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From the Hill

Stephen Collins
Colby College

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A Blow to Freedom

Inaugural Oak Fellow detained by Pakistani government

By Stephen Collins '74

Fall classes began September 9 at Colby, but without Zafaryab Ahmed, a Pakistani journalist who is supposed to be the inaugural recipient of the College's Oak Human Rights Fellowship. As of September 24, Ahmed remained in Pakistan, barred by his government from traveling. Charged with sedition after writing about the exploitation of children in Pakistani factories, he was awaiting a court ruling on whether he would be allowed to travel to the U.S. to fulfill the one-semester fellowship.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a nonpartisan organization of journalists dedicated to the defense of their colleagues around the world, renewed its campaign to secure for Ahmed what it called "the fundamental right to travel freely."

First Oak Scholars Arrive

The first three recipients of the Oak Foundation Scholarships for International Students arrived on campus this fall. The students, Pedzisayi Makumbe of Zimbabwe, Louise Langhoff of Denmark and Denista Hristova of Bulgaria, were selected based on their eligibility for financial assistance, their country of origin and/or because they have been the victim of political oppression. The scholarship is believed to be the only one of its kind that specifically earmarks funds for victims of political persecution.

The Oak Foundation established the scholarships in 1997 in addition to its gift to create the Oak Institute for the Study of International Human Rights.

A letter sent by CPJ Executive Director Ann K. Cooper to Pakistan's Prime Minister, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad, said, "the CPJ is deeply troubled by the prolonged persecution of Ahmed on the basis that his reporting was a threat to national security. We are further disturbed by the failure of the justice system to respond to Ahmed's petitions."

Ahmed was barred from leaving the country following his arrest in 1995 on charges of sedition that were leveled after he wrote about child labor in Pakistan and about the murder of Iqbal Masih, a 12-year-old who helped expose working conditions.

After many delays, Ahmed finally had a hearing in a Pakistani courtroom in Lahore September 4, according to Professor

of Government Kenneth A. Rodman, director of the Oak Institute for the Study of International Human Rights, but as of September 24 there was still no word on Ahmed's fate.

Rodman said the CPJ initiative on Ahmed's behalf adds to pressure being applied through political, diplomatic and non-governmental channels. Amnesty International and the CPJ both initially took up Ahmed's case in 1995.

In the past few weeks Rodman and Oak Institute Associate Director Eliza Denoeux solicited help from Maine's Congressional delegation, the State Department's Pakistan desk, the U.S. Information Agency and the U.S. Embassy in Lahore. Denoeux also appealed to Pakistan's embassy in Washington, urging officials there to help secure Ahmed's freedom to travel. ♦

Is That You, Dana?

Forget everything you ever knew about Dana Hall. The often maligned residence hall best known for the vigor with which upper-classmen spurned it, has been transformed.

A radical facelift, including an expanded and improved dining hall and a reconfigured room layout, make Dana among the most desirable residences on campus, students say. Nelia Dwyer '00 told the *Echo* that she was "going around to every construction worker I saw when I got here, saying, 'Thank you, thank you!'"

Each floor of the living area received cosmetic as well as structural improvements. Fresh carpeting, paint and flooring and sparkling bathrooms make the interior like new. Suites of spacious doubles and triples were created in the wings off each hallway, providing more privacy and a less institutional feel. Rooms along the main corridor were renovated to provide more space.

The dining hall was gutted. A system of individual food stations, where students can move through quickly, replaces the old buffet-style service line. The new seating configuration, on two levels, includes booths and small, private tables.

"It might as well be a new building," said architect Joe Feely. ♦



Seating in Dana Dining Hall now includes booths and small, private tables.

"The Coolest Place in Maine"

It appears as a small white blob on a videoscreen, the size of a pencil eraser, ghostly and serene. A casual observer might assume it was nothing more than a tiny reflected light. But that little white blob has created a stir in the Physics Department at Colby.

Working with Assistant Professor of Physics Duncan Tate, six Colby students have "trapped" rubidium atoms in a Mudd laboratory using a sophisticated device of their own making.

The atom trap consists of a vacuum chamber, in which the rubidium is stored, connected to a complex system of mirrors and glass through which laser light is deployed to slow and cool the atoms. The atoms are slowed by bouncing light particles off of them in much the same way the speed of a moving bowling ball might be reduced by throwing thousands of ping pong balls against it, Tate said. Unimpeded, rubidium atoms travel at about 600 miles per hour. In the Colby experiment, the atoms were slowed to about one mile per hour, thus cooling them to a temperature below one thousandth



of a degree above Absolute Zero (minus 459.7 degrees Fahrenheit), the temperature at which atomic motion ceases. Tate joked that the trap is "the coolest place in Maine."

With the atoms moving sufficiently slowly, they could be confined within a small region of the vacuum chamber by a magnetic field. The resulting rubidium ball that was formed, visible only via an infrared video camera, was composed of a million or so atoms. Seeing it for the first time, said Tate, was exciting. "I was looking at the monitor and suddenly this little patch of white appeared. Any physicist would be excited to see such a thing."

Cooling and trapping atoms has only been done for about 15 years, Tate says, and only a tiny number—perhaps two or three—small colleges have successfully performed the procedure. He says he conceived the project following a sabbatical at the University of Virginia during which he worked with atom traps. "I wanted to give students a glimpse of this kind of research," he said. ♦

On Their Summer Vacation



While one Colby student was swimming with dolphins during the summer, another was getting up close to cockroaches.

Stefan Pulver '99 and Annie Miller '01 spent the summer in internships organized by the College's Off-Campus Study Office.

Pulver worked alongside faculty researchers at the University of California at Berkeley who are studying insects' sense of smell. Seeking to better understand the cockroach's olfactory process, Pulver timed the response of nerve cells in their antennae to various odors.

Miller worked at Dolphins Plus, a center in Key Largo, Fla., that studies dolphin cognition and provides therapeutic swimming sessions for persons with disabilities. Miller, who earlier assisted with research on dolphin intelligence and language at the Kewalo Basin Marine Mammal Laboratory, assisted psychologists who are integrating swimming with dolphins into their treatment for patients.

The internships expand students' opportunities for undergraduate research, Pulver and Miller said. "By getting a chance to perform my own experiments, I gained technical proficiency with a variety of electrophysiology equipment needed to be competitive in graduate school and beyond," Pulver said.

Hudson, McGee Bow Out

Yeager Hudson, whose gentlemanly style and wit delighted students and colleagues for almost 40 years, retired last spring as professor of philosophy.

A Mississippinative, Hudson joined the Colby faculty in 1959. He was named full professor in 1977 and served as department chair for almost 20 years. He was a Fulbright visiting lecturer at Poona University and Ahmednagar College in India in 1967-68. He wrote and edited eight books on philosophy.

Dan Cohen '75, associate professor of philosophy, says Hudson was influential in his career, a path that began when Cohen took Hudson's Introduction to Philosophy course as a freshman. Cohen joked that although Hudson "didn't recognize my philosophical talent" right away, it was his teaching that developed Cohen's interest in the discipline and eventually led to his own decision to teach. Hudson's ability to provoke the intellect was a hallmark. "More than any other person, Yeager has inspired [philosophy] students," Cohen said.

Hudson told an audience of trustees, faculty and staff at his retirement dinner that after nearly four decades at Colby, "you know it's time to retire when you confuse newly appointed faculty for freshmen."

Richard McGee, long-time football coach and former athletic director, also was honored at the retirement dinner. McGee, served as head football coach between 1966 and 1978 and as athletic director from 1974 to 1987.

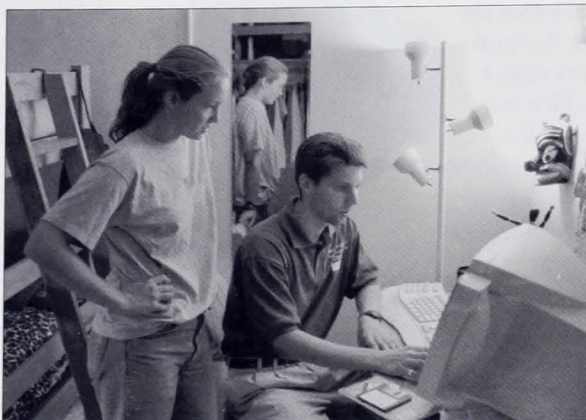
McGee's coaching "was an offering of joy that transcended the outcome of any individual game," said Dick Whitmore, McGee's successor as athletic director. Whitmore also credited McGee with helping establish a strong women's program at Colby.

A successful high school football coach in Maine prior to his arrival at Colby, McGee said he loved his job so much that "it never felt like work to me. I've been very fortunate to work with so many great young men and women over the years." ♦

Up and Running

Determined to ease the transition to a recently adopted dual microcomputer standard on campus, teams of student trainees and professional technicians roamed hallways during the first few days of school troubleshooting problems on the spot. Wearing pagers and t-shirts emblazoned with "Get Connected," the crews compressed what in past years has been a weeks-long process into a few days. "There's no more phone tag, no more waiting for weeks to get students up and running," said Ray Phillips, director of information technology services.

After months of consideration, Colby last spring abandoned its long-held Macintosh-only computing environment for one that supports both Macs and Windows-based machines. The decision puts Colby "more in the mainstream" among colleges and universities that typically offer students a choice of computing systems, says Phillips.



Ray Mazza '01 assists Nicole Laurent '02.

ITS performed 40 Mac-to-Windows conversions over the summer, including the entire development and alumni relations department, according to Phillips. One hundred of the 160 new computers purchased recently by the College were Windows-based PCs.

The decision to switch from a Mac standard followed a lengthy research phase that included a visit to Apple headquarters. Convinced that Apple—which had lost the confidence of many software developers in recent years—was rebounding, the College decided to stick with the Macintosh while adding support for PC users. Phillips says this

dual standard pleased students and faculty alike. "For some, the Macintosh is a superior environment," he said. "For others, the Windows machines are best, usually because of software availability for a particular need [that the Mac doesn't support]. There was some pent-up demand for PCs because of software issues." ♦

A Case of Cabin Fever

One of Colby's oldest buildings is being replaced without a murmur of discontent.

The Outing Club cabin, constructed more than 50 years ago on a pristine three-acre patch of Great Pond shoreline—site of hundreds of spontaneous camping outings, club sleep-overs and the occasional marriage proposal—is being dismantled this fall and replaced by a \$50,000 custom log structure. Students can't wait to get into it.

"We're thrilled," said Amanda Bakian '98, a former Outing Club officer. "We were picturing fifteen thousand dollars to renovate the old building. This [rebuilding option] was not even in our proposal."

Bakian and other Outing Club leaders waged an intense lobbying effort last spring after learning that the College was considering selling the property—assessed at \$200,000—

because of liability concerns and a perceived lack of student interest. The land is owned by the College, but the cabin belongs to the Outing Club.

Although the plan to sell came as a surprise to current club members, the likelihood of such a measure had grown in recent years. A club report written in 1996 warned that the disrepair of the cabin could compel the College to divest itself of the entire property because of high maintenance costs and liability concerns. A renovation plan developed by Rush Hambleton '97 was presented to the College last spring, but officials were reluctant to invest more money in a building that was literally falling apart. The old cabin rested precariously on a bed of tree stumps and boulders, and the floor had separated. The ice storm last January was the final destructive blow, said Ben Jorgen-

sen '92, director of student activities. "The damage from the storm made replacing it a better option than renovating it," he said.

The cabin itself was a concern, but the potential loss of the land—used by students and faculty since the 1930s—motivated students to rally. "Just think how many students have used it over the years," said Teri Young '98, Outing Club copresident. "Thousands."

Students made clear that the loss of the retreat site would diminish the Colby experience. "Quite a few students come to Colby because of the outdoor opportunities available here," Young said. "The Outing Club site is part of that."

Scores of current and former users of the site came forward with personal stories of memorable moments spent there. Alumni sent e-mail and letters in support of the site, and one

alumnus, Jason Klein '97, immediately offered a \$7,500 donation to save the cabin. "People were coming from everywhere offering their support," Bakian said. "We collected more than seven hundred signatures on our petition in one day. That's half of the student body. I think that shows how much this means to people." Jorgensen pointed out that the Outing Club is one of Colby's largest organizations, with a "fiercely loyal" membership of more than 300 students.

Moved by the outpouring of affection for the site, President Bill Cotter declared that "anything that means this much to students must be saved." His announcement in early May at a faculty meeting that the site would not be sold was greeted with hearty applause.

The new 1,000-square-foot cabin is expected to be completed by Thanksgiving. ♦

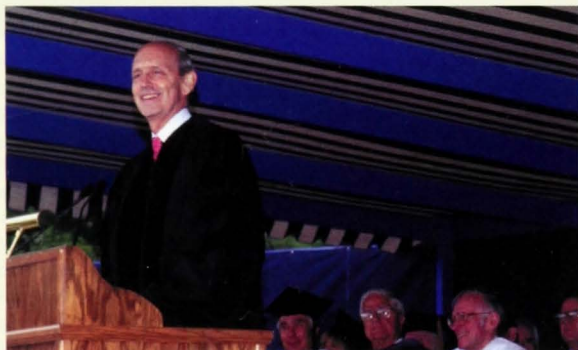
An Honorable Moment

The 177th commencement featured remarks by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Breyer, who admonished the 441 graduates of the Class of '98 to do the right thing. "Remember, as you create your life story, to devote time and effort, to commit yourselves, not only to your personal lives, not only to your careers, but also to the public affairs of your communities and your nation," Breyer said.

Recounting changes in American society that have opened organizations, colleges and even the Supreme Court to women and members of minority groups, Breyer said, "Change of this kind does not occur magically; it represents individual and collective pioneering efforts. You can still choose to be a pioneer, for much remains to be done."

Brigette E. Krantz of Boulder, Colo., this year's valedictorian and class marshal, led the procession of seniors. Tara D. Falsani of Duluth, Minn., addressed the convocation as the senior class speaker.

Honorary Colby degrees were presented to Justice Breyer; to Nobel Prize-winner Dr. Norman F. Ramsey, Harvard University's Higgins Professor of Physics; to John Edgar Wideman, author of more than a dozen books and professor of English at the University of Massachusetts; to Peter H. Lunder '56, president of Dexter Shoe and a member of Colby's overseers; and to Paula Crane Lunder, a member of the Colby College Museum of Art's board of governors and a trustee.



Chera Rodgers (top) of Jacksonville, Fla., found a friend in the crowd to share the moment.

Even from a distance (above), graduation seemed impressive.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer (above left) addressed the Class of '98.

Dan Maccarone (left) of Brockton, Mass., couldn't resist one final gesture of appreciation.