

Colby



Colby Magazine

Volume 95
Issue 3 *Fall* 2006

Article 3

October 2006

Letters

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Recommended Citation

(2006) "Letters," *Colby Magazine*: Vol. 95: Iss. 3, Article 3.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.colby.edu/colbymagazine/vol95/iss3/3>

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Covering the Sixties

Congratulations on the great cover for the summer 2006 issue. You took a risk and it worked.

Brian Connors '88
Windsor, Colo.

Rock On

I loved the idea of the article “Rock Never Dies” (summer 2006 *Colby*) and was interviewed by Brendan Sullivan [’06] as a part of the ’60s Colby band, Love Equation.

My 16-year-old son has always enjoyed the music of the ’60s, but he is equally involved in current music. He hands me his iPod earphones whenever he has a song he thinks I’ll like, and he’s usually right. I’ll hear something on the Seattle alternative radio station (KEXP) and download it for him. That cross-generational music sharing has been, for us, an important way to stay in touch. And, at 57, it’s fun to know more current music than 90 percent of friends my age.

I remember my dad buying me one of the first Moody Blues albums before I had heard of them (he was, and still is at 86, very music-cool), so I have tried to keep up that tradition. Current alternative music is different than ours, of course, and frequently innovative (take the Magnetic Fields or Radiohead).

On a separate note, the Love Equation performed at a couple of Colby reunions recently and were lucky to have two generations of Colby performers—Vic Pinansky ’68, who started the band in the 60s, and son Marc ’00. Music sharing at its best.

Chris Crandall '70
Seattle, Wash.

As one who is familiar with ’60s rock, as I was there, I commend the photographer for finding and arranging the album covers illustrating the story “Rock Never Dies.” Looking at them brought back memories of listening to Janis Joplin, with Big Brother and the Holding Company, tear into “Ball and Chain” while visiting

a campus hot spot my freshman year in college; and the Moody Blues doing “Timothy Leary’s Dead” in my scholarship hall room. Great memories of great rock and roll. The magazine cover captures the album covers of the era; like the artist, I was there.

A. Vaughn Tolle P’08
Wichita, Kan.

I have a 14-year-old son who we just took to see his first rock concert—John Fogerty! My son knows more about classic rock and roll than my husband and I ever did. He is in his first year of high school and is starting his own band. It is great to see him listening to this music. He has also learned so much about the time period we middle-agers grew up in! Great rock and roll never dies!

Erin Ryan
Mass. and Fla.

A “Pit Rat” Turned Surgeon

Thanks for reacquainting me with Pat Wood (surgeon Patrick Wood ’75, “The Perfect Fit,” summer 2006 *Colby*), whom I knew at Colby as a dedicated “Pit Rat.”

Back then, ’74-’75, Pat had a permanent desk in The Pit, on the lower level of the library. He hobbled around with crutches (must have been the football injury) and was a much more reliable fixture there than the Colby clock. It at once filled me with awe that he studied so much, then his work ethic became an inspiration. I eventually chose a desk in the stacks as “my spot.” I somehow knew all these years Pat would accomplish as much as he has. Thanks again for a great profile.

Kate Cone '76
Harpstown, Maine

Dr. Patrick Wood is one of the greatest men I have ever known. He performed a liver transplant on me when I was 13 years old. I am about to turn 24 and because of him I was able to get married, become a nurse, and have a family. He is my hero.

Amber Ehbrenspenger
Houston, Texas

A Conservative Movement

This is the only time I have done a search for Colby’s magazine online. In fact, until today I didn’t know I could find it online. The reason for my search? I had read Professor [Joseph] Reiser’s article (“Lonely on the Right,” summer 2006 *Colby*) several weeks ago, when the magazine arrived in the mail. Since then I have commented on it to several friends. The article has sparked such interesting conversations that I wanted to reread it but couldn’t because I had discarded the magazine. I was so happy to be able to retrieve it online.

As a secondary-school teacher, I long ago realized that I have to keep my political and social preferences to myself. Right-leaning discussions are balanced by left-leaning ones. It would be a travesty if my students held back their thoughts for fear of offending me, and worse, negatively affecting their course grade.

Thanks for giving me so much to think about, Professor.

Paula Lust Davidson '76
Elkins Park, Penn.

Regarding “Lonely on the Right,” my roommate at Colby was the first to found the Colby Republicans in 1993. The Colby Democrats were already well entrenched. When she was going through the process of establishing the club, she had to find a college professor who would act as the “faculty sponsor.” It was a long and difficult search. I’m glad to hear that Colby has at least one Republican professor now. Great article.

Brandy Shafter Chapman '93
New Canaan, Conn.

The Colby faculty took a sharp turn to left during the Reagan administration. Since then I have refused all pleas for contributions. I see no change in sight. My contributions have gone to Hillsdale College.

John Fifield '42
Pinehurst, N.C., and U.S. Virgin Islands

On Fraternities' Demise

I was disappointed to see not a single letter from a female student in response to your magazine article about the demise of fraternities at Colby ("The End," spring 2006 *Colby*), and not a single letter supporting the College in their decision to get rid of fraternities.

This was the deciding factor for me when I selected Colby over some of the other small liberal arts colleges I considered. I still commend the bravery and character this showed on the part of President Cotter and the board at the time. Good for you.

Rachel Tilney '89
Lebanon, N.H.

Many students chose Colby specifically for the fact that there were no longer fraternities. In a school of Colby's size, groups such as fraternities can act as a divisive force. It is too bad that alumni have been alienated by these actions, but a new and different Colby has emerged. If fraternities were still in existence would we be ranked as high as we are with news organizations and named a "new ivy?" Would international students still be as interested in the Colby experience?

Yes, new and different groups have been created that have filled some of the gaps, and to returning alumni it might seem as though these new groups promote division.

But in truth they give students an outlet to express their beliefs in a way a fraternity never could. Joining one of these groups allows a student a voice, but it does not have to be their only voice, they can join as many groups, as many factions as necessary to truly express themselves. And they get to choose—they do not have to be chosen.

What makes Colby such an amazing institution is that each student has the ability to choose their own path, whether it is through groups, academics, or athletics. Everyone finds their own way, without having to follow the path set out by others.

Nicholas Snyder '05
Portland, Maine

It's not surprising that all [younger alumni] have seen portrayed is the *Animal House* mentality of fraternities and sororities. Face it—good, nice, well-behaved just doesn't sell! Would you pay ten bucks to see a movie about straight-A students doing nothing but charity work? I don't think so.

When I joined ATO in the spring of 1971, the chapter (like many on campus) was in trouble. Two years later we had done a good enough job of turning things around membership-wise and academically that two alumni paid off the house mortgage in full—not something they would do if it was all hazing and beer-guzzling parties. I won't deny those things

went on, though our hazing did not include anything that we brothers would not do ourselves. And by the way, it was all in fun.

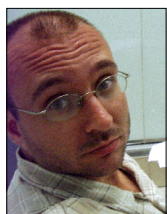
A person joined a fraternity or sorority because they had a common bond with the members, not because they were "chosen." Many of those revolved around athletics. You didn't have to join a fraternity because you were on a team, or part of any group, but you sure might have the desire. Just because you did, you weren't giving up your individuality. In many ways you had a safe place to express it. You could belong to as many organizations as you wanted. Many ATO chapters even had a group of ATO sisters on campus, so we weren't even totally gender biased. The friendships I have formed—and common bonds with all ATO brothers extend beyond Colby—have lasted a lifetime. I don't know many Dana or Woodman people who say the same thing.

You will have a hard time convincing me that the social atmosphere is more inclusive today than it was back then. You think it's better, because you never had the chance to experience it yourself. You only get to read what others have to sensationalize.

Paul Harrington '74
North Kingston, R.I.

Editor's note: The letter above is in response to a posted comment from younger alumni asking what fraternity life was really like.

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