Something to Munch On
William Kalasky '15 does more with the white board on his door than leave messages. Kalasky turns his door into art, here “covering” Edvard Munch’s “The Scream.” Photo by Jesse Goldman '12
Megalomaniac?

Megumi Sasada ’12 takes a solo turn during the Megalomaniacs end-of-semester a cappella concert in Lorimer Chapel.

Photo by Julianna Haubner ’14
One million. That’s the number of gallons of oil Colby will no longer be burning annually. It’s also a conservative estimate of the number of dollars Colby will save annually.

But the new biomass facility, which became operational in January, is a boon to Colby for more reasons than that. A number of factors make Colby’s $11.25-million facility a model for green energy. “We’ve gone above the minimum requirements to try and have the cleanest emissions we can,” said Director of Physical Plant Patricia Whitney.

Biomass has recently been criticized for not being as clean-burning as was previously thought. A 2010 report by researchers at the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences cast doubt on biomass as a carbon-neutral fuel and sparked a media blitz. The New York Times reported on plans for multiple biomass facilities being dropped because of public disapproval.

But proponents of biomass point to factors that make for a cleaner plant, and Colby meets those criteria, according to Whitney. One major factor is that Colby’s plant is producing heat, which is more efficient than producing electricity with biomass.

Another key factor is that Colby’s biomass—low-grade wood chips and forest waste including bark and treetops that would otherwise be left on the forest floor—is coming from sustainable forestry operations within a 50-mile radius, keeping trucking to a minimum.

Colby’s plant uses advanced technology, including a gasification combustion system, to create cleaner emissions. “It’s a two stage burn—you burn the gas [along with] burning the wood—so it’s cleaner and more efficient,” said Whitney. Cyclonic dust collectors and a $480,000 electrostatic precipitator minimize pollutants entering the atmosphere.

The plant itself has been built to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) specifications and is expected to receive at least LEED silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

In burning approximately 22,000 tons of wood instead of 1 million gallons of oil, the College estimates a reduction of more than 9,500 tons of carbon annually. The plant is a major component in Colby achieving its goal of carbon neutrality by 2015. —Ruth Jacobs
Opening a Dialogue

Allegations of sexual misconduct this fall prompted the first of a series of community conversations about sexual conduct and sexual assault on campus. On Nov. 15 more than 500 students, faculty, and staff convened in Page Commons for a two-hour discussion moderated by professors Adam Howard (education) and Lisa Arellano (American studies and women’s, gender, and sexuality studies).

The volume of questions made it clear that this discussion would only begin to address the community’s concerns about sexual assault at Colby—and the larger cultural issues that feed behaviors. Questions ranged from the specific (What is Colby’s procedure when an assault is reported? What resources exist for students?) to the more broad (What can we do to make people feel safer on campus? How does silence contribute to the problem?).

In response to calls for more education about Colby’s policies and the procedures around reporting sexual assault, Director of Counseling Services Patti Newmen discussed the process from the counseling perspective. “Whether it happens with a student coming in weeks, months, even years after the event, or within minutes of the event, we’re available to help them through the steps,” she said.

Senior Associate Dean of Students Paul Johnston shared the procedure for filing a complaint—from working with the Colby administration to filing criminal charges, if a victim so chooses. Knowing how difficult these conversations can be, Johnston said, “Don’t feel like you have to come alone, and don’t feel like you have to bear that by yourself.” The Dean of Students Office, he said, supports victims in whatever course of action they choose to take.

Students criticized the use of a student handbook to disseminate procedural information and discussed how to better reach students. Associate Dean of Students and Director of Campus Life Jed Wartman encouraged students to share ideas on how to “get more creative” about sharing Colby’s policies.

One reply—“A great way to disseminate this information would be a gender resource center”—was followed by thunderous applause. Professor of Education Lyn Mikel Brown and Berol Dewdney ’12 proposed a gender and sexuality diversity resource center last year, and discussions are ongoing. A proposal for a full-time position will go to the Board of Trustees in February, according to Brown. A resource center, advocates say, would create a place for ongoing discussion of this and other related issues.

Issues of consent came up repeatedly—from what qualifies as consent to creating a culture in which “enthusiastic consent” is the only acceptable form. Students in the group Male Athletes Against Violence talked about how men can contribute to change. And students began to discuss action steps—not what the College could do, but what they could do. “If you don’t know some of the ways in which communities have taken care of themselves and each other, you owe it to yourselves to learn those things,” said moderator Arellano. “I am just suggesting that you don’t want to entirely concede your power to take care of yourself to somebody else.”

Students’ ideas flowed. Think about the language you use and how it may disrespect others. Pass community standards to freshmen. Know what consent is. Don’t use alcohol as an excuse. Hold everyone to a high standard. Model respect. Said one student, “We’re here because we’ve been used to meeting high expectations in all areas of our lives, and I don’t think this should be any different.” —R.J.
Walking in Someone Else’s Shoes

When Nick Tucker ’10 and Sam Rouleau ’10 set out to walk across the country, volunteering along the way, the distance seemed vast. But they’re measuring the trip not in miles but in the parade of people they meet. The founders of Making Strides left Maine in August and have stayed with Colby alumni along the way. In late December they were in Dallas, Tex., with the families of Katherine Roberts ’93 and Katherine Tagtmeier ’92.

Tucker and Rouleau bid their hosts goodbye with the prospect that their Colby connection may lead them to meet again. Not so for many of the people the pair has met along their trek, including the children in an AIDS center where Tucker and Rouleau built a brick walkway and, as a reward, played with the kids.

“They seemed happy,” Tucker wrote on the pair’s blog. “That is until we had to leave and Reginald started to cry. Sam and I had a hard time walking out that door. Usually people could say ‘it’s ok, I’ll be back’ But that’s not necessarily the case with us.”

The Making Strides site has blog posts, a map showing the walkers’ location, news coverage of their journey, and contact information. —Gerry Boyle ’78

Delayed Reaction, Strong Occupation

Occupy Wall Street began Sept. 17. By late October, some students and faculty were wondering why it seemed no one was reacting at Colby. So they took action and organized two events to engage students, faculty, and staff in discussions about the issues brought forth by the Occupy movement and issues at Colby that participants thought should be addressed.

A post on a campus-wide e-mail list by Associate Professor Walter Hatch (government) read: “We fill Ostrove to hear representatives from Wall Street talk about the virtues of ‘The Private Sector,’ and yet we do not participate in any of the ‘Occupy Maine’ events. What’s up with that? If you are as curious as I am by the silence at Colby, join me in the Diamond Atrium at 3:45 on Tuesday.”

About 70 people did, including about 20 professors, and the small-group conversations that followed seemed more like seminar discussions than activist meetings. Topics included definitions of success, fear, and social class. “It was successful beyond my wildest imagination,” said Hatch of the Oct. 25 event. “It was just a level of creative thinking that I appreciated.”

Hannah DeAngelis ’12, who said she thought Colby’s silence was related to a lack of identification with the movement among students, agreed. She spoke of the egalitarian nature of the discussions—faculty participating with everyone else, and no clear leader—and the “solidarity” she saw at the event. “It felt like it was real, and other people cared,” she said.

Afterwards, said Renzo Moyano ’14, the movement became part of conversations across campus—from the classroom to the dinner table and on the Community Digest of Civil Discourse, an all-campus e-mail list.

“When I saw the enthusiasm, I realized this could be the start of a great movement on campus.”

Renzo Moyano ’14

New Affiliation with Columbia

A new agreement with Columbia University gives Colby students another opportunity to earn a dual degree in engineering. Colby has offered a similar program with Dartmouth for many years, but the Columbia program offers specialized degrees, such as electrical engineering, said Associate Professor of Computer Science Bruce Maxwell, advisor to the program.

Students apply during their senior year and spend two years after graduation at Columbia. According to Columbia’s materials, admission is guaranteed to students from affiliated liberal arts colleges who meet the requirements.

As part of Occupy Colby, this public art display hung on the walls of the Diamond Building to provide a space for creative exchange.
Same Place, Different Mission

G. Calvin Mackenzie sees the irony. Forty years ago the Goldfarb Family Distinguished Professor of Government was in the U.S. Army, fighting against a communist Vietnamese government. This semester, as a Fulbright scholar, he is working for the government of Vietnam, helping to set up American studies programs.

Mackenzie, author or editor of more than 15 books on American government and politics, is looking forward to returning with a different mission. “It’s a beautiful country,” he said. “The people are lovely and the economy is thriving.”

Through the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences in Hanoi, Mackenzie will work on developing curricula, training and gathering resources for faculty, and likely conducting seminars or lectures for scholars studying America. “If I can help them understand some things about how American government makes decisions—or most of the time doesn’t make decisions—maybe that’ll be useful,” he said two weeks prior to leaving.

American studies programs in Vietnam, he said, will be different from those in America. “To them American studies probably doesn’t mean deeply delving into American literature,” he said, but rather training people on how to do business with Americans. “I think their government understands if you’re going to have a modern economy you’ve got to staff it with well-trained people.”

Based in Hanoi, Mackenzie plans to travel throughout Southeast Asia on Fulbright-related assignments with his wife, Sarah (Sally) Mackenzie ’70. A professor at University of Maine, she was awarded a Fulbright to teach and consult with the government regarding school reform, teacher preparation, and leadership development.

The Mackenzies applied for Fulbrights together. Because Cal Mackenzie had served as a Fulbright in China in 2005, his candidacy was prioritized below those who had never received a Fulbright. Sally Mackenzie received her award first, and the Colby professor was made an alternate. “I was actually looking forward to being the trailing spouse,” he said. But alas, a month later, Mackenzie got the news that his services, too, were needed.

“We both had interesting things to do there,” he said. “I think that’s what made this happen.” —R.J.

Giving Marriage a New Ring

Kate Bolick ’95 started her magazine journalism career as an editorial assistant at The Atlantic magazine. Several stops later—including freelance assignments for Colby—the New York-based freelance writer wrote the cover story—and made the cover.

Bolick’s full-page photo graced the cover of the November issue along with the headline for her story, “What, Me Marry?” The story, about the ways men’s diminished prospects and achievement have significantly narrowed options for single women, describes a cultural sea change. Women are marrying later and less often and increasingly choosing to have children without a husband. “Foremost among the reasons for all these changes in family structure are the gains of the women’s movement,” Bolick writes. “Over the past half-century, women have steadily gained on—and in some ways surpassing—men in education and employment.”

It’s a wide-ranging article—historical, sociological, and cultural. And though the facts that support its premise are all around us, the story hit with a bang. Bolick appeared on the television talk shows, was interviewed far and wide, and saw her story optioned by Sony Television for a television series. If you didn’t see the story the first time around, you may see it coming to your home. —G.B.
A selection of tweets from @colbycollege. To see links, catch up on tweets, or sign up, click the Twitter icon on the Colby homepage.

Waterville to get $50K from @MaineArts Commission. Colby Museum Dir. Corwin: City is “poised to become a destination for arts.”

Fri. @1, @MPBNews Speaking In Maine: Maria Fenwick '03 on young teachers and urban school reform @TeachPlus #education

Dec. 16

Walk. Bike. Telecommute. Other. Ezra Dyer '99 talks to @ColbyCollege classmate @NFallat about @UnDriving @NYTimes

Dec. 14

RT @emmaloupearson: First day of finals @colbycollege #playedhardworkingharder | Time for all that hard work to pay off. Good luck to all

Dec. 14

RT @elisa_anne: Love this @insideColby post: “Never pass up opportunity to learn.” Easy to forget, but so important

Dec. 12

Reid Farrington '99's production of A Christmas Carol is on the cover of @TCG's American Theatre mag. #theater

Dec. 5

RT @inthecac: Definition of the Day: Dana Sauce

Dec. 5

3 Mule teams played Bowdoin 12/3: men's hockey won after trailing, women's hockey won in OT, women's b-ball won by 15

Dec. 5

Prof. Catherine Besteman's student-produced immigration exhibit wins national museum award | Sun Journal

Dec. 2

TwitterFEED

Microcosm of a Small World

Of 7 billion individuals now on Earth, a mere 25 million are native speakers of Amharic. So it was a long shot when Olivia Kefauver and Thomas Kimball, senior environmental policy majors, posted an e-mail announcement to the campus community Nov. 28 headed “ES493 class seeks Amharic speaker,” looking for translation help.

“I didn’t know there was someone doing something on Ethiopia,” said Abebu Kassie ’14, from Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, after she responded to the query. “I was really surprised. And really pleased at the same time.” She was even more surprised to find that Matthew Cheever ’12, another environmental policy major in the class, was studying Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile. “He is doing [research about] where I come from,” she said. “The lake he is studying? I’m from that spot!”

The ES493: Environmental Policy Practicum class presented its research—six focused studies of key environmental issues in Ethiopia—Dec. 7, showing PowerPoint presentations featuring data-rich GIS maps and graphics. In January Assistant Professor Travis W. Reynolds, who taught the course, will travel to Ethiopia, where he worked as a graduate student.

Of particular interest to the NGOs, said Reynolds, will be Kefauver’s research on how public institutions help or constrain the activities of environmental NGOs in Ethiopia. He was visibly eager to present his students’ research to university scholars in Ethiopia, confident the findings and large GIS maps layered with information about the anthropogenic drivers of water quality in the Lake Awasa watershed, for example, would prove valuable.

—Stephen Collins ’74

This GIS map developed by Thomas Kimball ’12 titled “Land Use and Elevation Emphasizing Agriculture Areas Bordering Forests” was slated to be part of a presentation to Ethiopian NGOs in January.