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From the Hill

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Diamond Groundbreaking Set

Roberts renovation, Cotter expansion round out ambitious construction plans

STEPHEN COLLINS '74 STORY

Diamond Building Construction

Construction of the Diamond Building, a three-story academic building at the south end of the Colby Green, will commence this spring. Trustees authorized \$11.5 million for the 53,050-square-foot facility that will be home to the Goldfarb Center for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement and to various social science and interdisciplinary studies departments.

"This building is going to have a huge impact on the school," said Administrative Vice President Arnie Yasinski, addressing the trustees' Physical Plant Committee. It is the most ambitious in a series of construction projects on the new Colby Green and a key piece of the College's biggest expansion since it moved to Mayflower Hill from downtown Waterville in the 1940s and early '50s. Bidding was underway in February, and construction will begin this spring, as the new Schair-Swenson-Watson Alumni Center, at the opposite end of Colby Green, progresses toward occupancy this June.

The new academic structure, located in what used to be the parking lot in front of Lunder House, will relate well to Colby's traditional Georgian architecture across Mayflower Hill Drive. It will be built of Colby brick with a copper roof and the familiar cream-white trim, and it will present a fairly traditional façade to the road.

The eastern face, the public entrance, is a complex arrangement of architectural forms and materials that break out of the traditional Georgian order of the central campus and reflect Colby's bold move into the 21st century.

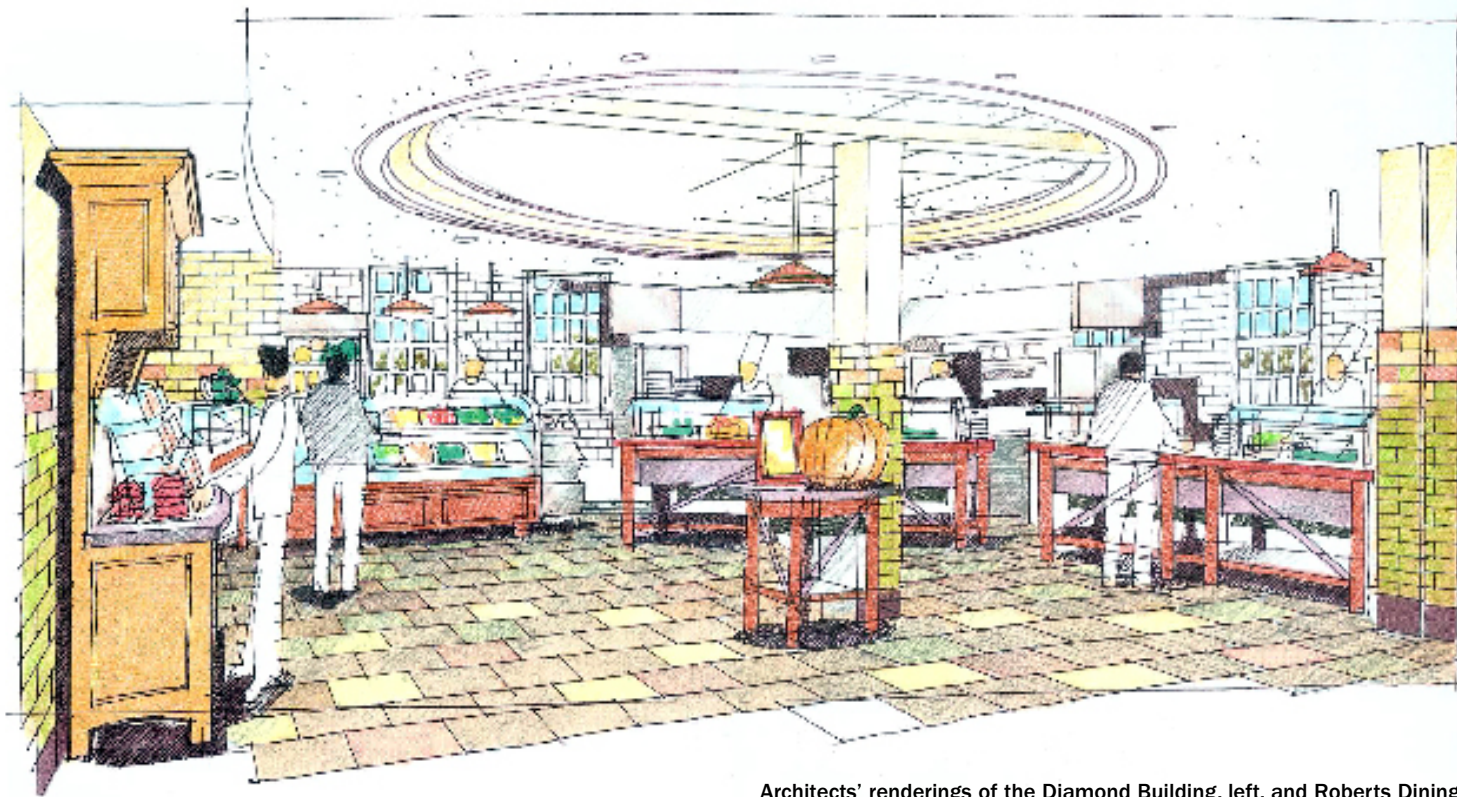
In deference to the traditional forms across the street, the other faces of the Diamond Building maintain the style, scale, and rhythms of Eustis, Arey, and similar buildings, said Joe Feely, supervisor of special projects.

The dramatic main entrance will enclose a three-story atrium that architect Peter Bohlin called "the heart" of the building. "Any time we make good spaces, they tend to get used beyond their intention," said Bohlin, a principal in the firm Bohlin Cywinski Jackson.

Besides classrooms and faculty offices, the Diamond Building will house a 180-seat auditorium, a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) lab, and a 60-seat case-study classroom. Additional spaces further enable the College's state-of-the-art pedagogy: three group work rooms, 17 student research offices, and eight seminar or conference rooms.

Colby will sustain its commitment to sound environmental design and practices by seeking certification of the Diamond Building through the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program. That environmental consciousness meshes well with another Colby value that Bohlin observed during the design process. "You do things in a rather spare fashion," he said, "and I see that as a virtue."

Bohlin presented final plans to the trustees' Physical Plant Committee prior to the trustees' vote in January that approved the project. Bob Diamond '73, a trustee and the lead donor who pledged \$6 million toward the project in 2003, was pleased with the plans. "Well done," he told Bohlin. "It's beautiful."



Architects' renderings of the Diamond Building, left, and Roberts Dining Hall.

Roberts Building Renovations

First it was Dana, in 1997, then Foss two years later. Now it's Roberts Dining Hall's turn for an extreme makeover. Construction begins on a \$6.3-million renovation project in June, and a thoroughly transformed facility will reopen for second semester next year.

The project will close the Roberts operation first semester, so Foss and Dana will have to take up the slack. Ultimately, though, the project will address a variety of needs in the downstairs level of the Roberts Building, modernizing a facility that opened in 1947. Food preparation areas will be reconfigured and modernized, a bakery will be built, and a handsome and unified dining area, seating 220, will replace two separate sections that exist today.

Representatives of Bruner/Cott Architects of Cambridge, Mass., explained that the facility is currently configured for institutional food service of a bygone era—single-file lines that march past steam tables where a cafeteria worker puts food on plates. The kitchen area is sufficiently cramped that the salad bar, drink station, and desserts are located in the dining area, so the dining room isn't useful for events even when the kitchen is closed.

The new vision calls for exhibition cooking stations—islands where chefs stir-fry dishes or grill food in the open. That cooking area will open into a spacious dining hall incorporating a range of seating options, not just ranks of long tables.

There will be a private dining room seating 22 for discussions and tray-lunch programs. Offices for dining services employees will be reconfigured, and the Roberts kitchen will get a much-needed upgrade and expansion. Though most of the work will take place downstairs in Roberts, the entrance to the building will be reconfigured, with the existing sunken courtyard and outdoor stairs to be converted into more usable interior space and a shaft to bring natural light into the dining hall entrance and offices.

"It is the most urgent infrastructure project we have on campus," Ad-

ministrative Vice President Arnie Yasinski told the trustees' Physical Plant Committee in January.

"I think they [students] will be thrilled," said Janice Kassman, vice president for student affairs. "They have seen what can be done in Dana and Foss."

Cotter Union Expansion

As the Schair-Swenson-Watson Alumni Center construction wraps up this spring and as Diamond Building construction and Roberts renovations get underway, another major project remains on the drawing board—a significant expansion of Cotter Union.

Creating a true center for student life was identified as an important goal in Colby's strategic plan, and a feasibility study commissioned in 2004 proposed building a central "heart" in Cotter Union to create spaces where students could meet, greet, and hang out.

The preliminary study proposes a 7,000-square-foot addition between the two existing wings, with space for a coffee bar, a new configuration of The Spa, a small campus store, public computers, a television lounge, and spaces for events of various sizes.

The proposal provoked some controversy. Initial plans, which Vice President for Student Affairs Janice Kassman characterized as "very preliminary," threaten a pair of large European beech trees northwest of the building. Concerned faculty members formed a group they call Friends of the Beeches, and a petition was signed by 63 percent of the faculty opposing removal of the trees.

Professor of English Linda Tatelbaum, who helped organize opposition, expressed her concerns about the trees and other aspects of the feasibility study in a memo to the Board of Trustees in January.

The architect for the project, Peter Bohlin, is working on alternate configurations and planned an open forum on campus in March. Construction and extensive renovations in Cotter Union are tentatively slated to begin in the summer of 2006.

MAKING NOISE

Adrian Blevins shows her students the rebellious nature of writing

ROBERT GILLESPIE STORY

FRED FIELD PHOTO

Southern women absorb this cultural message: be quiet, be sweet, says Adrian Blevins, her light Virginia lilt at odds with her thoughts about *that*. “Creative writing was my way of rebelling,” she said. “It was a way to say, ‘Guess what, I’m not sweet. Guess what, I’m not going to be quiet. I want to make noise.’ I think most writers have that need to mark up the page. Make some noise.” So says the author of *The Brass Girl Brouhaha* (Ausable Press, 2003).

In December, two writing workshops (one poetry, one fiction) into her 15th year of teaching and her first year at the College, Colby’s new creative writing teacher says that a culture trying to sell you things it wants you to buy doesn’t hear what you have to say. But in a writing workshop, a place where students can express themselves and learn different techniques for doing it, “there’s someone to hear you.”

Somebody said a poem has to have a form “because otherwise the poem will leak out. I really like that. So we do talk about structure ultimately,” Blevins said. To talk knowledgeably about a poem that is being workshoped, though, students must learn how to critique. A Blevins workshop is more about the person giving the critique, she says, than about the poem getting it.

“Being educated is partially a process of knowing how to talk about why you think or feel the way you do about that piece of art,” said Blevins, who earned an M.F.A. at Warren Wilson College. “It’s not only critical decisions, it’s also emotional decisions, which are half the decisions we have to make. If we had more poetry, we wouldn’t need therapy, we wouldn’t need Prozac.”

Build critical readers, she says, and you build thinkers. As students think about what they see

in the world and develop their ability to articulate judgments, they internalize judgment. As they write their own poems they start editing themselves, teaching themselves. Blevins likes to push them a bit past where they think they can go.

“I think that learning to think critically about literature, and learning to think critically about yourself, makes you a better citizen,” she said. “Which is what a liberal arts education ought to give you. It’s just what Jefferson wanted the populace to be able to do.”

Even those who work on poems 18 hours straight will find a workshop a far cry from a training ground for “professional” poets; might as well call yourself a professional lover, she says, paraphrasing Robert Francis. Her answer to students whose parents are convinced their poetry-writing offspring will starve in a garret: the more the American education system moves toward careerism, the further it

takes us from the idea of informed citizens able to make intelligent, critical decisions later on in their lives. “What is the consequence of not having any money? Well,” she said, “it’s not as bad as the consequences of not having a soul.”

Students no less high-mindedly intent on careers other than poetry may profit from a workshop, Blevins says. A prospective law student must understand rhetoric, think critically, use language well, use argument. “You know, a sonnet is an argument. Every poem is ultimately an argument of some sort. It’s going to help a lawyer make his or her case,” she said. “If women read poems to their children, it would be a better culture. It would be a better America.”

Blevins plain flat-out loves poetry. “If it were up to me,” she said, “I would say, ‘Everybody who goes through this college has to have poetry. You have to do it.’”

Poetry’s Lessons Carry Through Life

Ask alumni who have been out of school for a decade or more “what good is a course in poetry writing?” and you may be surprised to hear that the experience is still paying off in tangible ways. And that’s not counting real intangibles.

Writing poetry vastly improved his speaking and writing skills, says Corbett Bishop ’93, who began writing with Professor of English Peter Harris “for the pure fun of it.” Out of his fascination with meter and pace Bishop discovered “a valve for powerful emotion [and] unbearably intense abstract mullings”—any experience that “‘inspires’ . . . and niggles until purged.”

A published poet while he lived in Amherst, Mass., Bishop thinks his time learning about the art of language was “superb training” for his work as a safari guide in Tanzania, a profession he says requires concise and effective communication.

Nowadays he writes mostly on conservation and land management issues, he says, “so it’s very pleasant to explode into a bit of pentameter or haiku for relaxation and to exercise the mind into different directions.”

To read more about lessons remembered by creative-writing alumni go to www.colby.edu/mag/poetry.



Silent Seas

RIKI OTT EXPOSES THE REAL AFTERMATH OF THE *EXXON VALDEZ* DISASTER

ROBERT GILLESPIE STORY

LEO PANDO ILLUSTRATION

The tanker *Exxon Valdez* gutted its hull on Bligh Reef around midnight on March 24, 1989, pouring some 30-million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound. A storm two days later swept the surface slick out to the Gulf of Alaska, ultimately oiling more than 3,200 miles of Alaska's shoreline. (A slick of similar magnitude on the East Coast would stretch from New York to Cape Canaveral, Fla.) The oil, continuing to leach poisons for years, killed thousands of marine mammals, hundreds of thousands of marine birds, and millions of salmon and herring. The water died, native inhabitants said.

The public, led along by the speedy cleanup and "recovery," accepted Exxon's and Exxon-funded scientists' version of the disaster, writes Riki Ott '76, who operated a salmon fishing boat in Prince William Sound at the time. The company's version, however, set off "a bitter battle among scientists over the extent of harm to sealife injured by Exxon's spill and the prognosis for recovery." Ott, bolstered with a master's in marine biology and oil pollution and a Ph.D. in fisheries and marine toxicology, felt impelled if not fated to publish the public-trust scientists' reports, what she calls "Sound Truth."

Despite its 500-plus pages of sourced text and scores of tables, illustrations, statistics, sidebars, court records, and official reports—the outcome of Ott's six years of research and 15 years as eye-witness to the consequences of the spill—*Sound Truth and Corporate Myth: The Legacy of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill* is more than a massive science report. Sections such as "A Cover Up of Mass Chemical Poisoning" and "Buried: Workers' Health Claims" record gripping personal recollections of post-spill affliction. Suffering, wildlife and human alike, resulted from human miscalculation and misconduct.

Everyone who worked on the cleanup, Ott writes, risked increased levels of toxins in their bodies. Investigating the subsequent lives of cleanup workers, she turned up story after story of deteriorating health due to high levels of dangerous chemicals.

A physician Ott cites likens the body's ability to absorb pollutants in the environment to a barrel filling with rain. The full barrel can accumulate no

more; the overexposed human body loses tolerance for environmental pollutants. The body's response in the short term: heartburn, headache, dizziness, nausea, bowel and stomach irregularities, central nervous system problems, mood swings, and depression. Chronic problems included heightened sensitivity similar to allergic reactions, blood disorders, and liver and kidney damage.

Cleanup workers also experienced compromised physical abilities. A woman who once hunted seals and fished commercially in the Sound was too impaired to hold more than short-term jobs as census taker, substitute teacher, and banquet food-server at a hotel.

The challenges workers faced in pursuing personal injury lawsuits for chemical-induced illness added insult to their injuries. The emotional stories told or the depositions given by scientists, lawyers, and doctors as well as cleanup people, however, document the human side of the disaster, balancing Ott's self-described "scientific tendencies." A first-rate

work of science bearing on an issue of global significance, her book also is a record of courageous, determined detection as long on suspense as a police procedure novel.

Ott's chapters on the legacy of the disaster lay out two new scientific paradigms that emerged from the spill: an oil toxicity paradigm (an understanding of the effects of oil in marine ecosystems) and a disease paradigm, Toxicant Induced Loss of Tolerance, or TILT (remember the rain barrel analogy). Simply stated, oil is more toxic to wildlife and human life than anybody imagined before the pollution of Prince William Sound. The implications for public policy are obvious.

Ott headed to college intending to become a marine biologist like Rachael Carson. Whether *Sound Truth* reaches the iconic status of Carson's *Silent Spring*, which, among other things, led to a ban on the use of DDT, Ott's version of the *Exxon Valdez* spill and its aftermath provides scientists, environmentalists, historians, and novelists with a rich resource and a cautionary tale. For anyone interested in public health, habitat and environment, debates about energy, or oil drilling in The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and everywhere else on the planet, *Sound Truth* is critical information.



Shaped by Land

Bad Dirt: Wyoming Stories 2

Annie Proulx '57

Scribner (2004)

"His feeling for the ranch was the strongest emotion that had ever moved him, a strangling love tattooed on his heart. It was his."

Whether it is Gilbert Wolfscale's "scalding passion" for his dying cattle ranch or his sons' hatred of the place ("What Kind of Furniture Would Jesus Pick?"), each of *Bad Dirt*'s characters is shaped by the stark Wyoming landscape.

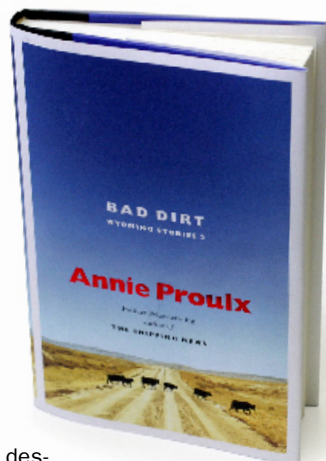
The 11 stories in *Bad Dirt*, the follow-up to Annie Proulx's much-lauded *Close Range*, vary from the desperate to the comical and even the fantastic. But despite a vivid cast of characters that includes struggling ranchers, poaching ministers, secret vegetarians, outsider retirees, and an (over)abundance of lively eccentrics, *Bad Dirt*'s main character is the land.

Five of the stories in *Bad Dirt* center on the tiny hamlet of Elk Creek. The town's tough, quirky characters and their antics (a winter beard-growing contest, a fad for outdoor hot tubs) create an amusing sketch of small-town, rural America. The Elk Creek locals and their stories are interspersed throughout *Bad Dirt* to provide a laugh. But these lighter-weight stories feel jarring when juxtaposed with *Bad Dirt*'s strongest, and more ambitious, pieces. In these lengthier works Proulx exposes the humanity and vulnerability of her characters in the Wyoming landscape, and she writes of these troubled people with an unsentimental compassion. In "The Indian Wars Refought" a young Oglala Sioux woman first learns about her people's massacre at Wounded Knee. While the battle took place a century earlier, for Linny "it happened last week." Now she must decide how to come to terms with a bitter history she never knew and what it suddenly means to be Sioux.

For affluent East Coast retiree Mitchell Fair ("Man Crawling Out of Trees"), Wyoming is a new world, one of which he can't get enough. He drives endlessly, climbing icy mountain passes and winding along empty back roads, trying to absorb the abrupt topography, to understand the place, fearing he is too late.

Gilbert Wolfscale already knows "the old world" is gone. Despite the depth of his passion for his ranch, "he would never be able to pass on how he felt about the land" to his alienated sons or the grandsons he imagines. He watches methane drilling and pricey sub-developments (like the one where Mitchell and his wife live) replace parched cattle ranches, and "new-moneyed suitcase ranchers" look down on his "skanky, run-down outfit." But, like all of *Bad Dirt*'s stubborn characters, Gilbert is permanently bound to the land. He will not abandon it, even if it abandons him.

"He had had enough of something, but not the place. He would stay no matter what happened." Ironically, in the end it is the words of Mitchell, the newcomer still searching for his connection, that echo Gilbert's fate in the changing landscape of Proulx's Wyoming. —Alicia Nemiccolo MacLeay '97



RECENT RELEASES

Young Gentlemen's School

David R. Surette '79

Koenisha Publications (2004)

Reading Surette's perfectly crystalized poems of childhood (and beyond), you'll wish he had been along for yours. How could you have missed all those common, everyday moments that in his simple but vivid words are revealed to be anything but. A boy in Catholic school kills a mouse: "Sister / (face as white as the bands across her forehead) / looking like one of the girls in my class, / innocent as any one of them. / "I thought you might have let it go in the schoolyard or . . ." The collection moves from life in a house full of brothers to a note telling children about the birds and the bees—"My youngest goes to an Agricultural High school, / majors in horses and cows so she's all set. / Everything there is super-sized."—gently pointing to the too-often missed significance of the life that is all around us.

Rocks

Alec Haavik '92

Red Ankh Records (2004)



Jazz saxophonist Haavik calls this CD "the culmination of my eight years on the NYC music scene." The eight tracks include six original compositions and two reinterpretations (The Police, John Coltrane), all part of Haavik's exploration of the confluence of rock and modern jazz. A philosophy major at Colby who studied Mandarin Chinese, Haavik this spring was bound for Shanghai, where he was to spend three months in residence at the city's premier jazz club. More information is available at www.alechaavik.com.

Commentary on Ainu Shin'yōshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods

Julie Marks Kaizawa '90

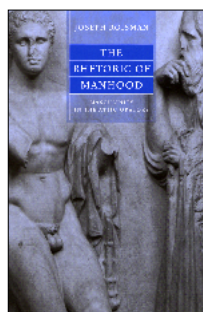
Sofukan, Ltd. (Tokyo, 2004)

In 1920 an Ainu girl set down tales told by her ancestors on the island of Hokkaido about the daily life, governed by religious perception, of the Ainu people. Kaizawa's English translation runs line by line beneath both the original Ainu and a modern Japanese translation. Copies of this collection currently are available in major libraries.

The Rhetoric of Manhood

Joseph Roisman (Classics)

University of California Press (2004)



What did fourth-century Athenians think it took to be a man? Roisman turns to the Attic orators for the answers in this groundbreaking study of manhood as it was regarded in that age. The book considers Athenian men as family members, friends, and lovers, manhood in the military, manhood as it related to social and economic status. Roisman finds that, contrary to previous studies, Athenians weren't of one mind on the topic of manly values and conduct.

E-Mail from the Front

Lt. Adam Cote reports on life in Mosul, casualties, cause for hope

Adam Cote '95 is a first lieutenant with the 133rd Engineering Battalion of the Maine Army National Guard stationed in Iraq, where he has been since March 19, 2004.

In civilian life, Cote is an associate with Portland-based Pierce Atwood, Maine's largest law firm. His practice involves regulation of electric and telecommunication utilities, overseas energy sector restructuring, and reform and privatization issues.

Cote earned his B.A. with honors in international studies from Colby and went on to earn a J.D. cum laude in 2001 from the University of Maine School of Law, where he was articles editor of the Maine Law Review.

The 133rd Engineering Battalion is a large-scale construction unit working in northern Iraq, from Tikrit to the Turkish border. Cote and the 133rd started Adopt an Iraqi Village (adoptaniraqivillage.org), a voluntary, grass-roots project that provides building supplies and basic household materials for impoverished families in northern Iraq.

The following is an e-mail conversation Cote had with Colby in January.

Where were you when the base dining hall in Mosul was bombed?

I was in there when it happened—I'd just sat down to eat when the explosion went off, knocking me out of my chair. Thankfully I was unhurt. I was literally saved by the salad bar, which absorbed much of the blast coming in my direction.

It was a terrible experience as you can imagine. There were nearly 100 casualties. As you know, we lost two very good soldiers, and about a dozen in our battalion were also wounded.

If there was a good thing that can be pulled from that day, it was the tremendous effort of

those who were there to help those that had been injured. I was proud to see so many from my platoon that were there to help. The immediate action of so many certainly prevented the death toll from being much higher than it was. And you've got to remember, this wasn't like a train wreck or a plane crash; it was a highly coordinated attack in a combat zone. So those of us who remained on the scene fully expected that a follow-up attack would be coming at any moment by way of mortars, rockets, whatever. That certainly added to the stress and sense of urgency and vulnerability. But the soldiers who were there stayed to help others despite this fact. That left me with a feeling that I could count on these people to do the same for me should the need ever arise—and that's important in a place like this.

I saw a lot of courage displayed that day. For example, I was working with a couple of others on a soldier who had shrapnel wounds to his abdomen and legs. After we treated him, we loaded him on a stretcher and four of us lifted the stretcher to walk the wounded soldier to the medical-aid truck for evacuation to a field hospital. I noticed one of the soldiers carrying the stretcher with me kept coming close to dropping his end. I was about ready to say something to him about this, but then I realized the reason—he had a severe wound to his leg. Yet all this time he had been with us treating another soldier and never once mentioned he had also been wounded. Since then, I've found myself thinking a lot about his sense of duty and selfless service. There were a lot of people there that day doing similar things and that really has had a profound effect on me.

Is it difficult to tell friend from foe there?

It's funny you asked that question because

it is something I've thought a lot about. This really hit home to me last April. I had just spent several hours on the phone and Internet organizing donations and fund raisers for the Adopt an Iraqi Village program I'd started. I was really feeling great, thinking of all the wonderful things the program could do. That's when I returned to our company operations center to hear the radio traffic coming in that one of our convoys had been ambushed by insurgents in downtown Mosul and one of the soldiers in our battalion had been killed (SPC Chris Gelenau). My initial thoughts were filled with anger and frustration at this whole place and I seriously thought about canceling the whole program. But after thinking it over, I knew in my heart that for every insurgent out there, there are far more wonderful people in Iraq, many of whom live in extreme poverty and want the same things that we do as Americans: schools for their children, jobs, running water and electricity, and most importantly, to live in peace.

What impact do you think you're having?

I think our battalion has made a very positive impact here. We are in charge of all engineer operations north of Tikrit, covering a very large area of Iraq. We have built schools, roads, and medical clinics and improved infrastructure throughout all of northern Iraq. More importantly, we have made a concerted effort to employ the local Iraqis in our missions and provided them with hands-on job training skills in engineering and reconstruction efforts. This is particularly important because of the high unemployment rate and lack of job skills in the area.

Of course, Iraq remains a very dangerous place. In my opinion, the chance for democracy to succeed here will turn on the ability of the Iraqis



Lt. Adam Cote '95, left, with children of Hamzan Village in northern Iraq. Cote and his National Guard unit built a new school for the village.

to learn to take ownership of their own futures. It's clear that we can't simply try to do everything for them. Just pumping money into this place will merely create further graft and corruption and encourage their dependency on the U.S. Rather, we must teach the Iraqis to do for themselves. They, in turn, have to begin to stop thinking for the moment and start planning for their future—to rebuild their infrastructure, improve their educational systems, and strengthen their military and governmental organizations. There's a fine line between helping the Iraqis steer their own boat and actually doing the rowing for them.

How do your legal and academic backgrounds apply?

I was an international studies major at Colby and spent a semester in San Sebastian, Spain, where I studied the Basque separatist movement. At Pierce Atwood, I specialize in international energy law. I work primarily in Eastern Europe, assisting countries like Albania and Bosnia to adopt open processes [and] privatization and to create an environment with which to attract outside investors. Likewise, one of the bedrock principles in working in this arena is to help these governments help themselves—not to do the

work for them. This is where the primary intersection of my legal skills and training translates to the work I'm now doing in Iraq.

When are you due home?

I should be home for good this spring. I'll return to a new daughter (our first), Anna Grace Cote, who was born November 10, 2004. My wife, Paulina, found out she was pregnant a few weeks before I left for Iraq. I can't wait to get home!!!



Mule Pack

Colby's fleet women harriers use group effort to finish fifth in nation

ERNE CLARK STORY

JEFF EARICKSON PHOTO

Members of the Colby women's cross-country team already had achieved their goal by qualifying for the NCAA Division III championships, so they weren't feeling any pressure last November when they entered the race as one of the 24 top teams in the country.

As the Mules readied to take on the six-kilometer course at Whitetail Golf Course in Colfax, Wis., on a raw and windy Saturday, there was the anticipation of competition. "I thought it would be good if we could get ninth at nationals," said co-captain Karina Johnson '05, acknowledging that the team had risen to ninth in the Division III coaches' poll. "We had beaten Amherst at the New Englands, and if we could beat Amherst again and finish ninth, that would be amazing."

Led by Johnson, the Colby runners went out in a pack, as they had while placing fourth at the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) championships and third at the New England Division III qualifying meet.

And in the national championship race Colby's five scoring runners stayed close, finishing only 45.5 seconds apart. Johnson paced the pack with a time of 22 minutes, 39.1 seconds, good for 45th place overall, followed by Anna King '08 (49th in 22:44.2), Karen Prisby '07 (65th in 22:56.1), Jess Minty '06 (82nd in 23:03.8), and Elizabeth Petit '08 (110th in 23:24.6).

As they began to cool down, there was no sense of urgency to learn where they placed. "We weren't really thinking about where we finished, we were just running around and having fun," Prisby said.

"I had absolutely no idea where we finished," said 20th-year Colby coach Deb Aitken. "Then Kristen Morwick, the Tufts coach, came up to congratulate us and said, 'I can't believe you finished fifth.' Our jaws just dropped, we couldn't believe it. Then we ran down to the finish line to make sure it was true."

Finishing fifth in the nation in Division III was the best in Colby history, topping a 10th-place finish in 1994. Among other NESCAC schools in the race, Williams took first, Middlebury second, Amherst 12th, and Wesleyan 14th.

"We were just all really, really excited to be there, and we really didn't feel any pressure," said Prisby. "We felt the pressure at the qualifying meet. As soon as we got to the nationals we realized we could just go out and run and have fun."

Colby began the season with optimism, based on the return of Johnson, co-captain Torrey Kulow '05, Prisby, Minty, Hillary Easter '06, Elizabeth Turner '06, and the addition of King and Petit. "We had time trials the first week, and coach was really excited," said Johnson. "So many people were faster than last year." But that optimism soon gave way to a problem—four of the top seven and several other runners were found to be anemic.

"With endurance athletes, it's fairly common," said Aitken. "You lose iron through the heels and soles of your feet if you run on pavement, and through sweat. We got them on liquid iron and talked about the need to get iron every day, and within three or four weeks there was a big turnaround. Everybody on the team was committed to doing the best thing possible for themselves and the team."

Ensuing results confirmed that commitment. Colby placed 10th at the New England open championships, which included teams from all divisions, and the team won the State of Maine meet. Minty was the individual champion at the state meet, but by then the team's identity centered on depth. "The top five were really close together, and we gave each other a great push," said Johnson. "On any given day you couldn't predict the order of the varsity runners. We were close together, and we were close together fairly close to the front."

That pack mentality stayed true at the NESCACs and at the New England Division III regional, where the Mules needed to finish among the top five to qualify for the nationals.

"It was an amazing day," said Johnson. "I can remember it well because I didn't expect us to get third, I was just hoping to get fifth to advance. At first I didn't believe we were third. It had been four years that I wanted to make this, and finally it happened."

MEN'S BASKETBALL returned to the New England Small College Athletic Conference playoffs for the first time since the 2000-01 season. Guard **PATRICK MCGOWAN '05** became the 31st Colby player to reach 1,000 career points, and head coach **DICK WHITMORE** reached 550 career wins in his 34th season. As this issue of *Colby* went to press, Colby was set to meet Tufts University in a NESCAC quarterfinal on February 19. . . . **MEN'S ICE HOCKEY** was 14-6-1 as of February 12 and was headed back to the NESCAC playoffs. **NICK BAYLEY '05**, a two-time National Academic All-American, was leading the offense and captain **PATRICK WALSH '05** was having another outstanding season on defense. . . . All-American **LAURA MILLER '05** was expected to challenge for a national title in the 100 butterfly in March's NCAA Division III Swimming Championships. She finished second last year. Both the Colby **MEN AND WOMEN'S SWIMMING** teams won Colby-Bates-Bowdoin (CBB) titles. For complete and updated fall season highlights, go to *Colby Online* at www.colby.edu/mag/sports_shorts.

Mestieri's Mules

Veteran players were elated as head football Coach Ed Mestieri took over when coach Tom Austin retired in 2003-04. For good reason, it turns out. In their first season under Mestieri, the gridiron Mules continued their winning ways. They went 6-2, handily won the CBB crown, and racked up impressive national stats. Read all about football and other sports news in *Colby Online* at www.colby.edu/mag/football.

From right to left: Hillary Easter '06, Karen Prisby '07, Elizabeth Turner '06, Anna King '08 and Elizabeth Petit '08.

Q&A

DEB AITKEN ON CROSS-COUNTRY WOMEN, A STUNNING SEASON, AND WAYS HER RUNNERS STAY HEALTHY

ROBERT GILLESPIE INTERVIEW

FRED FIELD PHOTO

Coach Debra Aitken, who received the NESCAC Coach of the Year award and whose team finished fifth in the NCAA Division III national cross-country championships, talks with College Editor Robert Gillespie about her team's ranking, consistency, training, recruiting, health, and goals.

Congratulations on both the NCAA fifth place and the NESCAC Coach of the Year award. That must feel pretty good.

Yeah, actually, it felt great. And it was just a bit of a surprise. I think all of us as NESCAC coaches just truly realize how difficult it is to have a top-five team. It's just such a competitive game that if you can break into the top five or six, you know that in any other region in the country you could probably be a national-qualified team.

You were fourth in the New England region, right?

We were ranked fourth until the New England qualifier, where we actually knocked off Amherst and were a third place team. You know, I have to say I just felt very strongly about our people, but whether we were third, fourth, or fifth, that was beside the point.

But when you went to nationals you were ranked ninth.

When we were ranked ninth I was like, ooh, maybe we deserve that ranking, I don't know. What had kept us strong the whole season was the fact that we had always, every single meet, seven strong individuals who were able to run in close proximity to each other, and that is really a strong point of our team.

Were the top seven runners all year the same top seven runners?

Yes, the same seven all year. I don't think we had the same exact placement of all seven runners in any one race all year long. And even with our second seven, eight through fourteen, that group stayed the same, but interchanging positions.

Did your team run that way the whole year, packed up pretty closely?

Yes, we were about a minute difference between one and five in the first race, and at nationals we were forty-five seconds. So, yeah, we were really consistent. We were usually about fifty seconds between one and five and very seldom much more than a minute between one and seven.

Do you have a training program for them during the summer?

Oh yes, they're all on a very specific training program. I send it out June first, and they pretty much follow it.

You don't specify particular workouts for particular runners?

No, I don't do that until they get back, and then I'm very specific. I do individualize my workouts. But during the summer the focus is to just build your mileage base. . . . I send out a very detailed explanation of why they're doing their workouts, a whole explanation. Plus, they know my training program; they understand that I train energy systems; they know exactly what I'm looking for.

How do you go about recruiting them? What do you look for?

First of all, you look for times, but I look as much for potential and just their overall attitude, how running fits into their life, if they have a real love for running. I'm weary of people who are coming off high-mileage high school programs that have kids running, sixty, seventy miles a week. I've had a few, and most of them are burnt out by the time they get to college.

What mileage do you do in a week?

We're not running much more than forty-five miles a week. I haven't found anything to substantiate that running sixty or seventy miles a week is going to make them better 5K runners. I don't think the benefits are worth the time and effort and the compulsive behavior patterns that it tends to develop.

You keep pretty close tabs on things like eating disorders?

Yes, and I think any cross-country coach, any running coach, will tell you that probably one of the biggest obstacles that you have to face is keeping these young, highly motivated athletes—and students, because they're the same way in the classroom—keeping them from stepping off the cliff. I always tell them, "I'm going to push you to the edge, but I'm not going to let you step off." And we talk a lot about nutrition. . . . I think one of the things that I pride our team on—and I talk to the team about this all the time—I think we were the healthiest team out there, the healthiest team at nationals. We talk a lot about keeping our lives in balance, because I think balance is what keeps us healthy. And that includes eating.

Do runners learn how to discipline themselves?

I think most of them are at least somewhat aware of it, but I'm really pretty close to my athletes, and I don't hesitate to bring them in and say something individually to them. Compulsive behavior is something that you see because running is a double-edged sword. The more you do, and the more weight you lose, for a period of time you are going to run better, you are going to run faster.



Deb Aitken, center, with members of the women's cross-country team.

Until you break down.

Until you hit the breaking point. Whether it's becoming anemic, or getting stress fractures, or having lower leg problems, something is going to happen.

So when you say that you thought your team was the healthiest team out there, you're talking the entire body?

I'm talking their entire body, mentally as well. I'm talking no eating disorders—or disordered eating habits, because I think there is a difference between eating disorders and disordered eating. Our normal eating cycles in this country are to eat way too much fat, way too much sugar. So you can have eating habits that are very healthy that to many people look disordered, or out of the norm, because they might eat a lot of smaller meals, or they might eat more fruits and vegetables. They're not eating French fries and soda and, you know, junk.

How do you hear about these kids in the recruiting process?

Well, I try to send a letter at the end of the junior year to anyone who has placed in a state meet in cross country and in track. In cross country, I'll go at least through twenty or twenty-five places in all the divisions, class A, B, C. We do this for all of New England, and that will generate a lot of questionnaires coming back to me. And then if, academically, they're also sound, I ask them to return a questionnaire with academic as well as athletic information. The Web site has generated a whole new recruiting base, because anybody can tap onto it and send questionnaires. And there's another whole set of people who visit the campus, and running is important to them so they try to set up a time to meet with me.

Do you add to their times to compensate for cold weather?

I think the majority of students that we have—and we have runners from California, Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, pretty much all over the United States—most of them are cold-weather runners. Our team was happy when the weather finally turned cold. They don't like the heat. I think it's an advantage for us to be here. And there's a whole pool of students out there looking for small, liberal arts colleges with great academic reputations and an institution where they can continue their running.

They come here, they're academically motivated, they've all been runners, they have certain skills already, certain personalities?

They're driven in the classroom just like they are driven to run well. And I think that many of my runners are perfectionists: they just want to be as good as they can be at everything and with everything that they do. I've got at least ten runners right now who are either in med school or are now doctors, and every one of them has run all through med school, every one of them. Well, you know, running is part of your life, who you are. It's almost like brushing your teeth.

What does it look like for next fall?

Well, everybody on that top-seven team put it all together very quickly and said, "Next year we're coming back even harder," so in their minds they're already setting their goals for top four. I think that's a team goal. The key: I try to never take anything for granted because you never know when injuries are going to come, or something can happen. But with the six people that we have returning, and with a pretty strong group of second-seven runners that I know will improve over the course of the year, if they choose to put time and effort in, and realizing that we've got some incredible talent coming in, too—yes, next year could be good, too.

Opening the Door

Pair recalls trials, triumph of founding The Bridge at Colby

SARAH TUFF STORY

FRED FIELD PHOTO



Bridge founders Nancy Snow Littlefield '74, left, and Euan Bear '74 (formerly Barbara Badger).

It was 1974, five years after the hot summer night when Manhattan's Stonewall Bar was raided by police and gay patrons fought back—a seminal moment in the history of gay, lesbian, and bisexual rights. Seniors at Colby, Barbara Badger (now Euan Bear) and Nancy Snow (now Nancy Snow Littlefield) were on a path that would take them to a major milestone in the state of Maine.

Bear, who grew up in Maine and New Hampshire, and Littlefield, from New Jersey, had bonded through work at a Girl Scout camp and at break-of-dawn practices for the College's woodsmen's team—chopping trees, rolling logs, and tossing pulp. They also shared an interest in God and faith and joined Colby's chapter of the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. But then, after they had moved in together for senior year, something changed.

"An ex-lover of mine came to visit," Bear said.

"And [Littlefield] found herself being jealous."

"A light went on," Littlefield recalled.

"We became lovers," Bear said.

There were few local outlets for lesbians at the time; Bear recalls rumors of a gay bar in Waterville but was apprehensive about being assaulted or harassed while en route and never tried to find the place. They road-tripped with other Colby students to the University of Maine, where the brand-new Wilde-Stein Club held a dance. The Colby pair—with little grounding in gay culture or history—were taken aback by the people they saw, who seemed to embody all sorts of gay stereotypes. Finding little solace in the few copies of gay literature in Colby's stacks—Littlefield still remembers the call numbers, HQ76—they decided they would meet with the dean of students, Willard Wyman '56.

"I was both defiant and scared to death," Bear said. "We were breaking new ground."

"They wanted a student club and I saw nothing odd about it," said Wyman, who had returned to Colby from Stanford University, near the social-activism epicenter of San Francisco. That background, he said, "was probably helpful" in his handling of the proposal.

"We wanted an acknowledgment that not everyone was cut from the same cookie-cutter. That, guess what, all those dances and barely disguised husband/wife social events didn't mean anything to us," Bear said. "We wanted an officially sanctioned way to socialize and find each other. We wanted to do it safely."

Fine, said Wyman; they would just

need a faculty advisor for their club. Bear and Littlefield approached Michelle Heitzman, who taught their women's studies course. "She wrote us back this letter that was so loving and caring," Bear recalled, her voice thick with emotion. "The opening line was 'Dear Gentlepeople,' and it talked about how proud and honored she was, that she would of course do it."

"She was way ahead of us," Littlefield said. "We were coming from the worst end and actually really struggling with it."

"I think we were a little ahead of most schools," Wyman said. "There were a lot of wonderful students [at Colby] with big hearts, and a milieu at the school that was kind."

But there were a couple of unkind reactions to the arrival of the new club on campus. Unsure of how their fellow students would react to the group, the women settled on the name "as kind of a hedge," said Littlefield. "We didn't want to say, 'We're gay!' but we wanted to be a bridge between the gay and the straight, not like 'We're wild-in-the-streets gay activists' or something."

"For the most part we were ignored or distantly accepted," Bear said. "Except for the frat guys ripping down our meeting and event notices. We received no death threats or anything like that—just all those pre-printed copies of sermons condemning homosexuality and consigning us to eternal hellfire. And I'm pretty sure those came from members of the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship."

Eventually the women were kicked out of the prayer group. In the group's view, Bear recalls, she and Littlefield were "unrepentant" because they were unwilling to stop being lovers or leading and participating in The Bridge. "I have to laugh," Bear said. "Of course we were unrepentant; we were having a good time!"

But not entirely good. After meeting for weeks with the group for discussion and prayer, the pair found themselves being escorted by members from class to class, preached at and prayed over, Bear said. "We did not give in," she said. "We

found spiritual sanctuary with the Roman Catholic priest who served the campus."

Some other students—including male and female members of the woodsmen's team—were accepting, Bear said. As Littlefield recalls, The Bridge decided to hold an open dance in the basement of Runnals, in the same room in which she and Bear had met with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. They bought snacks and posted signs while Wyman decided to lend a hand, including taking steps to deter any would-be troublemakers. "I got some guys who I knew who were wonderful people to go to the dance," he said.

The dance went smoothly, The Bridge continued to meet, and in the spring of 1974 Bear and Littlefield graduated and hightailed it out west, with little thought of what would happen to their club. "It wasn't my problem any more," Bear said.

"I really expected it to fade out," Littlefield said, "as it was so small at the time."

Thirty years later, The Bridge now has more than 100 members. Each week they are hosts for the Queer Tea, they travel to regional events, and they have invited speakers like Candace Gingrich, lesbian activist half-sister of conservative Congressman Newt Gingrich. To know that the work of The Bridge continues clearly touches Littlefield, who works in information technology for the University of Vermont, and Bear, an activist, author, and editor of Vermont's *Out in the Mountains* newspaper. Though they broke up shortly after graduation—Bear is now in a civil union with a long-time partner while Littlefield is in a straight marriage—they share a spark when reminiscing about The Bridge and its place in the world of gay rights.

"There's been tremendous progress, and the anti-gay marriage initiatives are actually evidence of that," Littlefield said. "Just moving from 'the love that dare not speak its name' to a central political issue is huge."

"We are a long way from a 'post-gay' world where orientation doesn't matter," Bear said,

bringing up the decision in late 2004 by CBS and NBC to ban a "controversial" advertisement for the United Church of Christ that shows two men holding hands. "Once again, the powers that be will try to shove us back in the closet. But it's too late: we're out, at least two generations since Stonewall and the founding of The Bridge."

GLBTIQQA Network Underway

Colby's Office of Alumni Relations is in the process of starting a GLBTIQQA alumni network. Margaret Felton Viens '77, director of alumni relations, invites interested alumni and other members of the Colby community to contact the alumni office at alumni@colby.edu or by phone at 207-872-3190 for more information.