, for me and for the football program," Mestieri said.



PHOTO BY DUSTIN SATLOFF '15

Ed Mestieri



Students dive to coral reefs during a geology Jan Plan in Bermuda.

typical course loads in each term) calendar. That doesn't include variations like Bates's 4-4-1 "short term" in the spring.

Obscured by 50 years of history is that Jan Plan was proposed as a solution to a nagging scheduling complaint. Professors and students were annoyed that courses in the fall semester were interrupted by end-of-year holidays, which created a couple of disconnected classes in January followed by first-semester exams. "It was a bit of an awkward, listless stretch," recalls Pugh Family Professor of Economics Emeritus Hank Gemery, who started at Colby in 1961.

The 4-1-4 calendar remedied the situation at Colby. Subsequently, particularly in years of oil embargoes and energy crises, other colleges adopted calendars that end first semester before the holidays and then simply stay closed until the last week of January.

But alumni who were on campus at the time recall the thrill of trying something new and so different. "I just remember there was a lot of excitement about it," said Paulette French '63, a student for two years before and two years after Jan Plan started. "We were really thrilled at this opportunity to do independent work."

French spent January 1962 reading and researching works by Albert Camus. She was so energized that she proposed a Senior Scholars project on French literature. Her thesis, "The Insatiable Seeker: A study of the concept of individual freedom in the works of André Gide," won a literary prize in France, which led to a year abroad, which led to a master's degree, which led to a Ph.D. in comparative literature. She traces it to the first-ever Jan Plan. "It led me into academic life more seriously."

Faculty and administration reviews also were positive. After the inaugural term Strider wrote in *Liberal Education* that "faculty reaction ranged from mild approval to vigorous enthusiasm." He quoted a professor who said, "The atmosphere was charged with excitement." A student referendum endorsed the experiment six to one despite students' propensities, Strider wrote, to vote "'no' on any administration or faculty proposal simply on principle."

Part of the faculty's enthusiasm was for the flexibility, Gemery said. "There was real pressure on a new professor," trying to balance teaching

with finishing a Ph.D. dissertation and developing new courses. Initially professors were expected to be on one year and off the next. Faculty members became more research-oriented in ensuing decades, "and Jan Plan is a time for doing a fair bit of that," he said.

A 1972 article in the *Journal of Higher Education* cited Colby and Florida Presbyterian (Florida Presbyterian, now Eckerd, opened its doors in 1960-61 with a 4-1-4 calendar; Colby was first to adapt its existing calendar) as early adopters. Joan Stark of Goucher College wrote, "The task of describing the current national trends among schools which have adopted the 4-1-4 academic calendar is quite like Charles Darwin's attempt to describe the many varieties of finches which adaptively evolved on the Galapagos Islands."

It's just a coincidence, but last year Leslie Brainerd Arey Professor of Biology Herb Wilson took the Ecological Field Study Jan Plan to the Galapagos to see those finches, among other flora and fauna. This year the Sundance Film Festival, Costa Rica, Russia, Belize, and Italy are among destinations for Jan Plan courses.

On-campus courses not for academic credit that are perennially popular include blacksmithing, woodworking, and an Emergency Medical Technician course that leads to Basic-EMT certification. Premed Academy, which includes shadowing area physicians, was introduced last year.

The opportunity for January internships is a big advantage for students, who increasingly need that experience on their résumés when they hit the job market after graduation, said Terry Cowdrey, vice president and dean of admissions and financial aid. Jan Plan is a distinction for Colby, she said. "It's something we talk about a lot."

Anecdotal evidence in 50-year-old memories conforms with written accounts from Strider and Stark: students loved Jan Plan from the get-go. "My friends all bought into it wholeheartedly," said John Chapman '62, a senior that first year. The business administration major spent the month studying Calvinist and Protestant foundations of capitalism, meeting once a week with Professor Walter Zukowski. Both Stark and French still have copies of their first Jan Plan papers.

Five decades later, the College's study of Jan Plan found that a significant cohort of students now take courses for credit in January to fulfill graduation requirements. It fits with the seriousness of many high-achieving Colby students who want to get ahead early. Jordan Lorenz '15 for example.

Lorenz said Jan Plan was "one of the deciding factors" when he was choosing where to attend. With many schools touting exploration and creativity, Lorenz was impressed that Colby was "willing to set aside a whole month for something I want to study," whether or not it relates to major or future career.

He initially signed up to take a philosophy course, thinking it might move him along toward a double major in philosophy. Then, after his mother inquired about his January plans, she asked, "But isn't Jan Plan about doing something different?"

This January Lorenz is in a theater and dance course instead: Solo Performance Workshop: From Folktale to Your Tale, on Stage. He will develop a solo piece and eventually perform it.

Happy golden anniversary, Jan Plan.



For details on Jan Plan courses and reports from interns, bloggers, and researchers see www.colby.edu/janplan