

# Colby is Hot, Rooms Are Scarce

By J. Kevin Cool

The “no vacancy” sign is out.

An incoming class with 50 more students than the College anticipated has required some creative solutions to find beds for all on-campus students. Thirty-nine sophomores are in rooms converted from lounges in several residence halls, says Associate Dean of Students Paul Johnston, who calls this year’s housing situation the tightest since 1991.

Rather than place additional students in double rooms, Johnston says, Colby merely restored rooms that became lounges after the Heights was built in 1981. “When we say some students

are living in lounges, that’s really a misnomer because they were [student] rooms to begin with,” Johnston said. “We just pulled the sofas out and put the beds back in.”

Johnston says students who are living in temporary housing seem to be adjusting well. “I haven’t heard from any of those students that there has been a problem or that they would like some other arrangement,” he said. The College gave each of the students in temporary housing a \$200 rebate on their room charge and an assurance that they would be relocated after the first semester, Johnston says.

Lindsay McConchie, a



sophomore from Lincoln, Mass., lives in a converted lounge on the second floor of Averill and says she’s basically satisfied with the arrangement. Her room is the same size as others on her floor, but because it has windows looking out to the hallway a “curtain” of white paper has been installed for privacy. “At night more light shines through than I would like, but it’s not bad,” she said. “I would

rather have this than be in a triple.”

Johnston says the College knew last spring that “we were going to be loaded” when almost 600 prospective students paid housing deposits. Even accounting for attrition—what administrators call “summer melt”—Johnston says the Campus Housing Committee estimated an on-campus shortfall of 50 to 75 beds. Fortunately, a higher-than-usual number of students requested permission to live off campus, freeing up enough beds to absorb the excess in temporary housing, Johnston says.

More than 180 students

## Trees, Bees and Scraped Knees

In case there weren’t enough variables to worry about as 651 new Colby students and trip leaders set out on Colby Outdoor Orientation Trips (COOT) over Labor Day weekend, Student Activities Director Ben Jorgensen ’92 lost sleep over fugitives in the Caratunk woods.

Two men wanted on warrants, armed with guns and flushed out of the cabin in which they’d been hiding were pursued into the wilderness by law enforcement personnel using ATVs, dogs and helicopters. The same wilderness lodged three groups of COOTers, which gave Jorgensen (who, along with his staff, organizes COOT) some jitters. But as it turned out, the manhunters didn’t cross paths with the Colby students. The



Happy COOTers at the summit of West Kennebago Mountain near Rangeley, Maine.

COOTers heard about the excitement from the owners of the campgrounds where they were staying.

The 1995 sessions marked COOT’s 20th anniversary, and it was an unusual year for the program. The 651 students were assigned to 52 separate trips, up from 48 last year and an all-time

high. For the first time in just under two decades, outdoor burning was banned in Maine over the Labor Day holiday, thanks to a relentless drought that left most of the state critically dry by summer’s end. (Even the fireworks planned on campus to celebrate COOT’s 20th had to be postponed.) Only

those groups staying in state parks and commercial campgrounds were allowed to have open fires—overland hiking trips probably, as one administrator put it, “had to bond over their Froot Loops.”

No matter. COOT was a big success. Jorgensen reported that only three students were injured or became ill—one suffered a broken collarbone, one had stomach flu and another twisted an ankle. The biggest problem, he said, was bee stings. Bees were “especially present,” Jorgensen said, and Maine meteorologists had spent the summer warning that the bees were grumpy about the lack of moisture.

Jorgensen found the bright side. “No anaphylactic reactions,” he said. ♦

# Graffiti



MARC GLASS

Lindsay McConchie '98 says her room in Averill, which was converted from a lounge, is not much different from other rooms on her floor.

requested off-campus housing, according to Johnston, 30-40 above the normal figure. "It got us out of what would have been a pretty uncomfortable housing situation," he said. The 100-or-so students who were released to go off campus in the spring were immediately increased to about 175, Johnston says. A few more requests were honored before the school year began to bring the number of students on campus within striking distance of the number of beds that could be made available.

This happy coincidence does have a down side, however, Johnston says. "Our numbers for off-campus housing have increased significantly over the past two

years, and that's something we need to take a look at," he said. "As the College moves toward the year 2000, we want to be able to respond if there is a feeling we need to recapture these folks [who are moving off the Hill]."

"What we're hearing is that students want a more apartment-like experience," Johnston said.

President Bill Cotter alluded to the growing number of off-campus requests in his State of the College Address and said the Board of Trustees is studying residence hall improvements and possible changes in housing options. "We want to do all we can to make residential life attractive for all students," he said. ♦

## Center of Attention

*The Colby Echo*, in a September 28 editorial, praised the building of the Pugh Center of the Student Union as "an important step for Colby" that "embodies our pledge to make the campus as diverse and accepting as possible."

"The process involved in the decision to build the center is almost as important as the center itself," the *Echo* said. "Students voiced their concern over a consequential issue, actions were taken to see that they were heard and a solution was found because of the students' persistence and willingness to work with the trustees to find what was best for the College. To all involved in the process, we applaud you and hope the Pugh Center marks the beginning of a new trend in thoughtful student action."

## Overseas Fees

Effective with the Class of 1999, students who wish to transfer credit to Colby from an approved international or domestic non-Colby program will pay a fee of \$1,000 per semester. The charge will apply for all non-Colby programs.

The proposal was endorsed by the Financial Priorities Committee and the Academic Affairs Committee before being approved by the Board of Trustees last year. The fees will help pay for a variety of support services, including faculty advisers, departmental committees and the four-person Off-Campus Study Office that both advises students and screens and approves non-Colby programs.

The measure drew sharp criticism from *The Colby Echo* and prompted a letter to the editor from Dean of Faculty Bob McArthur explaining why the fee was necessary. "The one thousand dollar fee . . . will spread some portion of the costs of our foreign study program over those students on non-Colby programs who currently do not pay anything to the College at all. The approximately two hundred thousand dollars in revenue will provide us with the opportunity to improve the quality of Colby overseas experiences for all students and will, to some extent, shift the burden away from those students on campus who are currently footing the bill," McArthur said.

## Cereal Killer

According to the *Echo*, breakfast at Dana has lost its Charms.

The days when students could choose Lucky Charms and "all the sugar cereals Mom wouldn't buy you at home" are gone. Citing a need to cut waste, manager of Lovejoy Dining Services Bill Bayle told the *Echo* that some cereal had to go. Students will have to get by on eight cereal selections.

"We had so many out there that they went stale," Bayle said. "We kept adding and adding cereals and they were not as fresh. We got complaints, too."

The *Echo's* tongue-in-cheek criticism of the move lamented that students can no longer sample "a new cereal every day for a month—from Cocoa Puffs to Cap'n Crunch to Raisin Bran."

There are fewer choices, the *Echo* said, and "usually none with marshmallows."

## Kudos

Rosa Chang '97 and Student Association President Tom Ryan '96 attended the 1995 World Youth Leader Conference in Seoul, South Korea, last summer. The United Nations conference brought together leaders in student government from countries around the world.

"It was a great learning experience," Chang said. "I learned more from the people I met than anything I did. I had three roommates: one from Lebanon, one from Germany and one from Finland."