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No Loans, More Pride

While I've always been proud to identify myself as a Colby alumna, the recent elimination of loans from the College's financial aid packages has further amplified the pride I feel for my alma mater. Access to higher education is an issue of utmost importance and it is incredibly exciting to see Colby taking such a proactive step. The College's commitment to equal access to education becomes even more impressive when compared to other institutions making similar choices, schools that tend to have endowments bigger (sometimes far bigger) than our own. This decision provides yet another reason to give back to a school that has already given me so much, even if one of the things was some college loans.

Furthermore, as a second-year law student wanting the freedom to pursue a public interest career, I know all too well how prohibitive large amounts of debt can be. It is encouraging to know that future generations of Colby graduates will have the opportunity to choose their respective careers with fewer concerns about financial constraints. Providing even more alumni with this freedom of choice will only increase the many ways in which Colby graduates are already giving back to their communities. Thank you, Colby, for truly putting your money where your mouth is.

Gretchen Groggel '03
Berkeley, Calif.

Aid Change Welcome in Diverse Communities

I write to commend Colby for adjusting the financial aid program to relieve incoming and undergraduate students from the burden of loans. I have for 30 years been one of the managers of a church-related grant program for Washington, D.C., public school graduating seniors. Charges from the admitting colleges and universities kept rising and rising, until a few years ago when Princeton announced their program. The change has come slowly, but is most welcome in a community that certainly can improve the "diversity" factor in admission statistics.

Barbara Grant Nnoka '43
Arlington, Va.

Still Other Paths to Healthcare

Thank you for your recent article ("Different Prescriptions," spring 2008 *Colby*) discussing the routes various Colby grads take into medical school. I would also like to add we cannot forget the various ways healthcare is practiced. After majoring in anthropology and women's studies at Colby, I returned to my pre-Colby ambition and decided that primary-care medicine was something I needed to pursue.

I took a year-plus of prerequisite evening classes while working full time and enrolled in a three-year master's program to become a family nurse practitioner. I decided on an advanced degree in nursing as compared to medicine for many reasons, largely including the tenets of nursing philosophy, which include focusing on wellness instead of illness and collaborative treatment with your patients.

I am now happily working in a rural health center in western Maine alongside another physician providing primary care to many people who have not traditionally had much access to healthcare. Each day I am grateful to my Colby education for allowing me to understand the breadth of the human experience in relation to people's experiences of health and illness.

In a time when our country is facing a national healthcare crisis and less and less medical students are opting to practice family medicine, it is important to acknowledge how allied health professionals, including nurse practitioners, many of whom have Colby to thank for their initial education, are stepping up proudly to fill in this role.

Sarah Andel '00, family nurse practitioner
Bingham Area Health Center
Bingham, Maine

Medicine Is Humanity

Alexis Grant's article on humanities majors in medicine ("Different Prescriptions," spring 2008 *Colby*) repeatedly emphasized Gwen Garrison's initial comments that humanities majors tend to be "people-friendly doctors" whose experiences have "versed them in compassion." Fair enough, but what about the very interdisciplinary nature of the profession itself?

Medicine is an integration of science, history, government, religion, philosophy, sociology, language, and many other far-reaching areas of knowledge. In fact, I would argue that required humanities courses would provide physicians with a far better background for understanding medicine and not just the scientific basis of most medical treatments. The short-sighted focus of this article really detracted from what could have been a very interesting insight into the cornucopia of knowledge that defines the medical profession.

Robert Redwood '06
Religious studies and Spanish
literature majors
Rush Medical College '11
Chicago, Ill.

Applaud Anthropologists Serving in Iraq

I read the article "Too Close For Comfort?" (spring 2008 *Colby*) and would like to respond to the members of the Colby faculty associated with the Network of Concerned Anthropologists.

As a Marine Corps veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom '04-'05, I witnessed firsthand the intimidation, death, and destruction that the Salafist, Sunni Bathist, and Al Qaeda terrorists inflicted upon the Iraqi people.

At that time, our number-one goal was to bring stability and security to Iraq, but in order to do this, we needed to put a stop to the violence that was occurring on a daily basis. The biggest obstacle to stopping the violence was our inability to identify who in the community was committing these egregious acts, and why. Marines are resourceful, and we basically became homegrown anthropologists. We conducted a primitive census and canvassed the people to determine their tribes, family infrastructures, faith, and mosque loyalties. Armed with this knowledge we began a dialog with the leaders of the communities and identified the insurgents. Through military and police action we drove the most ardent terrorists from the region. Insurgents that were willing to lay down their arms and work with us for peace have become our strongest allies.

In short, anthropology was the basis for our actions that eventually led to the pacification of the Anbar province. The Army's recent efforts have shown similar success in Baghdad.

The ultimate goal is peace in Iraq and withdrawal of U.S. forces. The opinion of Professor Catherine Besteman and the Network of Concerned Anthropologists seems to be that the military is using anthropologists to gain intelligence information that is then being used to dominate and kill innocent Iraqi civilians. These positions could not be further from the truth. Has the Network of Concerned Anthropologists been oblivious to the pacification of the Anbar province and the reduction of U.S. casualties in the past six months? It is the understanding of the complex fabric of the Iraqi culture that has begun the reduction of violence. I would hope that American anthropologists would applaud the courageous actions of their members to bring peace to Iraq, not debate the "ethics" of their actions.

Debate upon Mayflower Hill may engage the students of Colby in provocative thought, but for those of us that have seen the real world, action speaks louder than words. The actions of those brave anthropologists willing to help the Iraqi people have done more for peace than any self-serving debate on Mayflower Hill.

*Lt. Col. Christopher M. Caponi '91,
U.S.M.C.
Brookfield, Wisc.*

Rehab Essay Offers Lessons

What a wonderful article in the most recent magazine ("Wrong Track, Right Track: From Rehab to Mayflower Hill," spring 2008 *Colby*).

It really strikes home since I discovered that I had been clinically depressed for 36 years of my life and wrestled with substance abuse until 1986, when the pain got so bad I had to ask for help. So many people of all ages carry depression that it's often referred to as "the silent killer." No one should be ashamed to talk about depression (I can say that now), especially since that is part of the solution.

I've just retired as president of a small Maine bank and I am so blessed to have feelings today. Everyone can learn from that wonderful article. Thanks.

*Frank Parker '64
Freeport, Maine*

College Costs Threaten Democracy

What with tuition, room, board, living expenses, and books at Colby College approaching fifty thousand dollars a year, the question may be asked whether American democracy as we have come to know it and love it can continue.

Tell the migrant worker picking tomatoes in southern New Jersey this figure. What will this migrant worker think of a society and political system increasingly favoring the wealthy? Are we not recreating the very aristocracy from which immigrants to our country from

Europe fled? The alarm bells should be ringing in Congress and the White House, but they are not. No major presidential candidate is addressing the staggering costs of higher education, whether at a Colby or at a University of Massachusetts.

While the bells remain silent, other advanced countries are forging ahead economically and intellectually because higher education for their citizens is free or nearly free. China and India turn out more scientists than does the United States. So heavy are the student loans necessary to help pay for higher education in the United States that teaching and social service jobs, traditionally not among the highest paying jobs, cannot be considered by the debt-burdened graduate. The United States and its people are the losers.

At some point, too, the question may be asked whether two hundred thousand dollars for a four-year education at Colby College is worth the cost. Perhaps the answer lies with community colleges where tuition is a fraction of the cost of tuition at a Colby College. Perhaps we must rethink our values and priorities as a country. Soon one trillion dollars will have been spent on the war in Iraq, a sum of money which could have been used to pay the tuition, room, and board of an entire generation of college and graduate students.

*Dr. Stephen Schoeman '64
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("Don't Worry; Be Happy," P. 24) is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who has worked for newspapers in Massachusetts, Florida, Maine, and Ireland.

In between freelancing for Maine magazines, she is writing a book about a Newfoundland hurricane that killed many of her seafaring ancestors.



Freelance journalist **TOM NUGENT** ("Mars Up Close," P. 14) has written about health and science for the *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Boston Globe*. He is the author of *Death*

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RICH BACHUS '87
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Current projects include a rewrite of his first novel, *Into No Man's Land*.