

# Colby



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## Letters

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### Profiles in Courage

You are to be commended on the summer 2009 edition of *Colby*. It contained an artful balance of noteworthy news, standouts, and the real standouts when it comes to guts-ball human courage.

“Jeromino Maradiaga’s Journey” is a story to be taken in and then allowed to brew in the soul, as it speaks to much of the grist of what it means to be human. Entitlement, attitudes that we don’t have, they have us, the grit of resilience and survival and triumph in circumstances of monumental odds. But his story is also a testimony to a college that was willing to support and stand by Jeronimo, through the muck he could not avoid facing, to the place where the poet Rilke tells us, “What seems our greatest demon can become our greatest ally.”

But as I thumbed my way through the alumni news to The Last Page, I was particularly touched by Richard Whitecar’s one-pager (“Learning to Live with Bipolar Disorder, Minus the Stigma”), which concludes the reading. Poignant, yes; noteworthy, absolutely, in light of the quote he used from Booker T. Washington: “Success is measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed!” Or, as Mark Twain once remarked, “It’s not so much about being dealt a good hand, it’s about playing a poor hand well.”

Perhaps what Whitecar reminds us all from his personal journey is that the inner struggle is ultimately what connects the head and the heart, which is not about knowledge but about wisdom.

*Tony Burkart '71*  
Franklin, Maine

I found the cover story ... about the challenging journey of Jeronimo Maradiaga '09J, to be riveting. The tenacity of this young man to accomplish his goal—and fulfill his dream—of going to college and graduating, no matter how long it took or how many obstacles stood in his way, was truly inspiring. Thank you for sharing his story with us.

*Cathy Palmer Smith '80*  
Boscawen, N.H.

### Bipolar Challenges Hit Home

I always enjoy reading *Colby*, but your summer issue was particularly good. The cover story on Jeronimo Maradiaga '09J was inspirational and awe-inspiring. However, it was The Last Page article by Richard Whitecar '75 on his struggles with bipolar disorder that really struck home.

Last summer my 26-year-old son called from Arizona where he was attending ASU, sobbing hysterically and talking about suicide. I hopped the next plane, checked him into a hospital where he was diagnosed as Bipolar, Type 2, rapid-cycling. Thus began my personal education in this disorder. I am gratified to report that he is doing exceptionally well on medication and has returned to college, but it was a sometimes agonizing and nightmarish time in my life (and not how I had planned to spend the first year of my retirement from government service). We are currently following the health-care reform issues with particular attention because my son now has a “pre-existing condition” and his medication costs \$2,000 per month. Who can afford that? And yet it is vital to his continued well-being.

My personal thanks to Mr. Whitecar for speaking openly about his condition and its impact on his life. There is strength in numbers.

*Judith Kenoyer Stoy '71*  
Brunswick, Maine

### Bias Evident In Letter Selection

I am shocked at the bias shown in selecting the letters published (summer 2009 *Colby*) in response to “Where is Science Behind Climate Change Claims?” (spring 2009 *Colby*). What appear in the summer 2009 issue are two lengthy letters criticizing David Epstein’s article and the College for publishing it and one brief letter suggesting the benefit of healthy discourse of a controversial topic.

Meanwhile, in the correspondence to the author that follows the online publication of the article are 24 letters: two disputing Mr. Epstein’s work and 22 agreeing with or supporting the article. Among other attributes, these 22 letters demonstrate that the jury is still out on global warming and its causes; scientific truth awaits facts, not unfounded hypotheses; and critical thinking is to be encouraged.

If such an imbalance in the published letters (two to one published versus two to 22 online) is an example of the College’s encouragement of academic curiosity and journalistic fairness, then I am ashamed to be affiliated with *Colby*.

*Cynthia Barber '62*  
Newark, Vt.

*Editor’s note: Due to space constraints, letters from alumni are given priority in the print version of Colby. Most of the online comments were in agreement with David Epstein’s essay, but nearly all of those were from non-alumni. All comments are welcome online.*

### A Convenient Lie

Of course I’m referring to the great hoax and myth of global warming (a.k.a. climate change) perpetrated by Al Gore and his sycophants. I have read the fine essay on the subject by Dave Epstein '86 (“Where is the Science Behind Climate Change Claims?” spring 2009 *Colby*) and completely agree with him. I would trust his forecasts on WCVB-TV anytime. In his rebuttal to Dave’s essay, Steve Eitrem '63 cites the 40 scientists that reached a strong consensus under the IPCC stating what? All too often the proponents of global warming warn us of the impact of CO<sub>2</sub> on mankind and our

planet, but don't back it up with any concrete facts. In recent years, over 31,478 scientists including 9,029 Ph.D.s signed a petition that refutes global warming ([www.petitionproject.org](http://www.petitionproject.org)). In summary it says, "There is no convincing scientific evidence that human release of carbon dioxide, methane, or other greenhouse gases is causing or will, in the foreseeable future, cause catastrophic heating of the Earth's atmosphere and disruption of the Earth's climate."

Three years ago a very esteemed geology professor made me aware of the entire global warming frenzy with all its predictions and dire consequences. He considered it "climate adjustment" and said we are in an "interglacial period" when the Earth warms up, glaciers melt and life flourishes. Mr. Gore and his followers would have us believe that the use of fossil fuels and other activities of mankind have overwhelmed Mother Nature during this period and are producing unheard of, out-of-control warming. Well, it's simply isn't true. The out-of-control warming is false. John Coleman, founder of the Weather Channel, in an address before the San Diego Chamber of Commerce said, "Worldwide there was a significant natural warming trend in the 1980s and 1990s as a solar cycle peaked with lots of sunspots and solar flares. That ended in 1998 and now the Sun has gone quiet with fewer and fewer sunspots, and the global temperatures have gone into decline. Earth has cooled for almost 10 straight years. So, I ask Mr. Gore, where is global warming?" I strongly suggest reading Mr. Coleman's address ([www.kusi.com/weather/colemanscorner/19842304.html](http://www.kusi.com/weather/colemanscorner/19842304.html)) that debunks the mystique of global warming.

*John A. Dutton '55*  
Citrus Heights, California

### **Colby Should Encourage Debate**

Several items in the summer 2009 issue struck a chord with me.

First was the reaction to "Where is Science Behind Climate Change Claims?" in the spring issue. When I read it, I too was surprised to see it, but

also very happy! It told me that there was some recognition of that point of view.

Now an interjection. When I started at Colby in 1967, my father wrote me a note of fatherly advice that I still have today. I recall a quote from the letter where my father said the president was "a liberal of the worst sort" and he was concerned about the quality of education I would get at Colby. At the time, I didn't realize what he was talking about. He was the leader of "conservative Democrats" in Southern California.

What I have taught my kids is to keep your ears, eyes, and mind open and make your own judgment. Teachers will make a point, and it is okay to question them and seek an alternative point of view. Then decide where you stand on the point.

It has always been my belief that colleges and universities should encourage debate and research to uncover and expose all points of view. I hope Colby encourages research, debate, and the recognition that it is okay to hold a different point of view.

So the letters claiming that "the debate is over" with respect to climate change are very disconcerting. In my opinion, they are trying to stifle debate and silence alternative points of view. Take an open mind to the Cato Institute, the Heartland Institute, the Heritage Foundation to see real scientists questioning climate change. It is a debate. There should certainly be an open debate about what to do about it.

*Larrie Trippet '71*  
Reno, Nevada



### **Ready for the Big Leagues**

As a former student of and research assistant for Professor G. Calvin Mackenzie ("The Digital Revolution Hits Home—Or Does It?" summer 2009 *Colby*), I

can tell you that his use of technology in the classroom is unrivaled. He doesn't use technology for the sake of using technology; he uses it to accentuate his point and to paint a clearer picture for his students.

I also want to take an opportunity to support Professor Mackenzie's argument that institutions of higher education, like Colby, should examine and be open to their students graduating in three years (if a student has met all the college requirements for graduation). Currently Colby has a four-year graduation policy, with some students allowed to graduate in 3.5 years. Very occasionally a student is allowed to graduate in three years.

However, this shouldn't be the case. Every single Colby student should have the right to graduate in three years as long as they have fulfilled their all-area requirements, completed 128 credits, and majored in at least one subject. I enjoyed my four years at Colby and wouldn't have graduated early. But why should a college require students to attend an extra year and fork out another \$50,000 if students have already met the minimum graduation criteria that the college has set? As Professor Mackenzie says, "Many Colby students, aided by technologies and resources that did not exist a generation ago, seem to have reached levels of proficiency as juniors that I didn't used to see until deep into their senior year. ... They are, in baseball parlance, ready for a higher league long before they get their degrees." I echo that statement.

*Lokesh Todi '09*  
Boston, Mass.

### **No Glare Allowed**

The summer issue of *Colby* just arrived. I commend you on the non-glare pages. As an older person I find print on glossy paper difficult to read although I am told that it makes for more striking photography. I wish the many periodicals we receive in the mail would do likewise.

*Rev. Charles L. Smith, Jr. '50*  
Providence, Rhode Island