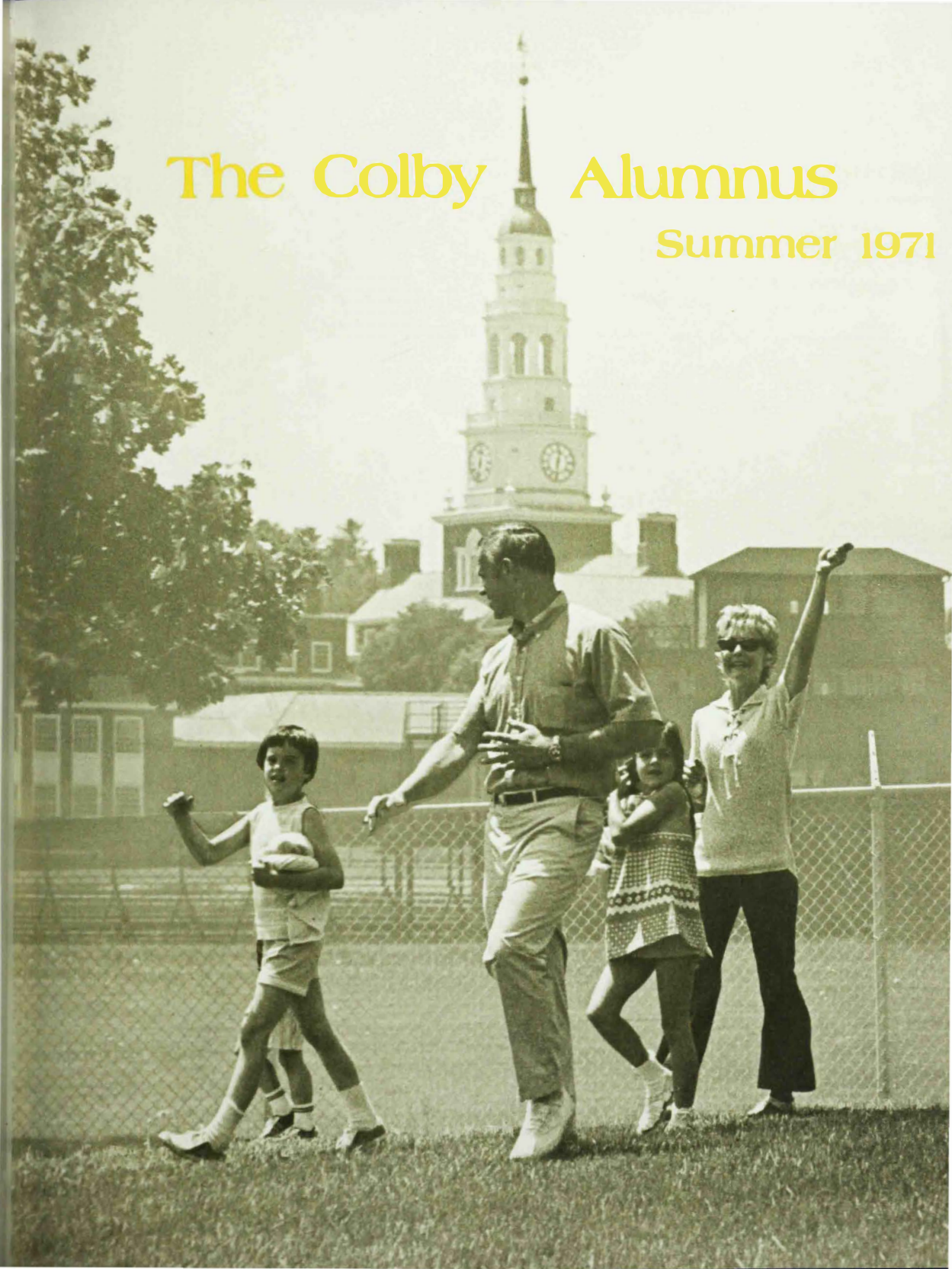


The Colby Alumnus

Summer 1971



Our Man in Peking

"Mr. Roderick, you have opened the door."

If April's ping-pong diplomacy should lead to an era of relaxed relations between the United States and Red China, Premier Chou En-lai's phrase could be the stuff of history books. But even if American table tennis players and newsmen provided only a brief glimpse through the bamboo curtain, Associated Press staffer John P. Roderick '36 has scored the "beat" of a lifetime.

Premier Chou may have singled out Roderick in his greeting to the group only because the two were acquainted—John covered China for AP before the Communist defeat of Nationalist forces in 1949. Time will tell whether Chou's remark was more significant; the arrangements that led to the surprise China visit were strictly covert.

Roderick was the first of three correspondents to receive a 10-day visa, granted "for the only purpose of covering U. S. table tennis team visit to China." Nine hours after its issue he was on a plane to Hong Kong with a camera, one small suitcase and the fervant hope he would be permitted to stay and report without hindrance or terminal date. As it turned out, the visa was extended for three days.

"This is my first dispatch from China in 22 years," began Roderick's lead story April 12. "Our assignment is to cover the team," he said later in that story. "But the biggest story of all—China—is all around us and crying to be told." John's bylines have been appearing in newspapers all over the world for more than 20 years, but the China development was his biggest story since 1948, when he broke the news of the assassination by Israeli terrorists of Count Folke Bernadotte, Swedish U. N. mediator in Palestine.

Subsequent stories from John covered the daily activities of the team and Chinese officials, plus the reactions of the people. The stories and pictures were cabled to Tokyo, where Roderick has

been assigned since 1959 as an expert on Red China and Far Eastern affairs.

A bachelor, John was born in Waterville and began learning his profession with the *Waterville Sentinel* while at Colby. His brother, Ernest, was a classmate. John took military leave after five years with AP in Maine and wound up serving in China with the O.S.S. On V-J Day, he had the presence of mind to wire AP's general manager asking to stay on and work for the wire service. For the next two years, he lived in the Communist cave capital of Yanan. There he interviewed and became well acquainted not only with Premier Chou but with Party Chairman Mao Tse Tung, who called him Lo Teh-li (the closest Chinese to Roderick) and promised to welcome him someday to a new Communist capital in Peking. Overtures about such a visit were made by the Communist government during the latter 1950s; but one of the nations—or both—decided the time was not ripe.

After covering wide areas of China for more than three years, John was transferred to the Middle East and later, to London and Paris. He helped cover the Indochina war in 1954 and later developments in the growth of the new state of South Vietnam. Appointed chief of bureau in Hong Kong in 1956, he was relieved of administrative duties to concentrate on writing interpretive dispatches on Red China from material in Hong Kong. A recipient of an honorary doctor of humane letters degree from Colby in 1966, John replied to President Strider's reading of the citation in Japanese: "domo arrigato gozaimash 'ta," the formal, classical way of expressing thanks.

John has written that Chairman Mao sees the U. S. as a "paper tiger" despite its "imperialism," and the newsmen notes that Mao predicted our "last gasp over 30 years ago and we are still gasping with considerable vigor."



John Roderick talks with students at Ching-hua University in Peking.

husband enjoy flying (he has his license) and skiing. Isabelle goes in for singing, directing choral groups, writing and traveling. . . . **Charlotte Blomfield Auger** is assistant head teller at the submarine base credit union in Groton, Conn. She enjoys sewing, gardening and hooking rugs. Her Navy son brought home a stereo from the Far East and Charlotte tapes her own selections from records and TV. . . . **Paddy Davan** teaches in an "open campus school" at Westbrook. This means come to school only when you have classes and the rest of the time, get lost. Paddy feels some can accept it, but the majority are lost. He has five classes, and is head of social studies and athletic director. When he retires, three

will take over! . . . **Tom Foley** owns an insurance agency in Norwood, Mass. . . . **Rebecca Chester Larsen** is the first full-time registrar at University of Maine, Portland-Gorham. . . . **Oscar Nickerson**, power station operator for Great Northern Paper Co. in Millinocket, is a Mason of long standing who enjoys fishing, hunting and outdoor sports.

John Webb, retired, is trying to sustain life in Boston's Charles Playhouse. . . . **Geraldine Foster Chase**, a Kittery teacher, has a daughter, Sara, at Colby. **Jack Locke**, **Leon Bradbury**, **Walter Dignam** and I all have offspring attending the college. . . . **Harrison Williams**, with General Foods, spends almost all his spare time with Boy Scouting. In Jan-

uary he took 75 men camping in the snow at minus 32 degrees! Harry is in the custom tent-making business as a hobby. His 50-page book, *Making Light Equipment*, is in its fifth printing. . . . **Mal Stratton**, retired Army colonel, is license collector, assistant tax administrator and civil defense coordinator for the city of Salinas, Calif. . . . **Myron Levine** owns a pharmacy in Milton, Mass. He is past president of B'nai B'rith Pharmaceutical Lodge and editor of the *B'nai B'rith Bulletin*. Myron sees Dr. **Dave Sherman** frequently. . . . **Perry Wortman**, superintendent of schools in Greenville, plans to retire from education in 1972 after 38 years of teaching and administration in Maine. Perry says there are at least two