

Colby



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From the Editor's Desk

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From the Editor's Desk

A few words on this issue of *Colby* and how it came to be.

Several months back, writer Peter Nichols of the University of Pennsylvania called and pitched a story about Daniel Traister '63 and his course Nuclear Fictions. Nichols knew Traister's course by reputation and had signed up to experience it firsthand. After a semester, Nichols emerged profoundly impressed by Traister's knowledge and passion for a topic that many of us would prefer to ignore: the dropping of the atomic bomb and the subsequent nuclear standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union. Traister's examination of the nuclear age through its literature sounded interesting; *Colby* commissioned the article.

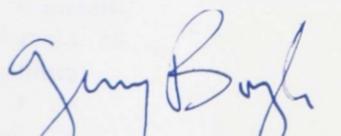
Nichols had just filed his story when another came across the desk: a *New Yorker* article on another product of the Cold War—biological weapons. The story, by Richard Preston, author of the bestseller *The Hot Zone*, prominently featured Dr. Frank Malinoski '76, one of the investigators who uncovered the Soviet Union's secret production of biological agents like smallpox and anthrax. Malinoski subsequently had gone to work for a Philadelphia-area pharmaceutical firm. We called Nichols, who had just emerged from the Cold War. His head still spinning with visions of mushroom clouds and black rain, he plunged back in to write about biological warfare.

While he did yeoman's duty, Nichols confided that writing these stories hadn't buoyed his spirits. The package he produced is a nonfiction page-turner with chilling details about living in the nuclear bull's-eye and discovering experimental ebola aerosols—stories of international import that happen to have Colby connections.

For balance this issue contains optimism aplenty in the inauguration of President Bro Adams, his vision of the future of the College and the accompanying celebration of "The Colby Difference." There is hope in stories of alumnae working to defeat AIDS in North Africa or traveling through rural America and finding a good place, marked by acts of kindness. There's inspiration in the football team and its remarkable turnaround. And where else can you find an artful exploration of the origins and peculiar history of Colby's anachronistic mascot?

Mules aside, as Elizabeth DeSombre points out to her environmental studies students (also in this issue), it can be a tough world out there. They can't expect to change the world for the better unless they accept that hard fact.

Nichols, our designated Philadelphia inquirer, produced some hard facts about the Cold War and the post-Cold-War era. In both cases, Traister and Malinoski chose to face them squarely. We think readers of *Colby* will do the same. Colby College is an institution dedicated to the inquiring mind, *Colby* magazine serves inquiring minds, and, as the saying goes, "inquiring minds want to know."



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