

Colby



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Letters

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A Global View

In 1958, when I entered Colby as a freshman, I was considered almost a foreign student as I hailed all the way from Washington, D.C.! Indeed, Colby was pretty parochial in those days in many, many ways. I loved the College but thought of Colby as a fairly isolated, “white bread” place even as recently as the early ’90s when I served as an overseer.

Change happens! Your last issue of *Colby* marvelously depicted the enriching multi-cultural changes that have taken place on the campus in recent years. The young Indian woman’s reverie on snow; the portraits of international alums looking back; Lt. [Adam] Cote in Iraq; the important and courageous story of the Bridge founders: all of these stories were first rate and demonstrated real changes from within the soul of the College.

Congratulations to you and your team for covering in Technicolor detail a much more interesting Colby. I do know that many have helped this change to come about, including the extraordinary philanthropist, Shelby M.C. Davis, whose scholarships are bringing such extraordinary young people to Colby from around the world.

Colby has provided a sound education for a long time, but now I sense Colby is truly preparing young people for our global community, and for that I am enormously grateful.

Lael Swimney Stegall ’62

Deer Isle, Maine

Christians’ Task Unchanged

Your article about our Colby friends Nancy Snow ’74 and Euan Bear ’74 (“Opening the Door,” spring 2005 *Colby*) drew central focus to the activities of a very small group of professing Christians in the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. I was part of that group whose doctrinal statement includes a belief in “the unique divine inspiration, entire trustworthiness and authority of the Bible.”

Nancy and Euan’s memories about

the events of those days as part of the Christian fellowship sounded correct. The small Christian community did meet with Nancy and Euan about their decision to form an organization [The Bridge] promoting behaviors the Bible calls “sinful.” Undoubtedly some of us may have given them “copies of sermons.” Certainly there was “discussion and prayer.” The only account in your story that I do hope is historically inaccurate is the statement that they were “kicked out of the prayer group.”

As a confessional witnessing community of students, we recognized that we are all alienated from God and from each other because of our sin and guilt. The issue that we were confronted with in 1974 was whether a confessing community could be formed with members having “unrepentant” commitment to behavior that is condemned by the Bible. It is the Bible that we believe to be *trustworthy* and *authoritative* in setting these standards. The decision to enter or leave that confessing community belonged to Nancy and Euan. Jesus called himself a “fisher of men.” Jesus sought out *all* men and women who suffer alienation in all of the shameful ways described in the Bible. If we did less, we were wrong.

The times have changed. Homosexuality is not the novel basis for organizing social associations that it was 30 years ago. What has not changed is the standard by which confessing Christians understand our behavior to be measured. David F. Wells reminds us that it is culturally convenient to use the word *evil* “to express moral repugnance without needing to make clear the standards by which the action is seen to be repugnant.” The word *sin*, Wells adds, is not used because it “deliberately understands this [evil] in relationship to God.” In 1974 we were attempting to measure our activity on the basis of the Bible. That is the task of the Christian community, and that has not changed.

Robert B. Gregory ’76

Newcastle, Maine

An Opposing Voice?

Although I think you have done a superb job changing the look of *Colby* magazine, I am disappointed in some of the articles it contains. Not because you have seen fit to include them but because opposing beliefs are never included.

In your spring [2005] issue, there is an article discussing a speech given by Bishop Gene Robinson, a gay, divisive bishop who has brought about a split in the Episcopal Church. I know you didn’t invite him, but if you are going to present his views, then shouldn’t the readers have the opportunity to read what other non-gay Christian leaders have to say?

On page six, you include an article about a student who is defining fat people. I guess she hasn’t read about the health problems that overweight individuals cause, nor the fact that health officials across the country are concerned about people who are overweight.

You also devoted two pages to two lesbian women. Do they represent the majority of the student body or substantially less than 1 percent? If it’s the latter, why talk about them? Instead, the magazine should contain articles about student clubs and their activities or articles about scholastic achievement. Students attend Colby to get a degree, so let’s hear about those who are excelling and why. And don’t forget the alumni. I am sure there are many interesting stories relating to what students have done since graduating.

Richard G. Streich ’52

Maitland, Fla.

Obesity Is Primarily a Health Issue

I would be the first one to stand up against discrimination based on race, religion, or sexual orientation, but adding fat to the list and making it an issue (“Defending Diversity,” spring 2005 *Colby*) is just taking it one step too far.

People can talk about genetics and heredity as much as they want, but most people who are fat have become that way because they eat too much and exercise too little. I know that it is not in vogue

to be so frank, but I feel compelled to do so. We should in no way be celebrating a lifestyle that causes diabetes, heart disease, etc. And with an epidemic of childhood obesity here in the U.K. and in the U.S., I personally think that we should not be telling kids that it is OK to be unfit and accept their body as it is.

This rant is not coming from a naturally skinny person either. I know it can be done. Last year I took a look at myself and instead of “accepting” my own size, I was appalled and committed to doing something. My personal experience was to have lost 25 lbs this year that had accumulated over the last several. All it took was a bit of discipline at the table and some light exercise (no crash diets, just a change in behaviour). Ask any person who has lost weight whether they would go back to accepting their body as it was and they would laugh at you. Their turning point occurred when they decided not to accept things they way they are.

James Gill '85

Chesham, Buckinghamshire
England

Judeo-Christian Heritage Erased

It was with sadness, if not surprise, I learned that Colby has taken another dark turn towards the abyss with the scrubbing of Western Judeo-Christian holidays from the official calendar. I sent an e-mail asking for an explanation and received word that “as Colby has become more diverse” there is a “desire not to insult the non-Christian and non-Jewish members of our community.” “So we made the decision to include only federal holidays and significant dates from Colby’s academic calendar.” (Students of totalitarian societies will note the common tendency to erase folk holidays, to be replaced with Official, Approved Holidays.)

If I take the explanation at face value, I can only conclude Colby is fostering not a community of “diversity” and “tolerance” but one of fear and bigotry towards the culture that built the school and the endowment in the first place. Removing traditional holidays is just one of many

Letters Welcome

Colby welcomes your letters. Send them to Gerry Boyle, editor; *Colby* magazine; Office of Communications; 4181 Mayflower Hill; Waterville, ME 04901, or by e-mail to mag@colby.edu. Length should be limited to 300 words. *Colby* reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity.

steps Colby has taken as the administration has embraced just about every cultural Marxist’s fad of the past 15 years, from removing the cross over the chapel, removing White from White Mules, the normalization of sexual deviancy, the promotion of superficial diversity, and more recently the celebration of genital mutilation, the desecration of sacred vows, and the dereliction of traditional duties.

Certainly, some alumni support this direction, but the sons and daughters I went to school with—folks from working class towns in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, folks from the Eastern Establishment schools of New Jersey, Connecticut, and New York, and the many athletes from the Catholic and public schools around Boston—should be made well aware that the current regime is running the school so far off the ideological map there will be nothing left worth saving when they are through and move on to their next gig.

Observant Christians and Jews, conservatives, classical liberals, and Western humanists, be advised: Colby considers your culture to be “insulting,” an embarrassing relic of the past. As the price

of Colby tuition heads to \$50,000 per year by 2010, Colby can boast of the high SAT scores of its current class, but the Colby liberal arts tradition, a tradition rooted in the classical past of the West, has been scrapped for the promise of a golden calf.

Lastly, I have it on good authority that the Bowdoin calendar lists Easter falling on March 27, Passover April 24, Yom Kippur October 13, and Christmas December 25.

Charles Bowen '96
Durham, Maine

(Editor’s note: The cross never was removed from the spire of Lorimer Chapel and the official mascot remains the White Mule.)

Compliments for Colby

Congratulations on the spring issue of *Colby*. In this retired journalist’s eyes, it was far and away the best issue I can remember. The writing was clean and crisp, the graphics outstanding, the articles well selected, and the whole production eminently readable from cover to cover.

Colby has come a long way—both the College and the magazine.

Sid McKeen '49
Belfast, Maine

CONTRIBUTORS



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Project (www.sahanaproject.org), a post-tsunami relief effort focused on her native Sri Lanka.



Rebecca Green (“Music to Their Ears,” P. 18) is a musicologist who specializes in the music of the 18th century but also loves to hear the music of living

composers. She is the coordinator of education at Bay Chamber Concerts in Rockport, Maine, and lives in Waterville.