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From the Editor

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Often we see the common threads that connect stories in Colby. Sometimes it takes readers to make the connections for us.

That was the case for the summer issue of the magazine, which included the cover story on Jeronimo Maradiaga ’09J, who succeeded at Colby by overcoming hardships at home in the Bronx. The issue also included an essay by Richard Whitecar ’75 detailing his post-Colby experience with bipolar disorder. Maradiaga, a Watson Fellow currently traveling the world studying different definitions of success, was faced with poverty and homelessness early in life; Whitecar was on track for success when, just after Colby, his illness derailed him.

I admit I was puzzled when I read the first letter from a reader linking the two stories. But then the commonalities became obvious. Both are stories about Colbians who overcame adversity: Maradiaga, by pursuing his goals despite overwhelming family pressures; Whitecar by coming to terms with—even finding contentment in—his life with mental illness. But the pair has more in common than that.

What Maradiaga and Whitecar possess is the courage to reveal themselves and their problems to a community marked by accomplishment, especially as represented in this magazine. The pages of Colby are peopled with scientists and novelists, academics and activists, investment bankers and accomplished athletes. References to poverty in this magazine usually are in the context of efforts to assuage pressures; Whitecar by coming to terms with—even finding contentment in—his life with mental illness. But the pair has more in common than that.

Of course, Maradiaga and Whitecar aren’t the only alumni who have coped with disadvantages. They are just two of the relatively few who have been willing to admit to their college community that, at times, their lives have been marked with struggle and stress.

So if you haven’t read their stories, go online (colby.edu/mag) and do so. And also read the letters in this issue of Colby. Both contain lessons for all of us. As letter writer Tony Burkart ’71 points out, success is about more than the bare fact of accomplishment. Burkart quotes the old saying, “It’s not so much about being dealt a good hand, it’s about playing a poor hand well.”

CONTRIBUTORS

Alexis Grant ’03 (“Silver Lining,” P. 20) is a journalist who is writing her first book, a travel memoir about backpacking solo through Africa. Until May 2008 she worked as a reporter for the Houston Chronicle.

Adam Howard (“From Privilege, a Call for Social Justice,” P. 12) is associate professor of education and director of the Education Program. His research and writings focus on social class issues in education, especially on privileged youth and schooling.

Melanie Brown ’13 (“Magnetic North,” P. 56) is the winner of the Colby magazine Class of 2013 essay contest. Hailing from Denver, Colo., she is an avid fiction writer and poet and a member of the Cellar Door creative writing club, the chorale, and the Colbyettes.
A new year has brought new voices and energy to the insideColby team of student writers, photographers, videographers, podcasters, and bloggers. See a sampling of what they’ve been up to below, with much more at insideColby.com.

Inside the Colby Fishbowl

Watch, Listen, Learn

This summer Tarini Manchanda ’09 set out to learn what makes Colby Colby. She interviewed students and professors and, using skills learned in the American Dreams documentary filmmaking course and a gift for storytelling, she produced a 10-minute film called The Colby Experience.

Also this summer, Tamer Hassan ’11 made videos about everything from the Colby-Hume Center, where students hang out on the dock and in the lake, to recent grads who chose to stay in Maine to work—at the Natural Resources Council of Maine, MaineBiz, and, of course, L.L.Bean.

InsideColby bloggers making page one of the Times (“Guess what. We ic bloggers are famous. Well, kind of. ...[T]he New York Times—the New York Times!—had a front-page article about student bloggers, and insideColby got a mini-shout-out.”)

These are among the many topics discussed in recent blog posts on insideColby.com. Unedited student voices.

COOT. Still Fun. Photo by Hannah Shapiro ’12
African drumming anyone? Photo by Brian DiMento ’10
GO MULES! Photo by Kendyl Sullivan ’11

Spice of Life

Around noon on weekdays students begin streaming into Colby’s three dining halls. They breeze through the lines to get their cards swiped and grab anything from a salad (sometimes with vegetables from the student-run garden) or a made-to-order sub to an Asian bento box or a make-your-own noodle bowl. They gather with friends, fuel up, and take off for the next thing. What’s happening behind the scenes is not at the top of most students’ minds, but they appreciate the result. “They do a really good job in making sure there is a variety of different foods,” said Sharonda Bradley ’10. ...