

FEATURES

Line out:

College can't decide to love outsiders or leave 'em

By John Hurst

Last week, Campus reporter Maurice Spoonfed was granted a rare and unprecedented interview with newly elected Middlebury College president Clitus Rusterchrome. As you all know, Mr. Rusterchrome was chosen out of nearly a dozen very qualified people with large, unpronounceable business degrees and Brooks Brothers suits. So, as you can imagine, the new head honcho was more than happy when Maurice dropped in at the house on South Street for a quick interview and some finger sandwiches.

M.S. "Congratulations are in order, Mr. President, as well as a sincere welcome from the college community. What do you feel set you apart from the other applicants, and how will this play a part in your new job?"

C.R. "As you know, I was head counselor at the Shady Oaks Camp for Overprivileged Adolescents for eight years. In addition, I have degrees in child psychology and farm equipment management. I feel that I have the capabilities and support to return Middlebury to its ideal of diversity and excellence in undergraduate academia."

M.S. "Amazing, sir! You just quoted verbatim from the first page of the 1991 catalogue."

C.R. "Yes, well, I have done quite a bit of research on this place. Seems to me the college is spreading itself too thin with all these out-of-the-house projects. Education is all relative, you know. What the kids want is good old fashioned fun. It's like hiding a vitamin in a bowl of ice cream—all the benefits without the bad aftertaste."

M.S. "Very pertinent analogy, sir. Although the students here would probably prefer not to be addressed as 'kids,' and a good majority of them take their academics quite seriously."

C.R. "Please, please, don't get me wrong. I'm sure the students take everything quite seriously. That's just the problem. Too many distractions from the outside world. There are a lot of unsavory characters out there."

M.S. "Yes, of course, Mr. President. But don't you think the students need more contact with the people and events outside the academic bubble if they're to succeed after graduation. You can't stay in college forever."

C.R. "I see it all now. You've been reading all that subversive gobbledegook about integrating the college into the surrounding community. Like that one by...what's that boy's name? Scott DeSimon...yes. The one about the lemondrops or whoever those ruffians were. Well, how do they expect the college to stand for all those outsiders drinking our beer and making a mess of the place, eh?"

M.S. "Well, to be honest, sir, everyone paid for their own beer, and I.D.s were checked. Scott did make a good point about the hypocrisy of an administration that claims it fosters diversity in the community and then shuts its doors to anyone outside the college. He also showed how one such incident is indicative of the college policy toward the outside world. Advertising on campus is illegal, campus facilities are jealously guarded against outsiders, and yuppieism has transformed a once-idyllic New England town into a haven for

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Campus recycling efforts undermined

By Nancy Walker

This fall, Middlebury students implemented a new, campus-wide program to reduce the amount of waste produced by the college community. The recycling program was designed during the fall and winter of last year by students in Steve Trombulak's Environmental Policy 401 class. A response to the increasing concerns about the environment, the project addressed the problem of solid waste in Vermont as well as the difficulty in developing a cost-effective method of reducing and treating waste at Middlebury.

Recent legislation in Vermont mandated the closing of landfills unprotected by thick plastic linings by 1991. Faced with increased dumping costs and pressure to recognize its responsibility to the environment, the college needed a simple, effective means of recycling.

During its first year in action, however, Middlebury's recycling effort has been repeatedly criticized as being neither simple nor effective. "The system could be much more effective," argued Matt Stewart '90 who resigned from the program due to what he saw as its inefficiencies. "It has to be made easier for the everyday user."

Under the direction of Stewart Resident House Assistant Matt Longman '89, a team of workers has placed blue bins in both residential and non-residential buildings to collect newspapers and other recyclable paper. Many critics of the program feel that these bins are not simple enough to encourage use. It is still easier to throw paper in the trash than walk down the flights of stairs to recycle it.

If the college did provide additional bins there is no guarantee they would be used properly. "I've seen vomit in the recycling bins in Forest," Stewart said, "and people using them to sled. Middlebury's efforts are doing more harm than good. The program makes recycling look ineffective."

Lack of commitment to the program has been a problem not only among the general college community, many critics feel, but among the members of the recycling team as well. Student workers who hold salaried positions are completely responsible for collection routes. "They can't lift the bins, though," Stewart said. "The program needs workers who are physically capable of doing the job. Right now, it's run more like a club than a business."

Longman and his crew work a four-day week, with three students on the job each of these days. Longman feels this structure is building a sense of commitment to the job and the issues among his workers. "It really has been a smooth year," he said, "with some trial and error."

Despite the criticism, Longman is pleased with the response to the recycling effort. "This year's freshman class has shown a great interest in the program. They're coming from towns that already have comprehensive recycling programs. Often, it's a way of life for them," he said.

Longman hopes to continue this trend by introducing Middlebury's recycling plan to next year's freshmen during their Bread Loaf orientation. His goal is to involve incoming students as active participants in the program, whether as paid workers or simply concerned students. "What's frustrating is that students forget that it's other students doing the work. Throwing



Matt Longman poses with an eager group of Middlebury recyclers.

Photo by Christopher McChesney

food in the bins is just hurting their peers," said Longman.

The response by the rest of the college community, Longman feels, has been positive as well, especially in recycling newspapers. The use of colored paper has been drastically reduced by most college departments and organizations. Food Service and the College Store already recycle their cardboard boxes. But as for the recycling of white paper, Longman noted, "We discovered there's a gold mine of white paper out there. Stacks of unused handouts and copies of tests were being thrown away. The faculty could really contribute more here by using as little as possible and recycling any surplus."

The administration believes that the success of the recycling program benefits the whole community in the effort to cut spending. Student wages and operating expenses are covered by the reduction in landfill costs.

Ideally, the project would be

completely cost effective. Stewart, however, disagreed. "I don't see it as ever making money," he said. "Recycling programs are flooded across the country. There aren't enough processing plants to handle all the collections. It's still cheaper to process virgin goods than to recycle them."

The recycling team is already planning for next year and devising easier methods of collection, especially for the mail room. The mail room is always a problem area for litter. Longman hopes to obtain a rack for organizational materials which would allow students to choose which information they need, rather than receive unwanted fliers in their mailboxes.

Stewart is skeptical about the possibility for success through this method of waste reduction. "Mass mailings serve a purpose. They force information on you. Students may welcome less junk mail, but organizations will be reluctant to give up this publicity," he said.

Longman also wants to label the

blue collection bins more clearly to show which are for colored and which for white paper. This will prevent needless sorting by his workers. Stewart agrees that this improvement is needed. "And if the college acquires additional bins," he added, "they should be colored for colored paper, and white for white paper."

Stewart offered more suggestions for reducing waste, such as a computerized mailing system for on-campus mailings. Other colleges, such as Lehigh, require students to purchase computers with the help of financial aid. This way every student is connected to the campus-wide network. "Middlebury already provides access to the Vax, and offers financial aid for computers. With all the computer rooms, this campus would be compatible with a complete electronic mailing system," said Stewart.

"We're taking a global issue and personalizing it. It's a way for people to act, and really make a difference," said Longman.

Indians protest power contract

By Sara Higgins

The electric utilities of Vermont and those of other New England states are currently seeking approval of a multi-billion dollar contract with the power company of Hydro-Quebec. According to Vermont Public Service Board documents, the proposal would mean that Vermont would agree to purchase the majority of its power and energy from the Canadian company over the next twenty years.

The contract would fund the second phase of the James Bay project, which is a system of very large reservoirs and generating stations in the James Bay, just south of the Hudson Bay. The second phase would increase the surface area of the water storage developments and augment equipment in that area.

Supporters of the new contract argue that power demand is increasing in New England, and the expanded capacities of the Hydro-Quebec facilities would supply more power at cheaper costs. This idea is particularly attractive to businesses. For the pro-contract advocates, the Canadian alternative is preferable to nuclear plants or coal plants, and Vermonters support the fact that the development is not in their own backyard.

The backyard that James Bay happens to be in is that of the native Cree and Inuit Indians. According to their supporters, Phase I flooded 4,300 square miles of the ancestral hunting grounds of these peoples, and has interfered with their traditional ways of life.

The projected and/or observed ecological effects of the James Bay project, according to Dr. Hélène Connor-Lajambe, include land and wetland loss from flooding, the release of carbon into the ozone layer due to the burning of trees in the dam areas, erosion of river banks, interference with animal migration, the accumulation of mercury to toxic levels in fish in the dams, and an increased likelihood of earthquake activity precipitated by the water weight in the reservoirs. Many of these impacts are specifically detrimental to the Cree and Inuit livelihoods.

In an effort to raise awareness in New England about the negative side of Hydro-Quebec, about forty representatives of the Cree and Inuit, who feel they have been unfairly treated, are participating in a symbolic canoe journey from James Bay to New York City. Ten Indians at a time are rowing the canoe, which is being accompanied by a bus, and

the group is stopping at cities along the way to New York, where they plan to be on Earth Day.

Saturday night, April 7, the Indian protesters stopped in Middlebury to communicate their concerns. Among other things they made documents available with information on the issue and provided addresses of people and companies to whom Vermonters opposing approval of the contract could write.

Cree and Inuit speakers addressed a capacity crowd packed into the top floor of Munroe Hall. Along with people who spoke about why the Indians were opposed to the Hydro-Quebec project, each tribe gave the floor to their elders who spoke in their native tongue about life before outsiders came to their land. With the help of translators, they enlightened the crowd about some of their ancient rituals.

Corey Chase '92, a Northern Studies major, said the evening "wasn't quite what I was expecting, but I enjoyed it because I'm interested in the issue."

Former Environmental Quality president Sue Oddsen '90 shared Chase's positive sentiments. She said "when you actually meet the people you're trying to help out it really helps."