April 2010

Colby News

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine/vol99/iss1/5

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by the College Archives: Colbiana Collection at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Magazine by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Colby. For more information, please contact mfkelly@colby.edu.
Wishful Thinking

Ben Desmond ’11 sprinkles snow on Matt Vivero ’11, who suns himself on frozen Messalonskee Lake. March in Maine is not quite bathing-suit season.

Photo by Charlotte Wilder ’11
Library Legacy

These are just a few of the names carved by students (and a roofer) high in the Miller Library tower. Traditionally students have left their mark after climbing the tower to touch the blue light.

*Photo by Brian DiMento '10*
State Department’s Judith A. McHale to Speak at 189th Commencement

Judith A. McHale, under secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs at the State Department and former president of Discovery Communications, will deliver Colby’s 189th commencement address Sunday, May 23.

McHale was appointed by President Obama to help lead America’s engagement with the people of the world. Her career has been devoted to building companies and nonprofits that reach out to and connect people globally. With Colby’s deep commitment to internationalism, including a senior class representing 29 countries, McHale’s international background is particularly relevant.

Former U.S. Ambassador Robert Gelbard ’64, chair of the trustees’ honorary degree committee, credited McHale with redefining international broadcast communications and praised her ability to work with people of disparate cultures.

McHale grew up in Britain and apartheid-era South Africa. Her upbringing inspired a lifelong commitment to social justice and engagement with development issues, especially in Africa. As president and chief executive officer of Discovery Communications from 1987 to 2006 she helped build the Discovery Channel’s parent company into one of the world’s most extensive media enterprises, with channels broadcast in more than 170 countries.

More at www.colby.edu/commencement
**Colby Ski Area Redux**

Skiers came in droves to the former Colby Ski Area this winter after alumni, city officials, and others collaborated to open the new Quarry Road Recreation Area. The city-owned facility opened with a five-kilometer Nordic ski trail along Messalonskee Stream looping through land at the base of the former alpine ski hill, last operated by the College in the 1970s. Organizers say the initial trail is just the beginning and that the land has almost unlimited potential as a year-round recreation area.

John Koons ’72, a driving force behind the project who grew up skiing on “the Colby Hill,” joined with City Manager Mike Roy ’74 in what began as a land-swap puzzle. Roy had to find new recreational property in order to sell a city-owned golf-course restaurant, and he approached the College. After Colby agreed to sell and the deal went through in 2008, “It was pretty much the next day that John Koons was at my door,” Roy said.

Fundraising for the first phase netted more than $300,000 from the city, state, foundations, and private donors, many with Colby affiliations. John Morton, a trail designer with experience on several Olympic venues, was brought in to plan trails on the 120 acres.

Initial trails include tracks for classical and skate skiing in a 16-foot-wide groomed swath. “It’s more like a boulevard,” Koons said, comparing it with carriage trails at Acadia National Park.

Cross-country skiers from Colby and surrounding communities besieged the area before winter petered out early. A section open to snowshoeing and walking turned into a major draw for non-skiing area residents too.

Koons said that the successful launch could be just the beginning. Plans include snowmaking equipment, expanded access for walking and biking, ski competitions, kayaking and canoeing, perhaps even a snowboard park on the old ski hill. He even dreams of resurrecting the ski jump.

A grassroots organization is being formed to help run and maintain the area. —**Gerry Boyle ’78**

---

**Record-Setting Dean**

Dean of Faculty, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Professor of Psychology Ed Yeterian is among the best at what he does. Not included on that list: talking about himself.

“He’s enormously humble and reserved,” said President William D. Adams. “I admire that.”

Yeterian declined an interview as he prepares to leave Eustis after 12 years as the College’s top academic officer to return full-time to classrooms and laboratories. But Adams was unstinting in his praise: for his colleague’s “enormous capacity to do mountains of work,” his thoroughness and effectiveness, his fair-minded, even-handed, courteous approach. “He’s managed the complexities of that enormously challenging job with extraordinary ability and effectiveness,” Adams said. “He tried to treat every-one the same, with great respect and care but always with the same institutional good in mind.”

Yeterian joined Colby’s faculty in 1978 and was named to this position in 1998. Now the longest-serving dean of faculty in Colby’s history (the position dates to 1947), Yeterian will return to the Psychology Department after June 30. Getting acquainted there shouldn’t be a steep climb, though. On top of his prodigious duties on Mayflower Hill, Yeterian consistently maintained his neuroscience research in Boston one day a week.

As dean he was central to the strategic planning that helped shape new initiatives like the Goldfarb Center and new and repurposed academic facilities. He took leading roles in spreading project-based learning across the curriculum and building the Colby Undergraduate Research Symposium. He worked on new programs and minors in Jewish and Italian studies, adoption of more rigorous standards for academic honors, and a curricular review with a focus on evaluation of learning. In addition Yeterian made sure Colby was central in major research grants to Maine.

Colby’s ninth dean of faculty, Lori G. Kletzer, officially begins her duties July 1. —**Stephen Collins ’74**

“He’s managed the complexities of that enormously challenging job with extraordinary ability and effectiveness.”

President William D. Adams
InsideColby iPhone App
Almost everything at insideColby.com is now available on iPhones (and Touches and iPads) with a free application.
If you haven’t visited insideColby.com, it’s a view of Colby through the eyes of students who produce videos, podcasts, stories, photos, blogs, and more. The InsideColby app launched in mid-February and is available through the iTunes store. [www.insidecolby.com/iphone](http://www.insidecolby.com/iphone)

Provocative Musical Theater

The notion that musical theater—think *South Pacific* and *Annie*—is provocative proved provocative itself in March. When Irving D. Suss Visiting Guest Artist Jonathan Mastro (theater and dance) directed *Next! A Cabaret From the Front Lines* based on that premise, Maine radio and television producers jumped on the story.

In March Maine Public Radio aired a five-minute feature with recordings of the student ensemble’s singing woven through Mastro’s commentary. A day earlier Portland’s NBC affiliate featured a longer interview with Mastro on its TV magazine show, *207*.

Mastro came to Colby in the glow of having provided original music and musical direction in the wildly successful *Our Town* production currently running off-Broadway. His roots are in Chicago theater, having worked with Second City, the Goodman Theater, and The Neo-Futurists.

His *Next!* program was an amalgamation of material from shows including *Working*, *Annie*, *Hair*, and *South Pacific*, with students playing themselves putting on a revue. “I’m interested in musical theater as an instrument for social change,” he said on MPBN’s *Maine Things Considered*. “I’m interested in shows that give you a sense of what’s possible in the world, and not necessarily just shows that show you pretty dancers and that have happy endings.” —S.B.C.

### Radio and TV Broadcasts

**Maine Things Considered**, March 12, 2010
“Cabaret Fuses Popular Musical Numbers to Deliver Social Message” (5 minutes)
[www.colby.edu/mpbn_cabaret](http://www.colby.edu/mpbn_cabaret)

**207**, March 11, 2010
Interview with host Rob Caldwell (6.5 minutes)
[www.colby.edu/207_cabaret](http://www.colby.edu/207_cabaret)

Trading Places

Sulaiman Nasser ‘12 and Khaled Wardak ’13 spent two days in February with about 20 senior leaders of the Maine National Guard’s 1136th Transportation Company who were scheduled to deploy to Kabul in mid-March. Along with four other students from Afghanistan (including Qiamuddin Amiry ’09, now in a master’s program at Tufts University) and John Campbell ’09, they traveled to Bangor to help orient the Maine soldiers to the culture, customs, and religious foundations of Afghan society.

Participants on both sides were enthusiastic. “This will help them avoid some misunderstandings [and] save some American and Afghan lives,” Nasser said.

“It was awesome,” said Wardak. “Both sides learned about each other a lot. ... Some cultural sensitivities can bring a major change,” he said.

The sessions involved role playing, eating together, practicing communication techniques, even an introduction to the Koran. “It is unheard of for a National Guard unit to get this kind of training,” said Army National Guard Maj. Darryl Lyon.

Humor and camaraderie helped keep the training on track. One exercise asked both sides to list stereotypes of the other, no matter how unflattering. American soldiers heard they are perceived as ignorant and arrogant, while the Afghans were told they are often seen as terrorists, Nasser and Wardak recalled.

Part of the value students brought, Wardak said, was that they all have recent experience on the ground in Afghanistan and a good sense of the “word on the streets.”

Army National Guard Lt. Col. James D. Campbell ’86 called the training “absolutely essential for us to succeed. ... And I see success as us being able to leave Afghanistan.”

“You can’t win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people,” Wardak said, “… if you don’t understand and respect the culture.” —S. B. C.

A longer version of this article, with a link to the MPBN story featuring Sulaiman Nasser ‘12, is online at [www.colby.edu/mag](http://www.colby.edu/mag).
Angela Davis on Activism

Activist and scholar Angela Davis lent her voice to Colby’s student-led SHOUT! Weekend when she spoke on campus March 4. Davis, a former Black Panther who was on the FBI’s most-wanted list in 1970, encouraged students to resuscitate the movement that swept President Obama into office—a movement, Davis contends, that has receded in our collective memory.

“Why did we lose the afterglow of that moment so rapidly?” she asked a packed Lorimer Chapel. Echoing the underlying theme of SHOUT! (an acronym for Speaking, Hearing, Opening Up Together), Davis suggested that instead of putting all of their aspirations on the shoulders of one African-American man, Americans should recognize our collective power.

Now professor emerita at the University of California Santa Cruz, Davis, 66, reflected on the duration of her activism and how we seem to fight the same battles over and over. Instead of thinking that the battle for civil rights ended in 1964, for example, we need to think of civil rights for Central American immigrants and for the LGBT community, she said. “Rather than achieving a permanent victory, a definitive victory, what we learn in the process of conducting these struggles is that the terrain of the struggle gets broader.” In this collective struggling, “we learn how to glimpse new possibilities that otherwise would never have become apparent to us.”

During the question-and-answer period, a student asked Davis to advise a group of students with a cause. Davis encouraged the students to use social media to find out how others around the country are addressing this issue. “Create a community,” Davis said. “You’ll be far more powerful than if you are some students on one campus.” — Laura Meader

For an insideColby podcast on SHOUT! Weekend, visit www.insideColby.com/podcast

Students Win Projects for Peace Grants

Colby students were awarded two $10,000 Davis Projects for Peace grants, with each seeking to improve the experience of immigrant students—in Maryland middle schools and in European high schools respectively. Projects for Peace was begun by Kathryn Wasserman Davis in 2007, and this is the fourth year that Colby students have won two of the 100 annual grants.

Peace Bubbles, a Maryland-based project proposed by Jenny Chen ’12, will create content for Chen’s JJ Express magazine to foster discussion of community issues and identify some problems that middle school students can begin solving. Journey Into Culture II, headed by Michael Hempel ’11, will involve as many as five Colby students working on documentary films with high school students in Germany and France to explore cultural identity and integration.

Judge Nancy Gertner Wins 2010 Brody Judicial Service Award

The 2010 Morton A. Brody Distinguished Judicial Service Award was won by the Honorable Nancy Gertner, U.S. District Court Judge for the District of Massachusetts. A ceremony was planned for April 11, when an address by Gertner was to follow a panel discussion on “The Evolving Impact of Technology on Law and the Courts.”

Before her appointment to the federal court, in 1994, Judge Gertner was a defense and civil rights lawyer in Boston who litigated significant cases affecting reproductive rights, employment discrimination against women, and desegregation of Boston’s public schools. As a judge she has decided cases where racial profiling, employment discrimination, and fair housing were at issue. The Brody Award honors an outstanding federal or state judge who embodies integrity, compassion, humanity, and judicial craftsmanship.

More at www.colby.edu/brody
**Energizing Sustainability in Mid-Maine**

Maine’s third-biggest Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant this winter was awarded to Waterville and Winslow thanks to efforts of Steve Erario ’10. The senior environmental studies major provided most of the data and cowrote the application for $170,000 to fund community energy conservation and an alternative energy feasibility study.

The work should stimulate a dozen jobs, and, at the current price of heating oil, residents will save an estimated $115,000 per year in fuel costs after work is completed, Erario said.

Erario envisions 300 to 400 subsidized home-energy audits. Perhaps 100 homes will get improvements through low-cost materials and volunteer labor, and another 100 could get financing from partnering lenders. Solar-heated domestic water will be an option for homes with good exposure. Bulk purchasing will hold down costs for materials and installation, he said.

“He did all the number crunching, and he was the person who made sure all the t’s were crossed and i’s were dotted so the application met the precise criteria of the state,” said grant coauthor John Joseph Jr., a professor at Thomas College (and son of John Joseph of Colby Spa fame).

A Udall Scholar in 2008, Erario worked with the city since his first year at Colby and spent summers working on sustainability and managing student interns. He helped establish Sustain Mid-Maine, an organization focused on energy, transportation, reuse and recycling, environmental education, and local foods. “He embodies what civic engagement is all about,” said his thesis adviser, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Philip Nyhus. —S.B.C.

**Five Granted Tenure**

Five assistant professors were granted tenure at the Jan. 23 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

**Phil Brown** (economics) conducts much of his research in rural China to understand how China’s rapidly changing economic environment affects the behavior of poor, rural households. He is currently vice president of the Chinese Economists Society.

**Walter Hatch** (government), a former political reporter, teaches Introduction to International Relations, Chinese politics, Chinese geopolitics, and the Political Economy of Regionalism. He is editor of The Japanese Economy, a journal, and is author of Asia’s Flying Geese: How Regionalization Shapes Japan (Cornell University Press, 2010).

**Arne Koch** (German and Russian) is investigating literary and visual representations of cats in German culture in the 19th and 20th centuries. He has written extensively on German film and music and is overseeing the rewriting of the German curriculum.

**Philip Nyhus** (environmental studies) explores the policy dimensions of human-wildlife conflict and endangered species conservation. His current research includes developing new tools and processes for biodiversity risk assessment, GIS-based spatial models, and tiger and large mammal conservation in the United States and Asia.

**Tilar Mazzeo** (English) teaches British Romantic poetry, travel writing, and literary theory. She is the author of the New York Times best-selling biography The Widow Clicquot (Harper Collins, 2008). Mazzeo writes on food and wine for the popular press and lived in the California wine country before coming to Colby.

All will be promoted to associate professor to begin the 2010-11 academic year.