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## From the Editor

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*Colby College*

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On the chance that you, like me, need the occasional dose of inspiration, let me point you to our Q&A (page 30) with Joan Omaming Carling. A soft-spoken human rights activist who advocates for indigenous peoples in the Philippines, Carling arrived on Colby's serene campus in August after a summer dodging black-clad assassins on motorcycles and attending funerals for murdered colleagues.

Colby's 2006 Oak Human Rights Fellow, she is a profile in courage, standing up to the corporate-military machine dominating her country, armed not with wealth or power but belief in her principles.

And as a source of inspiration, this year's Oak program doesn't end there. Last fall, Patrice Franko, Grossman Professor of Economics and director of the Oak Institute for the Study of International Human Rights, offered students enrolled in Carling's seminar the opportunity to apply for the position of research assistant.

Franko was so impressed by the caliber of the students who responded that she shared some of the correspondence with *Colby*.

"I have a keen interest in human rights, particularly for those in communities often neglected by the most powerful nations," wrote one sophomore.

"I was born in Zimbabwe, have lived 15 of my 21 years in Southern Africa, most recently (before I started at Colby College) in the Kingdom of Swaziland," wrote another applicant, a junior. "As I continue my studies at Colby College, every course I do, whether economics or anthropology, has led me to look back at my life and analyze the forces that work to create the conditions in the countries I have lived in."

"This past year we focused largely on the crisis in Darfur," a first-year wrote of her high school experience. "Other projects have included women's rights, LGBT rights and conflict diamonds—all issues that I am very interested in."

"Within the first month of school I will finish designing and applying for an independent major with human rights as the central focal point. I also aim to incorporate environmental issues as well, with the broader perspective of the effects of globalization. . . . In addition, my father was born and raised in the Philippines, so I feel a personal connection and dedication to human rights, the environment, and indigenous peoples."

And on it went, each one impressive. A senior already had done human rights work with the National Council of Churches of the Philippines and at a center for torture victims in the United States. A sophomore spent three summers working for the Landmine Survivors Network. Another student, originally from Burma, had lived under a "brutal military regime" for 18 years and wanted to work to reduce human rights abuses. Another had organized an India-Pakistan peace conference and at Colby created an independent major called Peace and Conflict Studies.

These days it seems peace is a lot harder to find than conflict, certainly in the news. Carling is working steadfastly and heroically to try to slow the tide of violence and oppression that is rising in her country. This batch of correspondence—from students eager to learn from an on-the-ground practitioner who is in Maine on a one-semester fellowship—gives one hope that at Colby, and in the world beyond it, there is a critical mass of others ready to follow Carling's remarkable example.

Gerry Boyle '78, P'07J  
Managing Editor

*Each year we bring on a student to work as editorial assistant at Colby. This year's assistant, Adriana Nordin Manan '07, brings impressive credentials. Adriana is a Davis scholar from Malaysia with an independent major in globalization and social justice. She recently completed an internship at Malaysia Kini, a large independent online newspaper, covering everything from tsunami recovery to national affairs. We're glad to have her and look forward to featuring her work.*

# Colby

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