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Media

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FEEDBACK



Build Bridges by Understanding Others

"We are they who make the essence and stability of society."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The biggest tragedy leading into and coming out of the election, in my opinion, is that there was not a leader to represent all of those who feel marginalized and unheard in a rapidly changing world. That feeling, however, is increasingly the new, shared American experience. So much is changing for so many, and yet few of us today feel that we had an honest conversation about a common way forward.

General Stanley McChrystal has created the Franklin Project at the Aspen Institute, an effort to build a shared American experience, through service, that has been lost since the end of the military draft. Americans are no longer bound by experiences that bring us together across economic, community, and racial lines in service to our country. This enhances divisiveness—an us-versus-them mentality—as we simply don't know enough different people (a situation not unlike that faced by many colleges in relation to their host towns). This divisiveness is only reinforced by a

media apparatus and social media culture that echoes what we want to hear and a political machinery that exploits it.

I hope we take a step back to really think about how so many of us, even though we may look different and come from different areas, have so much in common. The challenges our country and our world face are very real and solutions to them will demand that we all feel a sense of ownership in the effort. We need to stop talking past each other. We need to stop disrespecting each other's identities. We need to stop undermining ourselves.

I have spent my entire life seeking to understand where the other person is coming from, often at the expense of knowing who I am. I have been privileged to learn a lot, build a global network of friends, and believe in a greater purpose. I also know that I need to do more. We all need to do more. Ask yourself, what will I do to understand and bind myself to others in the solidarity of purpose?

There is a larger lesson here for all of us and one that I believe liberal arts college students, especially Colby students, could apply to not just classroom learning but to experiential learning. A liberal arts education, a Colby education, is about building the foundations of inquiry, analysis, and empathy across a range of disciplines. This foundational skill set must be applied to the very challenge we, as a country, face today. Listening to the other. Acknowledging the other. Caring about the other. Binding to the other. This is what makes a community.

It is the privilege and the responsibility of someone with a Colby education to contribute to the continued American experience. The very roots and intention of the school require us to carry on the legacy. The opening quote from Emerson elegantly captures what he felt about "literary institutions" like Colby and the responsibilities of their trainees. In fact, he spoke those very words to our



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—Graham Macmillan '97

predecessors at the school in 1841. So, if nothing else, let us all, especially alumni of Colby, recognize the responsibilities of the education we have to build a more inclusive, compassionate, and ever-improving nation and meet Emerson's call.

Graham Macmillan '97
Bernardsville, N.J.

By Emphasizing the Extraordinary Magazine Misses Valuable Stories

Thank you for reminding us that we have a voice as Colby alumni and that, according to the editor's note in the fall issue of *Colby Magazine*, have been "quiet over the past few months."

While I am aware of and closely follow current discussions on college campus issues such as sexual assault, "safe" places, cultural diversity, and fully realize that these are also Colby issues that deserve attention and energy, I have some thoughts about *Colby Magazine* which may seem mundane in the bigger picture, but are still worth sharing.

The magazine is resplendent in its layout and presentation and is an accurate reflection of the vitality, both intellectual and physical, of our college. I do think, however, that the editorial inclination is so much toward the extraordinary accomplishments, super athletic

performances, super-athletes, super scholars, and experiences on the edge of reality that we have lost touch with a large part of our alumni body.

The magazine used to be called *The Alumnus* (inappropriate and stereotypical, I realize), but, with that title, it was clear that the publication was clearly designed to speak to alumni. So, if that continues to be true, it would be gratifying to read of alumni who are doing what the mass of us actually do—the unglamorous but essential work and activity of grinding out our lives, raising families, suffering successes, failures, tragedy, and joy.

Many of us deliver essential social services to the homeless, drug addicts, victims of domestic violence, the elderly, and disabled. Many of us also fit into or have emerged from those categories ourselves. There are stories of Colby alumni to be told there. Our stories of work tell of small business prosperity and abject failure. Some of us are unemployed and have wrenching stories of the economic transitions occurring within our professions.

Many of us are working well into our 70s and 80s, not always because we love our professions (as I do) but sometimes out of economic necessity. Actually, there really isn't much written in the magazine of our age group at all. As we prepare for our 50th reunion in 2017, we have asked our classmates for a summary of their lives to date. I expect that these will not be extraordinary stories, but, if told truthfully, that they will be full of life. They will make good reading, I am sure.

Irving Faunce '67, P'90
Wilton, Maine

Remembering Peter Ré

Peter Ré's "freshman" year at Colby was my freshman year at Colby (1951). I sang in the Glee Club all four years. It was great pleasure for me because,



as a teacher and conductor, he got the best out of people. He challenged us with new material and made the whole experience exciting.

When he built his first house out on a lake (I don't remember which one), members of the Glee Club went out to help dig the trenches where the footers would go. Later on, I joked with Peter that I was amazed the house did not fall down considering the amount of beer cans in those trenches.

Peter attended most of our important reunions, the last one being our 50th in 2005.

He was one of those very rare teachers whom you will always remember with great fondness. I miss him.

John Reisman '55
Columbus, Ohio

It was sad to read of Peter Ré's passing in the Fall 2016 *Colby Magazine*. While much can be written about Peter's accomplishments and impact, I will remember him most for a piece of advice that has stuck with me for 32 years. He gave it to me in the context of independent study in music composition, but its broader applicability makes it unforgettable. I've recalled it often, and I've shared it with many students and colleagues (always crediting Peter). "Not every measure has to be genius."

Rich Kliman '84
Phillipsburg, N.J.

Colby honoree Jarrett is Darling of Far Left

Valerie Jarrett, like all other recent Colby College honorees, is an offensive insult to thousands of Colby alumni who expect some semblance of philosophical political balance on the campus of a self-described liberal arts institution. The sad irrefutable truth is Colby is flamboyantly dedicated to a singular intolerant position of radical leftist activism expressed in its faculty, administration, recognition policy, and its open contempt for anyone or any thought of disagreement.

The only resemblance to a traditional American liberal arts college remaining is the pristine Mayflower Hill campus built from the generosity of discarded, forgotten, obviously now irrelevant, dedicated disciples of a bygone era.

Tragic.

Rush Oster '61
Bradenton, Fla.



On John Joseph and Spa Breaks

Regarding John Joseph, I'm sad to hear of his passing. I fondly remember spa breaks in the library. Nothing quite like meeting friends and having a Colby 8 while sitting in one of those booths!

Anne Luedemann Hunt '79
McLean, Va.