

Colby



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From the Editor

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Given the tumultuous times, I hope the stories in this issue of *Colby* offer a bit of reassurance. No, we can't tell you when the economy will rebound. But we can show you that there are many good people out there—more than a few being bona fide members of the Colby community—and they still are going about their business of making the world a better place.

This magazine is chock full.

Professor Barbara Kuczun Nelson '68 not only teaches Colby students, but she offers her acclaimed Spanish language-instruction Web site free of charge, free of advertising, to students and teachers around the world (P. 14). What does Nelson get out of it? Read the e-mailed and heartfelt thank-you notes that accompany Lauren Pongan's story—and multiply them by several thousand.

On television, cops are always hard on the trail of crooks and terrorists. Tom Betro '81, head of the real-life version of TV's popular drama *NCIS*, has spent his career in such pursuits, but in the real world (P. 20). The perps—from drug dealers to murderers to actual terrorists—aren't bagged in an hour, but Betro's global team usually gets its man (or woman).

Readers may be both heartened and dismayed by the work of Ken Wong '83 at the Face-to-Face Aids Project (P. 26). Wong has inspired Jamie Goldring '09, and both have worked to tell the human story behind AIDS in Malawi. It's an effort—and a story—that takes a tragic situation and imbues it with courage and hope.

It takes courage to confront a problem as overwhelming as the AIDS epidemic or poverty. It also takes a certain amount of courage to remain optimistic in the face of adversity—or confronted by the inescapable reminders of it. This is a note about the power of optimism and the importance of a willingness to move forward in small but unyielding steps, so I must conclude it with a plug for Joe Atkins (P. 12).

Atkins is a psychology professor at Colby, and he also runs multicultural programs here. He is African-American and has felt the sting of racism. But Atkins, like millions of Americans, also has felt the sea change that was the inauguration of Barack Obama. Atkins has chosen to join what is not so much a movement as what he sees as an emerging reality.

Read his essay. You may choose to embrace this new reality, as well. And, like others whose stories are told here, you may feel that with good works comes the sometimes faint but still-inextinguishable fire of hope.



Gerry Boyle '78, P'06
Managing Editor

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DAVE EPSTEIN '86 ("Where Is Science Behind Climate Change Claims?" P. 56) is a Boston



television meteorologist who teaches at Framingham State and was a Jan Plan instructor at Colby. He is host of GrowingWisdom.com, a gardening Web site.

TOM NUGENT ("The Real *NCIS*," P. 20) is a freelance journalist who has written about



health and science for the *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Boston Globe*. He is the author of *Death At Buffalo Creek*, a book of investigative journalism about coal mining in Appalachia.

LAUREN PONGAN '09 ("The Spanish Lady," P. 14) is an English major and the editorial



assistant for *Colby*. Hailing from Langhorne, Pa., Pongan has written for *Maine Women* and *Port City Life* magazines. Though she enjoys magazine journalism, Pongan is pondering her post-Colby plans.

Those insideColby students have done it again. The latest issue includes stories, essays, and photos showing a life on the Hill that is so different from, and yet so similar to, years gone by. Here are some excerpts. Read more at insidecolby.com

making Their mark

Volunteering with struggling Waterville residents gives students new perspectives
by Hannah DeAngelis '12

Julia Coffin '09 is making French toast and can't find the cinnamon. She rummages through the shelf of scattered spices again and sighs. "I'll just pick some up next time I'm out," she says under her breath. Suzanne Merkelson '09 resumes cracking eggs, and the two women decide to continue cooking without the cinnamon.

It's 6:30 on a Monday morning, and the French toast isn't an early breakfast for Coffin and Merkelson to enjoy. It's for the men and women sitting at the large wooden table behind them at the Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter.

Coffin and Merkelson are two of many students who volunteer to help people in need in Waterville. While Colby is a picturesque campus on a hill, Waterville, like many former mill towns in New England, is a community working to redefine itself in a new post-industrial era. But it faces serious challenges. Good jobs are scarce, and the recent economic downturn is likely to make things worse. In January Maine's unemployment rate hit its peak since 1983. Of Waterville's 15,600 residents, 19 percent live below the poverty level. Many Colby students eagerly do whatever they can to help.



The Darlings of the Dining Halls

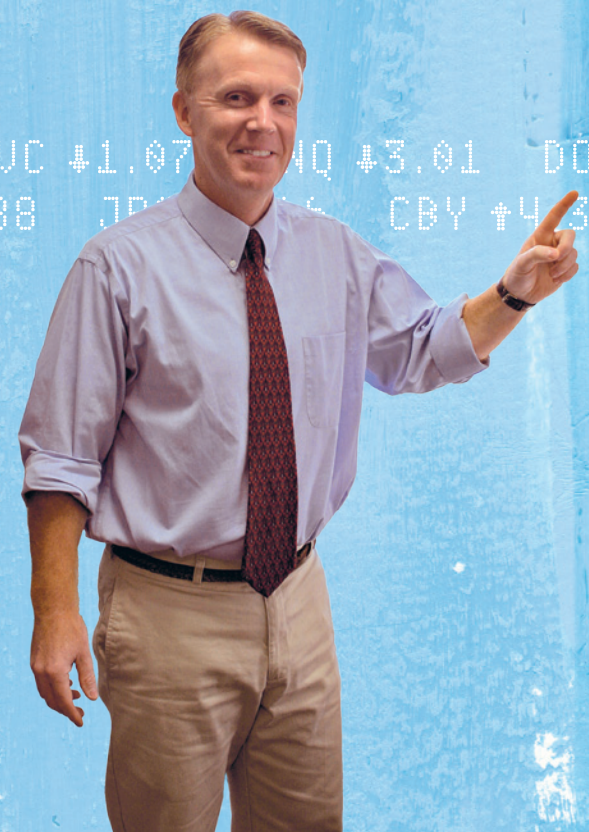
Students say why they love the ladies who swipe their cards

Let's face it. College is more fun than high school. Sure, the work is harder (it's supposed to be!), but that's a fair trade for high school's nagging homerooms, mandatory study halls, and scheduled lunch periods.

Perhaps dining is the best way to digest the newfound freedom. No, we at insideColby are not suggesting downing soft-serve 24/7. That would be gross. Rather, we'd like to introduce some of Colby students' favorite people—the ladies who swipe our cards at the dining halls. Each has a unique personality that students know and love. After all, when you're away from home, who else is going to greet you at breakfast and tell you that you're looking sharp?

Q&A with Economics Department Chair David Findlay

Patrick Bagley '10 admits to sweating while waiting for David Findlay for his interview, wondering whether the stories of the energetic, no-BS professor were true. They spoke about teaching at Colby, the nation's struggling economy, and why baseball is a saving grace for economists.



study group.
photo by Ling Zhu '09



celebrating Diwali.
photo by Kendyl Sullivan '11



winter stops nothing.
photo by Brian Dimento '10

