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Letters

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Is Home Where the Heart Is?

I want to congratulate *Colby* on a job well done in highlighting the College's international students' complicated understanding of home and what it means ("Finding Home," summer 2008 *Colby*). It is something that we Colby international students discuss all the time when we get together. Whether to go home or not? To stay or not? Where can you best maximize your potential?

I graduated in 2005 with a double degree in biochemistry and religious studies and decided to pursue an academic career in the study of religion (instead of my initial interest, medicine) at Harvard Divinity School. I was also a Davis Scholar (Mahindra United World College '01).

As a Malaysian who has spent time traversing three different continents, the concept of home still confuses me. Is it a place (or space) where your family is? Or is "home" where you are most comfortable intellectually? I have been torn with these questions ever since leaving Colby and deciding to attend Harvard Divinity School. I am currently working at a private high school in Boston where I teach and administer social justice education and programs. I continue to define home as a place where I can best maximize my own potential, but this is incomplete because it would leave out my family members who are still in Malaysia.

Thank you once again for highlighting this issue to our Colby community.

Rodney Yeoh '05
Brookline, Mass.

Stereotypes of Male Sexuality

Alice Domar was a terrific student in one of my classes many years ago and I'm not surprised that she's a principled and caring person doing valuable work in the field of women's health and sexuality. In the course of the magazine article ("Don't Worry, Be Happy," summer 2008 *Colby*), though, Alice made an offhand remark ("men don't worry about sex; they just want it") that I found glib and

potentially damaging in its stereotypical portrayal of male sexuality. Granted that in our patriarchal culture men use sex as an expression of power much more often than women do, but men I know, young and old, have many anxieties about sexuality; they worry about—among other things—their adequacy, their capacity to please and to bear a child; they wrestle with obsessiveness, feelings of disassociation, the effects of aging, and the loss of desire during depression.

My hope is that Alice's remark, if quoted accurately, represented a momentary slip. I hope she'd acknowledge that in a culture where sex is commodified, both titillating and taboo, both excessively public and private, everybody suffers (though not in equal doses). And that human sexuality, in any case, is a labyrinthian tangle of pleasure and worry, ecstasy and danger, connection and damage. And the wide brush she used to paint male sexuality is both indiscriminate and insensitive.

Ira Sadoff (English)
Hallowell, Maine

Bob Gillespie Is Sorely Missed

I was deeply saddened by seeing Bob Gillespie's name in the obituaries of the summer 2008 *Colby* magazine. Since the late 1980s, Bob had been both a supporter and encourager of my poetry, and he was kind enough to pay attention in *Colby* to my books and chapbooks. Too, I shall miss his articulate and sensible writings on whatever topics in *Colby* he was dealing with at the time.

Ron Moran '58
Simpsonville, South Carolina

Richner Struck the Right Note

For nearly five decades, Colby's special summer programs included an institute of church music. Thousands of organists and choir directors came to polish their skills and refresh their spirits on Colby's beautiful campus.

Thomas B. Richner, who cofounded

the institute in 1955, died in mid-July in Worcester, Massachusetts, at the age of 96. Richner had an international career as a pianist and concert organist. He was a professor at Rutgers University and a recognized authority on Mozart's piano music. (The other cofounder was Professor Everett Strong of Colby's Department of Modern Languages.)

Tom Richner was affable and generous, with a lively sense of humor. He brought famous organists such as Robert Glasgow and Wilma Jensen to teach at the institute, yet he upheld the original purpose—to encourage musicians from small churches. Richner himself taught at Colby for 42 consecutive summers. He also found time and energy to hold positions as a church organist. Richner's boundless energy sprang from the fact that he was more interested in giving than in getting. This is a mind-set he shared with countless other benefactors of Colby.

William W. Saunders
Boston, Mass.

Domar's Lessons Resonate

[Regarding Alice Domar '80 and her new book, *Be Happy Without Being Perfect*], (Don't Worry, Be Happy," summer 2008 *Colby*), I agree that healing the generations is important. My children are grown, but I hope that by modeling more self-care and self-acceptance, children will see pathways out of the dysfunctional patterns that impede them.

Ann R. Stillwater '81
Harrisburg, Penn.

Dad Comes Clean

Regarding "Money in Laundering," (summer 2008 *Colby*), students; I told my son, Bryan Solar '07, it was a bad idea: distracting, liability, etc.

Bryan: You were right.
Parent: I was wrong.

J. Michael Solar P'07
Piney Point, Tex.

Letters Welcome

Colby welcomes your letters. Send them to Gerry Boyle, editor; *Colby* magazine; Office of Communications; 4350 Mayflower Hill; Waterville, ME 04901, or by e-mail to mag@colby.edu. Length should be limited to 300 words. *Colby* reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity.

Finals Were a Wash

Lazy Mule [Laundry] was a life saver!!!
Can't imagine finals without it.
Thanks Guys!

Chloe Warren '08
New York, N.Y.

History is Humbling

The next time Colby boasts of some accomplishment or the nation extols some achievement I shall think of the recent visit my wife, Joy, and I paid to Venice, Rome, and Istanbul, formerly Constantinople. In their day, so many centuries ago, they were great powers. The Doge's Palace, the Roman Forum, Topkapi Palace—these were places where great decisions which shook the Western world were made. The Doge's Palace and Topkapi Palace today are crowded tourist attractions. The Roman Forum is a ruin. Most tourists visit these sights unaware of what glories and power were once the Venetian Republic, the Roman Empire, and the Eastern

Roman and later Byzantine and Ottoman empires. Who today knows of Roman emperors Anotnious Pius and Commudus or Ottoman Sultans Mustafa II and Ahmen I, the Bill Clintons and the George Bushes and the Tony Blairs and the Vladimir Putins of their day?

Many lessons can be drawn from visiting these places but the one I draw in particular is best expressed by Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity." In every age people like to think that they are the best, that their achievements rank first, that their dreams are unique and special, that the world is their oyster. The next time you hear a boast, think of what once transpired in these ancient places and how so little remains.

I am not suggesting that we not strive to do our best, to try to fulfill our dreams, to excel lest what we do will be forgotten. I am not suggesting that we not support our political system even though in two thousand years Washington, D.C., may be little more than a quarry with

only the foundations of the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, the Capitol, the White House remaining.

Who knows what will remain of our world in the far beyond. What author? What poet? What composer? What general? What scientists? What business tycoon? What president of the United States? What achievement?

Each age is self-important, believing itself to be the embodiment of all virtue and good. In the end, think of Venice, Rome, and Constantinople and step back from our pursuits that we may realize and appreciate what is truly important and lasting. Not fame. Not power. Not glory. Not this national success or that Colby achievement. Rather, it is our humanity, our sense of proportion, our decency, our commitment to values far removed from the office, factory, and battlefield.

Consider that societies then also had their national achievements and their Colby colleges and their armies and their commerce and their other daily activities. Be confident that if we moderate our egos and our intentions and plans we may last longer than some of the great empires and states of the past who overwhelmed with their own importance fell victim to outsized ambition. In the process we may lead happier and more fulfilling lives.

Dr. Stephen Schoeman '64
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("Breaking Through," P. 26) is a freelance writer who has taught English and creative writing at Colby. Her essays and stories have appeared in

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DAVID TREADWELL

("The Gender Gap," P. 14) is a freelance writer who lives in Brunswick. He specializes in writing admissions and fundraising materials for select colleges, and he

has had articles published in the alumni magazines of Bowdoin and Connecticut colleges and Brown University.



TENZIN DAWOE TSEWANG

'07 ("Tibet's Sadness," P. 72) was born and raised in the Tibetan settlements in South India but moved with her family to Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1996. After

receiving a B.A. in biology, she moved back to New Mexico, where she currently works at an immunogenetics lab at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine.