

# Test Driven

By Stephen Collins '74

Kori Heavner '96 of Lubbock, Texas, split her junior year between Sweden and Turkey and spent Jan Plan in Germany. But it wasn't until she returned home last summer that she started carrying vocabulary words around in her pockets.

She expected minor problems readjusting to everyday English and she anticipated what returning international students call "reverse culture shock"; what really threw her were the words she found in the tutorials she used to prepare

for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) last summer—words like "ineluctable," "bedizen," "detumescence" and "coeval."

Heavner decided to take the GRE in Texas during August, anticipating that life would be considerably busier when she got back to Colby than it was at home during the summer. Back on campus this fall, watching and counseling her classmates as they prepared for GRE testing during the academic year, she's glad it's behind her and that she can say it was no big deal. She



may have been "insouciant," she says, invoking her new vocabulary to relate how she was neither obsessed nor overly stressed by the exam. "If I hadn't done as well, maybe I'd have better stories to tell," she said.

Carmen Spear '96 of East Aurora, N.Y., has wedged GRE cram sessions into a frenetic fall semester

schedule. She dropped a class this semester to make time for looking into graduate programs in journalism while completing a senior honors thesis on 16th-century Spanish literature. She was depending on fall break, a four-day weekend that conveniently fell just before the exam was administered in October, to study for the GRE. "I'm more stressed out about getting my grad school applications out on time [than about the GRE]," she said.

Spear's lack of anxiety does not diminish the GRE's import but reflects her ability

## Big Sibs Ease First-Year Transition

By Alyssa Giacobbe '98

The transition between high school and college has been made a little easier for this year's freshmen by the introduction of the Big Sibs program.

More than 300 Big Brothers and Sisters inaugurated the program this fall by guiding, counseling and befriending over 500 first-year students, according to Andy Kruppa '97.

Begun last year in Averill by former hall president Kruppa, Big Sibs expanded this fall to include all freshmen, transfers and international students. Kruppa and Associate Dean for Residential Life Jan Arminio worked together with Presidents' Council to coordinate the program.

During the summer, upperclass student volunteers received information in the mail outlining the details of the program, according to Kruppa. Included were the names and addresses of first-years to whom each Big Sib was asked to send a welcoming post card. Once on campus, Big Sibs were asked to help ease their Little Sibs into college life through activities such as dinner trips to Big G's deli, nachos at the Spa or just a walk around campus.

"My Big Sister was very friendly and made me feel more comfortable," said Kelly Bregou '99. "It was also really nice to get a letter in the mail from her."

After receiving a post card from her Big Sister, Cam McDonough '99 said she "felt comfortable" about Colby and knew she had a resource to use if needed.

Big Sibs are required to attend one of four informational training sessions which focus mainly upon academic advising

but also include general advice to relay to students away from home for the first time.

"It's just one more person to provide a caring link to new students," said Arminio. "Many upperclass students have said to me, 'I wish I had had a Big Sib when I was a first-year.'"

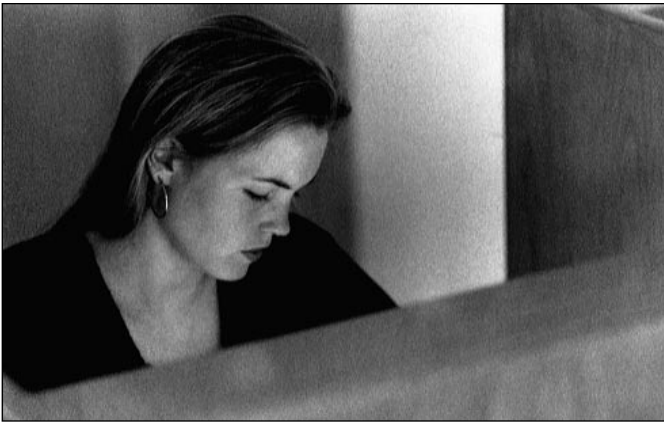
Incoming students are not the only ones who benefit. "Big Sibs feel good [about the program]," said Arminio. "It's another way for them to get involved with and help other students."

"It's a good idea for kids to have a kid to talk to rather than an adult," said Big Sib volunteer Heather Golding '98. "As kids we're basically all going through the same experience, and it helps to have someone there for you." ♦

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### Living Legacies

Among the legacies in the Class of '99 is Laurie Roberts, the great-granddaughter of former Colby president Arthur J. Roberts, Class of 1890. President Roberts, who began his career at Colby as an English instructor, was instrumental in improving what was then known as the Women's Division when in 1920 he hired Ninetta Runnals '08 as dean of women, paving the way for advancements in educational opportunities for female students.



Carmen Spear '96 in a familiar spot, at her study carrel preparing for the GRE.

to budget time and juggle multiple responsibilities, skills developed during her first three years in college, she says. "When I'm busiest, I'm most efficient," she said.

While other Colby seniors reported taking the additional responsibility of preparing for the GRE in stride, they all agreed that it adds to an already heavy workload. Eva Piotrowski '96 of Quincy, Mass., is taking the exam in April because conventional wisdom says students perform best during or right after their undergraduate studies. Scores are good for five years. In part because she's not planning to go directly to graduate school, Piotrowski said she wasn't too worried about the exam. "A lot of my friends are talking about going to grad school right after they graduate from here. They're the ones I've been talking in off of ledges all week," she said.

Mark Mortensen '96, of Millwood, N.Y., planned to take the general GRE in October and the subject test for computer science in December. He wants to go directly into a Ph.D.

program, which, unlike master's programs, requires the computer science GRE score. While he agreed that taking the exam in the summer might relieve some

pressure during the academic year, he concluded that, whether it competes with a summer job or the academic workload, "It's pretty inconvenient no matter when you do it."

"Taking [the GRE] in the summer might be useful," Mortensen said, "because it would get an additional strain out of the way. If you're carrying a full course load and applying for graduate school or applying for jobs it can get pretty excessive."

Registrar George Coleman, who administers the tests at Colby for the Educational Testing Service, noted that athletes have an added variable when away games are scheduled on test dates. Players on visiting teams have been known to take the GRE in Lovejoy on a Saturday morning and then suit up to play against the White Mules the same afternoon, he says. Coleman says that, while the number of Colby students who take the GRE fluctuates from year to year, he hasn't noticed any long-term increase or decrease.

As important as the GRE is, students are keeping it in perspective. "It is my senior year and I'd like to have fun," Spear said. "It's not like I'm in my room every Friday and Saturday night." ♦

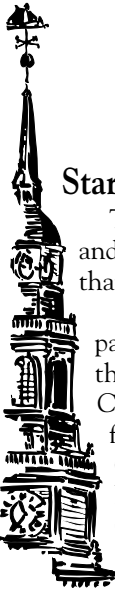
# Nothing New

Anecdotes from the Colby Archives

## Stars and Stripes Forever

The Pledge of Allegiance, recited in schoolrooms and at civic functions across the United States for more than 100 years, was the brainchild of a Colby alumnus.

Concerned over what he perceived as a lack of patriotism, James Upham, Class of 1835 and editor of the premier children's magazine of the era, *Youth's Companion*, set out to restore respect for the nation's flag. Upham recruited Francis Bellamy, also of the *Companion*, and together they began a campaign to have flags raised at every school in the country on October 12, 1892, in honor of the 400th anniversary of Columbus's landing in the New World.



Upham and Bellamy worked with school superintendents throughout America and raised the funds to purchase the flags, pennies at a time, from schoolchildren. As an accompaniment to the flag-raising event, Bellamy wrote the prototype of the verse since memorized by virtually every child in America:

I pledge allegiance to my flag,  
and to the republic for which it stands—  
one nation, indivisible—  
with liberty and justice for all.

## The Steeple Chase

For several years, Go-to-Church Sunday was an annual event held the first Sunday of the academic year. Proposed in 1921 by President Arthur Roberts, the idea was to introduce Colby students to the clergy and to various places of worship in Waterville.

The entire College assembled at 10 a.m., with each denomination in a separate group, and marched down College Avenue. Students broke away from the procession as it passed their place of worship.

The *Echo* reported in 1922 that every Colby student participated and the procession was more than half a mile long.

