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From the Editor

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Over some 20 years as a reporter, I witnessed many of the landmark changes that were part of central Maine's inexorable fall from economic grace.

Labor strife that portended the end of a New England mill-town's economic way of life. The closing of the area's last textile mill. The predicted but still unthinkable shutdown of the Kimberly-Clark paper mill in Winslow. The death throes of Hathaway Shirt Co., which, despite several jumpstarts applied to its ailing heart, expired nonetheless.

Now I think—and hope—I may have witnessed a sign of what's next for Waterville.

Recently I strolled through the empty Hathaway mill with Paul Boghossian '76, a developer from Rhode Island. Boghossian, motivated in no small part by a desire to do something for Waterville and Colby, has a tentative plan to convert the riverfront mill into a complex of studios, galleries, shops and apartments. The plan, which still is in a formative stage, would be the linchpin in a strategy to bring new life to the city.

Boghossian led the way through the vast factory I'd last seen filled with shirtmakers at sewing machines. He exuded tempered enthusiasm, raving about the building and its Kennebec view but still mulling the numbers needed to make real his vision of a new creative community—and economy—for Waterville.

But Boghossian isn't alone. A strong team of economic developers and community leaders—including President Bro Adams, Waterville City Administrator Mike Roy '74 and other Colbians—is working to revitalize the Waterville area (see "Reinventing Waterville," Page 10). Spec buildings, downtown festivals, investment in the Kennebec waterfront: it all points to an economic and creative renewal. Or so we all hope, up here on Mayflower Hill.

Of course, Colby has a vested interest in the health of its community. A vital community enriches the experience of Colby students, faculty, staff and alumni. The College is tied to Waterville and central Maine just as it's connected to the larger global community to which it contributes hundreds of alumni every spring. Colby also has what Adams refers to as a moral and historical obligation to its hometown.

It was in 1930 that Waterville was threatened by another potential economic blow. Colby had outgrown its downtown campus, and land for a new campus had been offered—in Augusta. Aghast, local leaders rallied and offered to acquire a site in Waterville. "The citizens of Waterville and friends of Colby are ready to do their part," wrote Percy Shepherd Merrill, Class of 1894, in *The Colby Alumnus*. Three campus plans were considered and one was selected. The community supplied the land on Mayflower Hill, Colby stayed in Waterville (earning congratulations from President Herbert Hoover), and nearly 75 years later the partnership continues. If the latest developments are any indication, the relationship between Colby and the community could soon benefit everyone involved.

Gerry Boyle '78, P '06
Managing Editor

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