



October 2009

From the Hill

Ruth Jacobs
Colby College

Stephen Collins
Colby College

Gerry Boyle
Colby College

Alexis Grant
Colby College

Laura Meader
Colby College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine>

Recommended Citation

Jacobs, Ruth; Collins, Stephen; Boyle, Gerry; Grant, Alexis; and Meader, Laura (2009) "From the Hill," *Colby Magazine*: Vol. 98 : Iss. 3 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine/vol98/iss3/9>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by the Colby College Archives at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Magazine by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Colby.

The Making of Machismo

EDUCATION PROFESSORS LYN MIKEL BROWN AND MARK TAPPAN DECONSTRUCT MEDIA MESSAGES SENT TO BOYS—AND GIVE PARENTS TOOLS TO RESPOND

RUTH JACOBS STORY JASON MCKIBBEN PHOTO

It has become a well-known dilemma: Women and girls are bombarded by thousands of media messages daily. These messages, often intended to sell products, limit girls and create feelings of inadequacy. Girls are up against a lot.

But what about boys?

With increasing attention paid toward boys' lagging performance in school, that question became a familiar refrain when Professor of Education Lyn Mikel Brown spoke about her 2006 book, *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters from Marketers' Schemes*.

Boys, too, are bombarded by media messages that perpetuate stereotypes to sell goods. These stereotypes damage boys, albeit in different ways. Brown found that, although people were hungry for critique, what existed was about the obvious—overtly violent video games, for example. Enter *Packaging Boyhood: Saving Our Sons from Superheroes, Slackers, and Other Media Stereotypes* (St. Martin's Press, 2009), by Brown, her partner, Professor of Education Mark Tappan, and psychologist Sharon Lamb.

Packaging Boyhood looks at kids' favorite products and media and pulls out the underlying messages that parents may not notice. The authors find that, much like girls, boys are reduced to stereotypes. Then Brown, Tappan, and Lamb show parents how to teach boys to see critically what's being fed to them and to encourage boys to be who they are, not who they think they're supposed to be. "It's really about helping parents negotiate this incredible onslaught of media messages about what it means to be a boy, what it means to be masculine, and how do they talk to their sons about it when they're just getting it from everywhere," Brown said.

Everywhere indeed. Books. Television. Toys. Music. Games. Movies. And it starts early, says Brown: "As soon as they're watching TV or engaging with media in any way." Children quickly move from educational television shows like *Sesame Street* to cartoons that glorify rudeness ("farting dogs" and "stinky boys," says Brown) and include "bumbling and stupid" parents, especially fathers. The subtle, underlying message, she says, is that parents are irrelevant in boys' lives. Another theme is the lack of meaningful relationships among boys. Friendships tend to be shallow and are not mutual but involve a strong character and a weaker sidekick. Boys don't show emotions, don't communicate well with girls, and if they do they compromise their masculinity—"you're weak if you show feelings. You're a girl, you're a pussy, or whatever," said Brown. Content for older boys emphasizes being

"It's the constant subtle messages that the boys get over and over that aren't examined."

Professor of Education Lyn Mikel Brown

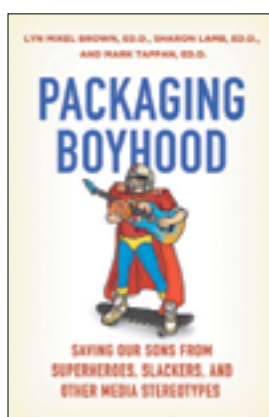
obsessed with girls, power, and, of course, violence.

In fact, the violence comes early. Toys associated with violent, intense, PG-13 movies are marketed to young boys through promotions like McDonald's Happy Meals, Tappan said. "All the toy tie-ins [are intended] to get boys begging to go to these movies," said Brown. If the parents give in, the content (which Tappan says is often on the line between PG-13 and R-rated) is potentially harmful. Even toys that once were considered more benign have resorted to the theme. Brown and Tappan point to Legos (destruction) and Nerf (bigger, badder guns). In action figures, physical proportions have become unrealistic. Throughout the media, things that seem harmless may not be. "It's the constant subtle messages that the boys get over and over that aren't examined," said Brown.

Still, not all media is bad, the authors say, and they highlight and analyze positive examples. They like Harry Potter (he's complex, is reminded that he needs his friends, has older mentors, and wrestles with emotions) even though the book series includes some stereotypes. *The Simpsons* and other satires and parodies have potential (for older boys) because they're "smarter." Some musicians send positive messages, including, perhaps surprisingly, some rappers, like the artist Common. The examples are abundant, and many are listed in the book. The authors emphasize that positive and problematic messages frequently occur in the same place, so

it's especially important for parents and children to learn to deconstruct them.

That is the focus of Tappan's Boys to Men course at Colby. The course examines masculinity and the transition into manhood and includes individual student research projects focusing on single products. "A number of those analyses kind of sparked our writing and were really helpful and got us thinking about things," said Tappan. A student with an affinity for World Wrestling Entertainment critically examined its action figures. Another focused on en-





Professors of Education Lyn Mikel Brown and Mark Tappan among boys' toys that emphasize over-the-top power and physical strength, a theme they say is detrimental to boys' development.

ergy drinks, which emphasize power and masculinity.

Brown, Tappan, and Lamb argue that boys are reduced to specific types in the media. Superheroes. Risk-takers. Winners. Powerhouses. "Everything for boys is over the top and huge and bigger and biggest," said Tappan.

So what's wrong with winning and being strong? Nothing, necessarily. But sometimes it involves violence or dominance. And what happens when boys can't measure up? "If you're not a winner, the number one, you're a loser in some way," said Brown.

And that's where money comes in. "One of the techniques that marketers use to sell a product is they raise your anxiety about something that's wrong with you," said Tappan. "They raise your anxiety and then they sell you a product that will help you feel like you've made it."

The inability to measure up to stereotypes has also given way to a new stereotype in the media: the slacker. "The superhero-big-guy-winner is so over the top now in boys media that this alternative identity of being a slacker is now

giving boys a kind of face-saving opt-out," said Brown. "So they can be funny sidekick slacker types—Jack Black, Will Farrell ... it's kind of an interesting alternative, but they also get associated with being losers in the sense that they're not quite smart, they're not good in school."

The messages are pervasive, but the authors of *Packaging Boyhood* offer ways to help boys resist becoming stereotypes. It's all about communication, the authors say. "Whenever possible sit down, learn how to play those games," said Brown. "Talk with them, watch their movies. It gets harder and harder as they get older because they have more and more independence, but that's why we say start young, help them develop some critical thinking ... so that by the time they get to an age where they don't want you around, they at least have your voice in their head."



Sustain Mid-Maine intern Erin Maurer '11 helped establish raised-bed gardens on North Street for community members as part of a local-foods initiative.

Students Help “Sustain Mid-Maine”

SUMMER INTERNS WORK WITH COMMUNITIES ON STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

STEPHEN COLLINS '74 STORY

In 2007 city officials in Waterville formed a committee to look at the city's energy use and carbon emissions in the hope of making municipal operations more environmentally friendly. But, when community members started to get involved, it became clear there was an appetite for greening initiatives beyond the scope of city services. An anonymous donor from town put up money to help dip into a deep local resource, Colby's Environmental Studies Program, which

offered a ready pool of qualified interns.

The result? Organizers say it's a unique, cooperative town-gown initiative.

In the words of Steve Erario '10, the original intern and a key organizer: “No one else in Maine is approaching [sustainability] in a strategic way like we are.”

Since Erario's initial internship with the City of Waterville in summer 2007, an organization named Sustain Mid-Maine formed, with five

committees that are working on energy, transportation, local foods, education, and waste and recycling in Waterville and surrounding communities. In 2009 Sustain Mid-Maine employed five summer interns: three Colby students and two from Unity College.

According to Waterville City Manager Michael Roy '74, “There have been benefits to the community in a number of different ways.” Not least among them, he said, are the youthful and in-

formed perspectives that students have brought to deliberations around tables populated by volunteers often a generation or more older.

Among other tasks, the Colby students have compiled baseline data on Waterville's energy use and its carbon emissions, mapped area trails with GPS, run a composting workshop and a Green Living Expo, helped launch community garden plots, published how-to brochures, and applied for grants.

After spending three summers working with Erario and other students, Roy said, "They are very organized, very mature, and they communicate very well."

The effort started to resolve into focus in January 2009 with a three-day workshop at which the five priorities were identified and steering committees formed. This summer Colby provided office space in the Olin Science Center for five interns who worked with community volunteers on each of the initiatives.

Erin Maurer '11 worked primarily on local foods and was instrumental in setting up the pilot site for community raised-bed garden plots, across from the Thayer campus of MaineGeneral Medical Center on North Street. While Maurer came to Colby for the strong Environmental Science Program and has a "passion for agriculture," she said, "It's been very cool learning about how Sustain Mid-Maine got organized."

And several interns recognized that organization and structure are critical to sustaining Sustain Mid-Maine.

Andrew Young '09, who applied GIS skills to transportation issues and produced a brochure on recycling options, formed an important bond with the community, though it came after his graduation and just before he left Waterville for a master's program in chemistry at UNH. Wishing he'd begun earlier, he said, "One of my greatest

fears is leaving and having the project fall apart. In the back of our minds is giving the next person what they need to succeed."

Jamie Nemecek, a rising sophomore at Unity, said she got sucked into the community involvement at a more propitious point in her undergraduate career. She is already committed to helping the education committee for another year.

The senior member of the Sustain Mid-Maine intern corps, Erario brought a technical expertise that formed the basis of Waterville's energy-use and carbon-emissions audits. Erario also took on strategic planning, community needs assessments, raising public awareness, kept volunteers engaged, and is trying to ensure that efforts continue after he graduates.

As with most civic engagement initiatives involving Colby students, it's a win-win situation for the interns and the city, organizers say. Students revel in being able to synthesize what they have

learned and apply it to a real project. And, from the city's end, "They were a huge help," said City Administrator Roy.

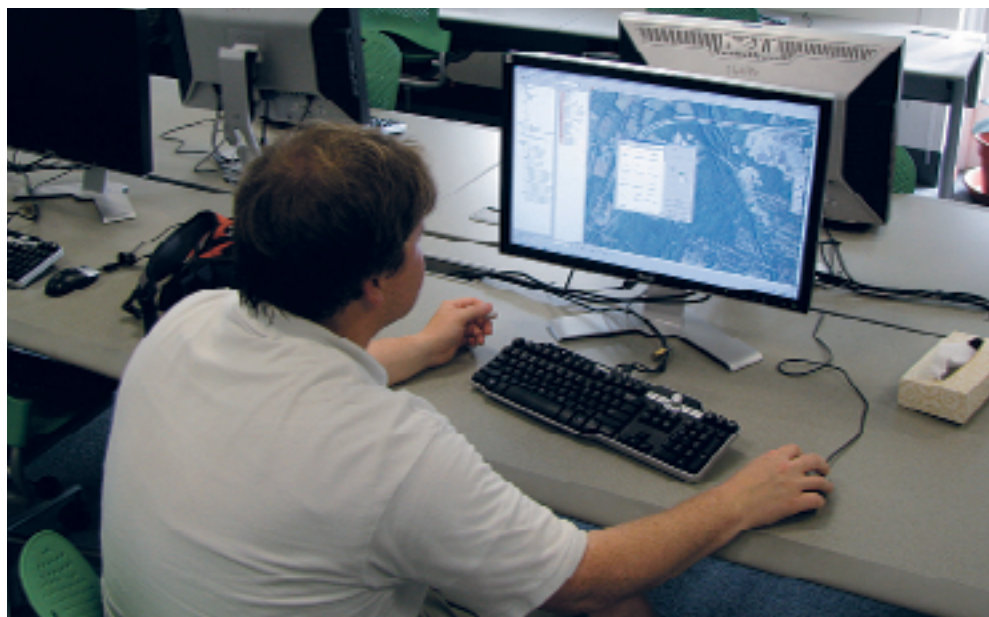
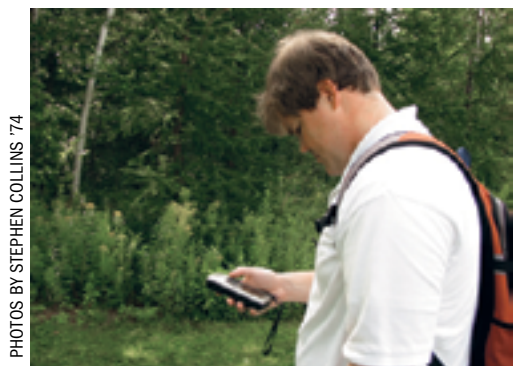
Equally important, though, is the basic person-to-person interaction. "Knowing people is half the battle," Erario said. "I've met hundreds and hundreds of people, and despite the stereotypes they may have held about Colby, they're always willing to talk and share ideas. That's very, very valuable to me."

"It's really nice to make these connections," Maurer said. "There was a police officer at the grand opening [of the community garden] who said he'd really like to have a plot."

Given tension that has surrounded some previous police/student interactions, that's a discussion that breaks down stereotypes on both ends.

"Knowing people is half the battle. I've met hundreds and hundreds of people, and despite the stereotypes they may have held about Colby, they're always willing to talk and share ideas. That's very, very valuable to me."

Steve Erario '10



Andrew Young '09 worked on transportation issues for Sustain Mid-Maine, including collecting GIS data for the Kennebec Messalonskee Trails organization. Here he collects data with a GPS unit (left) by hiking on-campus trails, then he imports the data into GIS software (right) in the Diamond Building's GIS lab.

Q&A

NOEL JAMES, THE NEW ASSOCIATE DEAN OF STUDENTS AND DIRECTOR OF THE PUGH CENTER,
ON BRINGING THE COLBY COMMUNITY TOGETHER AND ADDRESSING THINGS THAT CAN DIVIDE IT

GERRY BOYLE '78 INTERVIEW BRIAN SPEER PHOTO

Noel James was appointed associate dean of students and director of the Pugh Center in July after an interim year in the position. She spoke with Colby Managing Editor Gerry Boyle about what she's done, what she hopes to do, and the rewards and challenges of working on multicultural issues at Colby.

So how do you define your job?

Bringing people together. Engaging difference. Finding common ground.

Have you done that before?

Oh yeah.

Tell me a little bit about where and how.

Most recently was the Providence gig. It's like New Orleans Mardi Gras, Trinidad carnival, Brazilian carnival. And my role in that has been reaching out to all these different groups and bringing them together under the umbrella of celebrating the beautiful city of Providence. Prior to that I worked as a consultant, here at Colby, building community through arts and culture.

And before that?

Prior to that I was director of the office of cultural affairs in Minneapolis. And prior to that I worked with the Ordway Center for Performing Arts there. My main focus has always been arts and culture, bringing people together so they have a better understanding of themselves, where they fit in the world, and how they can relate to others.

So this is a smaller community.

But with the same needs.

You did this in an interim capacity last year. Do you feel that you made progress?

I feel real good about it. I just felt like people were just really hungry for somebody first to listen and then to get the ball rolling. So my number-one priority was getting the Pugh Center cleaned up, functional. Second was to get the Pugh clubs up and functional, give them some direction and some leadership in terms of things that they can do. And then three, what types of programming can be offered through the Pugh Center, through Multicultural Affairs, or through other professors who want to use this space to support their goals?

But there were some bumps in the road, like the incident on April 12. Can positive change can come from that?

It has to. And I think, yes, positive change has occurred already, simply because, one, my understanding is that there's a new communication protocol that's been put in place, so that it will allow these situations to be handled more in-house before an outside party is called. Secondly I believe that people are more willing, now, to engage in dialogue about racial issues. That's always uncomfortable. But we have to do that if we want to create the environment that we want, which is basically one that makes everyone feel welcome. Sincerely welcome.

So you're not discouraged?

No. If anything I felt we were doing good work because the students felt empowered to voice their opinion. So for me, I was happy that they were calling out what they considered to be not a good way of handling the situation. If stuff like that was happening and nobody was saying anything, that's not good. And I would not want to be part of that type of environment.

Where do you begin to make more progress?

In response to the students requesting transparency as well as creating a more inclusive campus climate, we had a number of students, [Assistant Dean of Students] Kelly Wharton, and myself create a document that will serve as our working document as we move forward as to how we can improve campus climate.



Associate Dean of Students and Pugh Center Director Noel James, center, with students at a recent meeting of the Pugh Community Board.

Part of that is the multicultural literacy?

What we want to achieve in this multicultural literacy piece is for students to identify how culture relates to them, how it relates to others, what are those beliefs and biases that inform how they see themselves and others, and then demonstrate an understanding of how one's level of multicultural development impacts real life.

You've talked about preparing students for life after Colby.

If they simply just showed up at the International Extravaganza, or they decide they want to attend the Passover service, or they want to go to Eid festival, it would just give you a better sense of other people's belief systems and how—through those belief systems—how they see the world. Whereas when you get outside of Colby, it's harder to go to a mosque, it's harder to go a synagogue, because it would be like, "What are you doing here?" It's not as scary, again depending on one's perspective, if you do it in a campus environment. Because we're all here to learn and, ideally, to learn from each other.

You don't come from an academic background.

Uh-uh.

When you came to Colby were there things that surprised you?

Well, the first thing that surprised me was the amount of resources that are available, whether it's faculty or the different programs. And also another thing that surprised me was the top-down approach. I'm hoping that through the experiences we've had this past year that everybody will understand that we need to interact with each other as humans and not necessarily the positions that we hold.

How do you like working in a community of young people?

I find it thrilling from the standpoint that their futures are ahead of them. The part that's challenging is that everybody is in transition. So if anything was challenging for me, it was understanding that this is a place where people should be able to change and be able to explore different aspects of themselves they never even knew really existed.

Do you have a lot of contact with students?

Last year I probably saw fewer students than my colleagues but I saw 409 students.

Who came to you for some kind of advice?

Right.

That's a lot of students.

In person visits, 292.

You'll still be advising?

Mmm-hmm.

I see. Well, you'll have full days.

You think?

A longer version of this interview is online at www.colby.edu/mag

A Passion For Giving Poetry Place and Time

Ira Sadoff, the Arthur Jeremiah Roberts Professor of English, is a distinguished poet whose work appears in his own books and in many anthologies, magazines, and journals. But Sadoff, as his many creative-writing alumni know, is also, in the words of poet Charles Simic,

“a close reader.” In a way that praise is a bit of a misnomer, as Sadoff’s gift for close examination of the language of poetry is simultaneously far-ranging. In this book of criticism, he explores the shoulder-rubbing of poets and culture, and he argues that poetry is most compelling when it is considered as art shaped by the artist’s connection to time and place.

If that description seems dry, it shouldn’t. Sadoff’s passion for the power of language resounds throughout the book. Like a jazz critic, he revels in words that soar from the page—that conclude and crystallize a composition with the single unexpected phrase.

The comparison is apt, as Sadoff considers contemporary poets—Louise Glück, Czesław Miłosz, John Ashbery among others—but also conjures up the exploratory spirit of John Coltrane and Billie Holiday.

There’s much to quote in the book, which one

critic hailed as “a thrilling and brave defense of poetry.” Sadoff’s interpretation both focuses precisely on language and throws up the backdrop of culture that prompts and silhouettes poetry and other art. The explication of Frank O’Hara’s poem on the death of Billie Holiday, “The Day Lady Died,” is worth the price of admission.

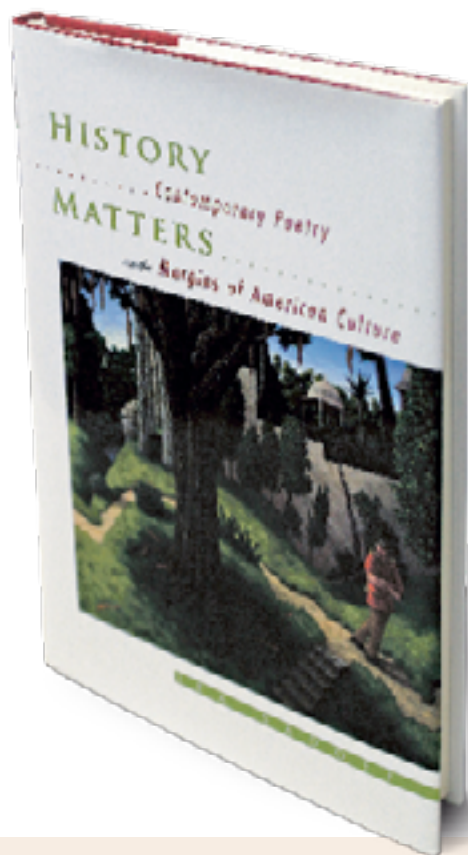
The speaker wanders Manhattan on an afternoon in 1959, buying a hamburger, cigarettes, orbiting the darkened star that is the poem’s punctuation:

*and I am sweating a lot by now and thinking of
leaning on the john door in the 5 SPOT
while she whispered a song along the keyboard
to Mal Waldron and everyone and I stopped breathing*

“The effect of this final stanza is breathtaking,” Sadoff writes, and then he shows how the speaker has been set adrift by loss, by the angst of America in the Cold War 1950s, making readers “feel both more human and more alone.”

In the end, the book is about what Sadoff calls “the true meaning of transcendence: not leaving the body, but dwelling in the world of language and the language of the world not only to recreate experience but also to create it.”

—Gerry Boyle ’78



History Matters: Contemporary Poetry on the Margins of American Culture
Ira Sadoff (English)
University of Iowa Press (2009)



Hear Ira Sadoff read from *History Matters*. www.colby.edu/mag,
keyword: Sadoff

RECENT RELEASES



Maine Birding Trail
Bob Duchesne ’75
Down East Books (2009)

Duchesne, a state legislator, spearheaded the creation of the Maine Birding Trail, a system made up of more than 260 sites, from the western mountains to islands Down East. Now he’s written a guide that tells birders where to go, how to get there, and what birds they’ll likely find. The book was compiled after Duchesne, an expert birder, visited hundreds of sites, trekking tens of thousands of miles over five years. With its precise descriptions and voluminous knowledge of bird species, *Maine Birding Trail* is a remarkable work that will be appreciated by any bird lover living in or coming to Maine. It also serves to showcase the state’s vast and diverse habitats and to applaud and encourage their preservation and enjoyment.



Caution: Men at (House) Work: What Happens When Dad Stays Home with the Kids
T.J. McKenna (Tim McCutcheon ’89)
Grace Creek Press (2009)

A stay-at-home dad caring for three young children, McCutcheon has a healthy sense of humor. His book combines real-life anecdotes, tips for new stay-at-home dads, and questions to help dad-readers decide whether they are ready for the job. E.G., “If you find a couple of drops of spilled liquid on the kitchen floor, do you just grab a kitchen towel or should you get a damp sponge? Answer: “This is why I wear socks.” Tough job? McCutcheon writes of friends inviting him on a hunting trip to get him out of the house, and how to fit in with the soccer moms (don’t try). It’s all in fun, which is a good thing. “A sixty-hour per week job of hard physical labor,” McCutcheon writes, “is the easy way out.”

Haunted by Past and Present

Sarah Langan's new heroine, Audrey Lucas, finds an apartment in a historic Manhattan building, complete with killer view of Central Park. Audrey has just left the only man she's ever loved and is also losing control of her Obsessive



Audrey's Door
Sarah Langan '96
Harper (2009)

Compulsive Disorder. But finding the cheap apartment was like "meeting the love of her life for the first time." The location offers the loner architect a fresh start on life and causes her to ignore the warnings of a gruesome murder-suicide that took place inside apartment 14B.

Author Langan '96, in her third suspense/horror novel, knows better. Publicity materials say that in real-life, Langan's Brooklyn home held a haunting secret: late-night, white-robed sacrificial rituals held in the basement by former owners. There were no lingering effects—other than to plant a seed in Langan's fertile imagination.

The result is a novel that has Audrey Lucas consumed by nightmares and visions. In her sleep she begins to build a door. A portal to her past? Perhaps it is her frantic upbringing by a mentally ill mother that keeps her there amid the chaos. "Crazy is often fun," she says, describing her mother's manic episodes.

Soon the young woman's world begins to unravel. Still imprisoned by memories of her childhood as the lice-ridden little girl in the double-wide trailer, she now is caged in by the demon of 14B. Is it the evil mother who died there with her children? *Audrey's Door* pulls readers into the mind of the haunted woman, where they find that horrifying history often does repeat itself. —Dana Hernandez



Sarah Langan's blog
www.sarahlangan.com/blog.htm

In Madison, Wisconsin, Asking Age-old Questions

Good For the Jews

Debra Spark (English)

The University of Michigan Press (2009)

Does anyone really know what's best for another person? That question lies at the heart of Debra Spark's new novel, winner of the 2009 Michigan Literary Fiction Award.

Good for the Jews follows Mose Sheinbaum, a veteran schoolteacher, and his cousin, Ellen Hirschorn, whom he raised and who is engaged to the superintendent. When Mose faces possible anti-Semitism from the new principal, Ellen is caught in the middle and is left to navigate an intricate matrix of relationships, lies, and secrets.

Spark unveils her characters slowly, primarily using dialogue. The daily lives of these modern Jews in Madison, Wisconsin, seem ordinary until we get to know their struggles as they confront institutions and prejudices. Spark's treatment of the characters shows the complexity of their concerns and the difficulty of dividing the world into Mose's two categories: "what was good for the Jews and what wasn't."

Even after arson and murder expose the anti-Semitism, secrets remain and Ellen wonders if they were all "hapless actors, unwittingly cast in some biblical story, where being right meant being rewarded and being rewarded meant demolishing your enemy."

What's good for the Jews? There's no simple answer, but Spark's insightful story demonstrates how fear and dishonesty take us away from what's best for everyone: respect and understanding. —Laura Meader



Hear Debra Spark read
from *Good for the Jews*.

www.colby.edu/mag,

keyword: spark

More about Debra Spark
and her writing at
debraspark.com

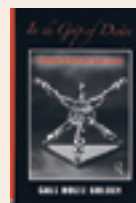


Eat Your Feelings: Recipes for Self-Loathing

Heather Whaley '93

Hudson Street Press (2009)

The back-cover blurb describes this as "a riotous and all-wrong collection of real recipes—think Amy Sedaris meets a warped Martha Stewart." It's an apt description of Whaley's comedic collection of the perfect foods for life's darkest, grumpiest days. From "Cheese Fondue Because Your Therapist Fell Asleep on You," to "Reluctant Breadwinner's Quiche for Resentful Wives of Stay-at-Home Dads," Whaley serves up tongue-in-cheek instructions for preparing the perfect "comfort food." An actress, playwright, and screenwriter, she knows the perfect meal for every pitfall. Think of her book, she says in a note to readers, "as a hand to hold in those bleak moments." She's kidding. Sort of.



In the Grip of Desire:

A Therapist at Work with Sexual Secrets

Gale Holtz Golden '61

Routledge (2009)

Golden, a clinical sexologist and faculty member at the University of Vermont Medical College, throws open the doors to the world of sex therapy, offering case histories to show the stages of treatment of compelling sexual problems. Acknowledging that there is rarely a quick fix for these problems, Golden leads the reader from her initial meeting with a client through the process that reveals underlying forces at work. Intended for both professional and lay audiences, the book is timely, coming when digital technology and societal changes have combined to produce "an excess of sex."



Health Minded

YOUNG ALUMNUS AIMS TO DO FOR GLOBAL HEALTH WHAT TEACH FOR AMERICA DOES FOR EDUCATION

ALEXIS GRANT '03 STORY AMEET SALVI PHOTO

A pair of tech-savvy Google employees. Two advocates for the fight against AIDS in Africa. And Barbara and Jenna Bush, sisters with backgrounds in public health who also happen to be daughters of former President George W. Bush.

To an outsider, they seem to have little in common. But in May 2008, after first connecting through an AIDS conference, these six newly acquainted young leaders huddled in Jenna Bush's apartment in Baltimore, brainstorming ways to reach a shared goal: getting their generation involved in global health.

Post-college, each of the 20-somethings had watched friends make the transition into careers in education through Teach for America. Why not, they wondered, create a similar organization that focused on health issues? "[Teach for America] gets a lot of people into education that wouldn't otherwise be in that field," said Charlie Hale '06, who works in advertising and sales at Google. "We felt like there should be a similar program for public health."

They created Global Health Corps, a nonprofit group that connects young leaders with health organizations. In August the group's first 22 fellows landed at 12 project sites, eight in East Africa and three in the United States.

Unlike some organizations already working in underdeveloped areas, Global Health Corps expects fellows to bring something more than an interest in health care to the table. Participants are valued for skills in business, marketing, writing, or technology. "The idea is to match recent college grads and professionals with very specific skills to organizations that need their help," Hale said. "Those skills don't have to be in the health field, only applicable to that industry."

For example, Andrew Peterson, a fellow who recently arrived in Tanzania for his one-year stint with the Clinton HIV/AIDS Initiative, was chosen for his technological skills. The 25-year-old, who until July redesigned internal information systems for Google, is now creating a computerized system to improve data tracking of HIV/AIDS.

"Part of the issue in Africa is that a lot of the health statistics over there

are taken in a variety of different ways," said Peterson, who lived in San Francisco before his move to Tanzania. "We need to get the right information from paper or word of mouth into a computer so we can actually analyze it."

Funded by grants from private foundations and Google.org (the philanthropic arm of the company), Global Health Corps has two full-time employees, including Barbara Bush. Hale and the other three cofounders are volunteers.

More than 1,000 applicants vied for this year's 22 positions. Half of the fellows are Americans and half are native to the country where each project is based. In-country fellows work in teams with their American counterparts, and all participants receive a modest stipend and room and board.

Project sites include Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi, Newark, and Boston. "In the short term, we want our fellows to have a direct impact," said Dave Ryan, the other full-timer. "In the long term, we think by providing those opportunities, actually the impact will be that those fellows will have a transformative experience and become advocates for global health throughout their careers."

That long-term vision is vital for service organizations, said Dr. Edward O'Neil Jr., author of two books on international health service. Global Health Corps' strategy of plugging well-qualified young people into existing models is likely to be effective, he said. "A lot of organizations come and go, but when you have the board of directors that this group has, when you have Barbara Bush—this is one of those groups that are going to succeed," said O'Neil, an emergency-room physician who founded Omni Med, a nonprofit that promotes health volunteerism.

The founders of Global Health Corps are already thinking about the future, aiming to increase to 150 fellows and 25 partner sites by their third year, despite the recession. "The economy is definitely making it a hard time to start a nonprofit," Hale said. "It's a tough climate."

His personal goal? To fill some of those new spots with Colby alumni.

A street in the outskirts of Stonetown, Zanzibar, in Tanzania, in an area known as Kiembe Samaki. Global Health Corps fellow Ameet Salvi lives in the neighborhood, in his first assignment for the organization.