October 2010

Letters

Professor Todrank's Values

Reading Carl Glickman '68's essay ("Sunrise by the Pond," summer 2010 *Colby*) gave me a very sweet flashback to more than 40 years ago. But it touched me not just because I was there at the pond that morning, had taken that very same Gustave "Gus" Todrank class that the bride and groom had, and had grown up in the same exclusive community as Carl. It had more to do with my feeling that Todrank obviously picked up something in this very young couple that suggested they would develop the kind of inclusiveness that he himself lived and preached.

I remember Carl as no less flaky than most of us were at that point in our lives, but can't believe that Todrank was simply being accepting when he agreed to marry these two real kids. He was very perceptive, and no doubt was able to see something about what the future held for the two of them.

Richard Foster '68
Berkeley, Calif.

I greatly enjoyed the article by Carl Glickman '68 featuring Gustave Todrank. Professor Todrank played a special part in my thinking about, and philosophy on, religion, even as it has evolved through the years. To generalize, he viewed all religions, if correctly practiced, to have the same overall objective and hence not in conflict in the broadest sense.

My wife and I married in June 1967 in a traditional ceremony in a Congregational church and are also still together today. I have found most helpful Professor Todrank's view that "religious" fullness comes from understanding all the major religions and focusing on what they all have in common instead of what makes them different.

I am currently helping a Zen Buddhist roshi raise funds for a new Zendo and helping a local Congregational church with its effort on behalf of the homeless.

Kurt Swenson '67
Hopkinton, N.H.

Regarding Gerry Boyle's "Editor's Desk" column (summer 2010 *Colby*), there are a lot of us alums scattered about living lives of varying styles driven by a range of goals and core values. But that's a good "problem" for *Colby* to have ("So how do we decide who and what to cover?").

I appreciate each issue, and, with its arrival, memories from the '60s and early '70s rise up from the haze near the brainstem. And I go through a brief process on a parallel to Boyle's as I question myself and my standards (like "Why am I remembering this?" and "Why the hell did I do that?" and "What might I have done?"). But then there's a piece like the one written by Carl Glickman '68, and I thank *Colby's* staff for their editorial work.

Dennis Marble '71
Bangor, Maine

In Defense of Angela Davis

I am unable to let pass without response the letter, "Will O.J. Be Next?" (summer 2010 *Colby*), which likens Angela Davis to O.J. Simpson.

First, Angela Davis was entitled to the presumption of innocence. Second, she was acquitted by an all-white jury of alleged involvement in the events resulting in the murder of Judge Harold Haley. Third and most important, Davis has devoted her life to scholarship, teaching, feminism, and advocacy on behalf of the underclass.

Had those who endowed the Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award delegated the selection of recipients to alumni such as those of the writer's generation, then might we see the likes of Glenn Beck or Rush Limbaugh invited to the campus to claim the award?

Graham Barkham '62
Larchmont, N.Y.

Regarding the letter "Will O.J. Be Next?", the writer expresses concern that Professor Angela Davis was invited to speak at Colby. The author admits that he is unfamiliar with Professor Davis's message, but nevertheless maintains that Davis should not have been given a "stage to share her views" because she was "charged (not convicted)" in relation to the kidnapping and murder of a judge some years ago.

We are told that to give her a platform "is to lionize and validate her."

Our fellow alumnus, Elijah Parish Lovejoy, would defend the right to publish such a letter. But would he endorse its argument?

Peter Grabosky '66
Canberra, Australia

Privilege Matters

I had a hard time reading the essay, "For This Slacker, Lessons Learned" by Chris Schmidt '83 (summer 2010 *Colby*). Chris applauds a characteristic of Colby (and similar schools) that I find disheartening and, frankly, embarrassing: that it's possible—no, easy—to pass the four years and to get a valuable degree without ever being called upon to do much more than pay for it.

That Chris gleaned a positive life lesson about "commitment" is nice but says more about him than about the school.

His last image is especially poignant: kids up on the Hill playing poker all night rather than studying. What goes unmentioned is the greater machinery of privilege that got those kids there in the first place and that continues to work tirelessly to support and promote them, regardless of how they behave. Yes, things will work out for those kids (and I don't discount myself from their numbers), but it's not anything to celebrate, for the kids or the school.

Mat Lebowitz '87
Amherst, Mass.

Professors Propelled His Career

This letter is prompted by Gerry Boyle's remarks in the summer 2010 *Colby* and Chris Schmidt's article in the same issue. I enjoyed Chris's article immensely, relating particularly to the fact that Colby professors helped me in a variety of ways that enabled my Colby education to serve me throughout my career as a high school principal. *Colby* best serves us all by continuing to present a wide cross-section of the great programs being offered to today's students. Keep up the good work!

Ross S. Holt Jr. '53
Camden, Maine