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Dispatches

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Letters

Good News for Gay Alumni

I just received my copy of *Colby* and I was thrilled to read that students and faculty are exploring the idea of a gay and lesbian alumni association. My partner just helped start one at her alma mater (Hood College, Frederick, Md.). There was much concern about it initially as Hood is a small, women's college, but once the idea took hold, it was a great success and there was little, if any, resistance from the other alums.

I also read recently that Colby got a high rating from the Princeton Review for "gay community accepted." That's great news too. "Accepted" is only half the battle, but far superior to its alternative.

Keep up the good work.

Diane Smith '86
New Market, Md.

Were Safety Rules Followed?

How sad to read of a promising life snuffed out in a canoe accident (Editor's Desk, summer 2002 *Colby*). You observe that it was "a freak accident, a flick of nature's hand." Now I don't know the circumstances of Kyawswar Win's canoe trip, but if it was a college-owned canoe—the Outing Club's?—I can't help but wonder if proper safety rules were not followed. Was he qualified to take out a canoe solo?

Was he wearing a life preserver? It should be required of all those using college boats. Did he let others know he was going out? Did he check weather reports? Messalonskee Lake is big but relatively shallow. Standing waves can pick up very quickly. Perhaps all these conditions were fulfilled, but most boating accidents happen because people are not prepared.

William C. Winslow '57
Public Affairs officer
Flotilla 5-3
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
New York City

"Silent Woman" Has English Roots

I was quite amused at the account by Susan Sterling (Last Page, summer 2002 *Colby*) about the "Silent Woman."

I don't think the "Silent Woman" sign in the 1970s was intended as a social statement. It was, in fact, a copy of an English pub that served the 95th Bomb Group (8th USAAF) in Horham, Suffolk, England 1942 to 1945. It is pictured in the book *One Last Look*, pg. 68. I remember the "Pub" from my tour as a pilot in the 95th and was surprised to see it in the book.

I don't think what Susan Sterling implies was ever intended. Anyhow it was a *great* place to go for a dinner. Waterville has not seen the same quality since!!

H. Stanley Palmer
Director of Physical Plant (retired)
China, Maine

Gillum's Lessons Remembered

I took Survey of Modern European History (1500-present) as a freshman from Gillum (he was known by only this one-word name then) in 1955-56. To my complete surprise, I aced the mid-year exam, which consisted of a one-hour essay, three 20-minute essays, three 10-minute essays, and the remainder "identifications." We included self-addressed stamped postcards when we handed in the blue books, so that we could get the results quickly, and we were told that "if we had any questions" about the grade, we could see him. I decided to ask. When I opened the door to his office, he greeted me with, "I know why you're here; you want to know what you did right! Well, you answered the questions!" I didn't even have to sit down to understand what he meant.

Some of my short "essays" amounted to only three sentences. No beginning, middle, end; they were all middle. I was too rushed in that taxing exam to do anything else.

Most day-to-day writing requires this of us. I learned it from Gillum. I remember the course title, time it met, and exam outline, and learned how to get to the point.

Helen Payson Seager '58
Nantucket, Mass.

The Cosby Chair Serves the Cause

I submitted a letter to the editor regarding the piece on Colby students' service in the community (spring 2002 *Colby*) and how my initial involvement in Colby's Big/Little Program led me to my current position as E.D. of a youth mentoring organization.

I just wanted to add to the "irony." At my 10-year reunion, our class president, Anne Bowie '92, organized an impromptu auction at our class dinner on Saturday night. We raffled off the lawn chair that Bill Cosby sat in as our commencement speaker, as well as (unplanned) some of our classmates' pants! The organization that had been chosen to receive the money was a youth-oriented group in the Waterville area. I was very excited about this, and wished I'd known about it ahead of time, but at any rate, I just wanted to add this information on to my previous letter. My class has now contributed to the cause I hold most dear to my heart!

Mary Beth Heiskell '92
Cornish, N.H.

Good Story, Wrong Kids

Thank you for your piece (summer 2002 *Colby*) on my role in the struggle for reform in Massachusetts. I enjoyed the piece. Unfortunately you got both of my children's names wrong. They are Benjamin, who just turned 4 in August, and Carson, who is 2.

Since I did the interview with *Colby* last spring, I moved on to working for reform at the national level. After five years, I stepped down as director of Mass Voters for Clean Elections on July 12th, and am now running a national issue campaign for Reform Voter Project (www.reformvoter.org).

David Donnelly '91
Jamaica Plain, Mass.



Gleaned from the campus newsletter, FYI

Good Food, Good Word

Each year when parents drop their first-year students off on Mayflower Hill, Dining Services has a display that includes the “Send a Sweet” table, where moms and dads can arrange to have treats sent to students for birthdays, exams, whatever. This year a Class of ’06 mother who approached the table said she wasn’t interested in sending sweets to her daughter. She had heard that Colby’s food service was so good, she wanted her daughter to send food home instead.

Best of the Best

Best Buddies promotes one-to-one friendships between college student volunteers and individuals with intellectual disabilities. This summer the Colby Chapter received Best Buddies International’s highest honor at the organization’s annual leadership conference in Houston. Congrats and thanks to **Laura Shufelt ’03** and **Jill Wentzell ’03**, who are carrying the torch for the “Outstanding Chapter” this year, and to **Monika Thiele ’97**, who founded Colby’s Best Buddies chapter, Maine’s first, in 1995-96.

Turnaround Credit

Chris Arnold ’92 got kicked out of honors English in high school but credits “an incredibly strong English department at Colby” for motivating him, according to a profile in the *Scarsdale Inquirer*. Arnold, now one of 80 correspondents worldwide who report for National Public Radio, took to writing in English classes at the same time he was getting his on-air start at WMHB.

Werewolves of London

Lost in London, alums **Scott Bixby ’01** and **Tim Wiswell**



Mink Frogs Go a-Courtin’

For three years **Cathy Bevier** (biology) has been studying the calling, territorial behavior and physiology of the small, mottled, mink frogs in a Mercer pond. This summer, she and four students have visited them at 1 a.m. armed with headlamps, chest waders and bug spray. “We want to learn how persistent they are in their aggressive behavior,” she said about the male frogs in an August 4 *Morning Sentinel/Kennebec Journal* profile. “One would assume that the more times they’re out in the pond, the better chance they have of finding a female—just like the more nights a guy hangs out at a singles’ bar, the greater his chances of picking up a date.”

’01 asked directions from a stranger. The stranger turned out to be **Dave Mitchell ’04**, in the English capital on the CBB-London program. Not only did Dave get them oriented, he put them in touch with economics program faculty director **Patrice Franko**, who invited them to a CBB Night at the Pub, with host **Steve Reed ’85**. Bixby then resumed his travels around Europe; Wiswell proceeded to Moscow for job interviews.

Strongest Link

September 12’s *Morning Sentinel* revealed what we already knew: **Patricia Crandlemire Murphy** (PPD) is not the weakest link. In fact she was the strongest when she won a round of the television show *The Weakest Link*. The show aired on September 13 on the daytime version of the program, with host George Gray.

Kash, on a Lack of Cash

With the headline “Budget deficit outlook only gets worse,” **Kashif Mansori** (economics) might be credited with helping keep the “dismal” in the dismal science with his September 5 op-ed in the *Bangor Daily News*. Kash gives a lucid overview of how the federal budget is likely to play out over the next 10 years and concludes: “The bitter truth is that we are probably going to have to scale back the untouchable spending items, as well as reverse recent tax cuts.”

Shedding Light on Dirty War

Ariel Armony (government) had a hand in the State Department’s August release of thousands of classified documents that shed light on the grim period in Argentine history known as The Dirty War. Ariel, who is spending this year

as a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, wrote a section of the Freedom of Information Act request. The release was delayed twice by the Bush administration, and Ariel calls the recent development a “big time declassification.” *The New York Times* reported that the documents detail widespread summary executions, torture and kidnappings from 1976 through 1983.

Walking with Whitman

“There is something about the poetry of Walt Whitman that simply defies a classroom,” **Karen Karbiener** (English) told *The Christian Science Monitor* in an August 6 article. That’s why “Whitman and New York,” the class she has taught at Columbia University the past two summers, uses the city as a classroom. On Mondays, Karbiener holds a traditional class on the Columbia campus. On Wednesdays, she roams the city with her students, stopping at landmarks from Whitman’s life to read his poetry aloud. “He embraced all of New York,” Karbiener says. “He was fascinated with the dirty and the clean.”

Hear, Hear

Since getting its frequency straightened out a couple of years ago, WMHB has been on a steady upward trajectory. The station recently passed an independent FCC inspection “with flying colors” according to General Manager **Lee L’Heureux ’03**, who has provided much of the leadership for recent growth and improvements. WMHB is in 100-percent compliance with all FCC rules and regulations, he says. And that’s just the technical, regulatory side. With more applicants than slots, the station can be pickier about talent. Prof who made the cut are **Cheryl**

Townsend Gilkes (sociology), gospel music; **Jeff Kasser** (philosophy), jazz; **Karen Karbiener** (English), “West End Rock;” and “Jazz with Chas” —**Charlie Bassett**, that is.

Building Complex

When the renowned architect **Benjamin Thompson**, designer of Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston and Harborside in Baltimore, passed away recently, obituaries in papers across the country noted that he had designed buildings at Harvard, Brandeis, Amherst and Colby. His contribution to Colby was the Hillside residence halls. “It is a wonderful example of its type and time and greatly under-

appreciated at Colby,” said **Joe Feely** (PPD). “Possibly the most skillfully sited complex of buildings on the campus.”

CCAK Is Model Program

Not only does Colby Cares About Kids provide positive role models for area children, the program is now a national role model for other mentoring partnerships between college students and communities. America’s Promise features CCAK’s training manuals, guidelines and more at www.americaspromise.org/HigherEducation/tools2002.cfm. “Attachments such as a brochure to market the program to students,

applications and background check forms, a mentor training guide and evaluation forms make this a robust tool for any community wanting to solidify its relationship with a neighboring college,” the group says.

Sign of the Pranksters

August 27, the day that first-year students headed to campus for the rites of orientation, travelers headed north on Route 95 were greeted by a hand-painted banner tied to the Brunswick exit sign. The sign directs motorists to that town’s liberal arts college. The banner said: “Colby—the Way Bowdoin Should Be.”

Moosecellaneous

Leo Pando (communications) not only draws pretty well, the cover story in issue four of *Illustration* magazine carries his byline as an author. The piece he wrote is a profile of Sam Savitt, one of the great American horse illustrators of the 20th century. . . . Anyone notice the “beauty mark” on **Larissa Taylor’s** (history) neck in the summer *Colby* magazine? It’s a black fly, actually. She remembers attending to a bite following the photo shoot. . . . *The Phishing Manual*, a history of the famous jam band, says, “Phish first performed the woeful story that is ‘Poor Heart’ on May 10, 1991 at the Colby College Student Center.”

Colby Update: Alex Quigley



Second-grade students at Carver Lower Elementary School in Indianola, Miss., pose with their teacher, Alex Quigley '99.

Alex Quigley has found his calling.

Visited in winter 2001 when he was teaching kindergarten in an elementary school in Lambert, Miss. (spring 2001 *Colby*) in conjunction with the Teach for America program, Quigley '99 has left Lambert, but he hasn't left the classroom or the Mississippi Delta.

Quigley moved south to Indianola, a town of 10,000 best known as the birthplace of B.B. King. More important to Quigley, it is the home of Carver Lower Elementary School, which is attended by 500 children in grades K-2. Quigley, known as Mr. Quigley to his students, teaches second grade.

“It’s going wonderfully, actually,” he said. “I was much better last year than I was my first year. Just the experience. I’m doing a lot of things similarly, but I’m just doing them much better.”

Quigley credits an inspiring principal for creating a motivating atmosphere for students and staff at the Indianola school, something that didn't exist at his previous school. He also points to the contrast between economically depressed Lambert and the more vibrant town where he now works and lives.

With his wife, the former Ashley Slate, Quigley bought a house in Indianola. Massachusetts raised, he's put down roots in the Delta—and he hopes he's influencing its future.

He teaches math, reading and writing, but Quigley has also added to his educational mission. His goal, he said, is to have his students learn ways to solve disagreements, “interacting with each other in a peaceful way at all times.”

While the Indianola area is less troubled than Lambert and surrounding Quitman County, still it is plagued by crime. “I see a lot of the violence,” Quigley said. “I hear about people getting shot around here, boys especially committing violent crimes. . . . In my classroom we are not going to solve problems in a violent way.”

That may not be what some children are used to, and it has required their teacher to regulate his manner as well. He isn't stern, he said. He doesn't shout. “I hug them every day,” Quigley said. “I say good morning and I smile all the time, which I didn't use to do.”

His teaching methods are evolving, and a Fulbright Fellowship promises to add to his breadth as an educator. Quigley's fellowship will allow him to travel to Japan in November to observe the schools there and confer with his Japanese counterparts. “I never expected,” he said with a laugh, “that it would be this exciting in rural Mississippi.”