

Alumnus publishes Middlebury-inspired J. Crew parody

By Hilary Watts
Staff writer

Are you sick of looking through dozens of catalogues piling up in your mailbox, trying to figure out what you really want to buy under those crazy marketing schemes? Do you have trouble understanding sales pitches which claim that items are "inspired by the subtle hues of England's rolling moors?"

Are you baffled by the color choices which differentiate between "bark," "moss," "cordovan," "dark navy," "charcoal heather" (heather is heather) and "natural?"

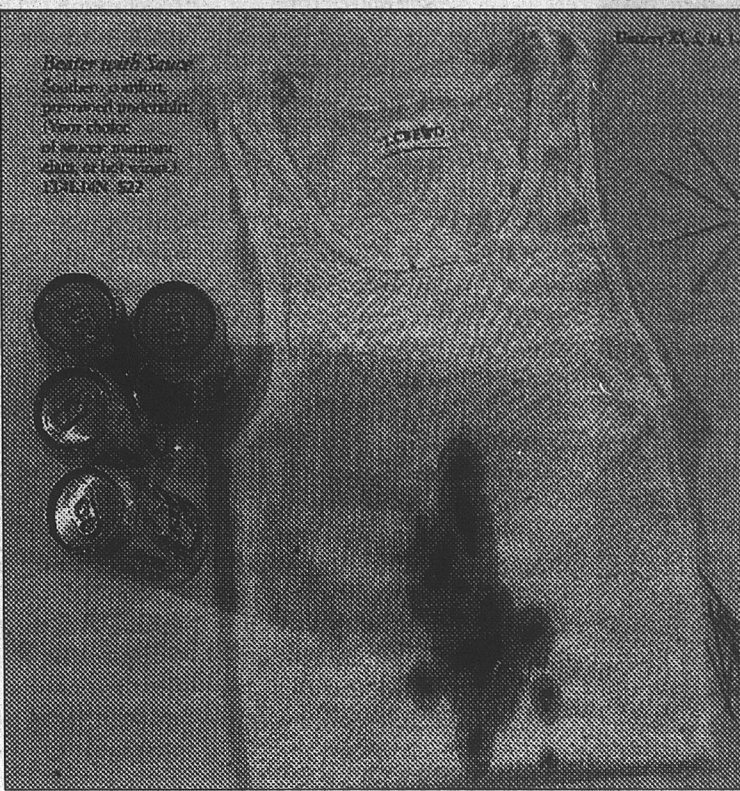
With the October 20th release of Justin Racz's '97 J. CREWD, a comic spoof of the popular catalogue, you can now order such straightforward, useful items as the "prep-school tested, northeast-approved Uptight Wedgie Pick" which promises, simply, to "dig deep." Or you can purchase the "Beater With Sauce prestained undershirt — an undershirt with a flavor all its own." With the philosophy "an overeducated customer is our best shopper," you can't go wrong with this new crude line of clothing.

The genius behind the satirical look at the prepped J. Crew crowd is none other than Middlebury alumnus, and admitted patron of J. Crew, Justin Racz '97.

An English major "with a minor in irreverence," Racz came up with the parody while still at Middlebury.

"When you read enough *Crumpuses* and watch enough 'Saturday Night Live,' you know." As a result, many of the pictures were taken right on campus, including the "ultimate funeral" and "J. Christian" lines of clothing and accessories.

From his first idea of the cotton rollhead sweater to the finished



One of the latest fashions on display in Racz's J. CREWD

Courtesy photo

product almost 18 months later, Racz spent much of his time generating ideas, taking pictures or laying out copies late at night in the *Campus* office.

Ultimately, he reveals, "The funny title sold me on the project." However, Racz insists that he did not do it all on his own. "A lot of collaboration was involved. Mark Felton '97 helped with the layout, which is instrumental in the selling of this book.

Amy Nichols, Ian "Naki" Brand '99, Jami Grechika '99, Kristen Connolly '02, Andrew Smith '97.5,

'When you read enough Crumpuses and watch enough 'Saturday Night Live,' you know'

—Justin Racz '97

Clint Bierman, Chad Urmston '98.5, John Richardson '00, Jeff Brodnix, Matt Ireland, Jim

Sparron '00, Nicholas Apostolatos, and Matt Baker.

However, it was not only friends of Racz who got involved. "My brother and grandmother contributed.

"It was a group effort," he explained. In addition to providing the clearance items ("Justin, a whole page for acid floral?"), Racz's "Grandma Dinah Kantor" gave her input on some of the other items. Of her favorite item, the pocket panty, she said, "It's about time."

Now, after sending an 18-page "official-looking" proposal to Doubleday Publishers, Racz is finding his masterpiece gracing the shelves of bookstores nationwide, from Borders to Barnes and Noble.

The parody has its own website at www.jcrew.com, which not only provides sample pages from the catalogue but also boasts contests for prizes in the catalogue. As Racz declares, "You can win my grandfather's pants on page 59."

Such success so soon is not bad at all for a man barely out of college.

When asked about the praise and laughter which the spoof is appropriately evoking, a tired but happy Racz smiles and responds, "It's good to see some stuff that comes out of my mouth is funny."

Racz's next project, a parody on Beanie Babies, is due to come out in May 1999.

Rainforest Action Group protests at Home Depot

By Mary Tucker
Features Editor

Home Depot got more than they bargained for Wednesday October 14th. In a passionate attempt to raise ecological awareness, 20 Middlebury students spent the day strategically positioned outside the Williston Home Depot protesting the chain's sales of old growth lumber from rainforests. Home Depot is the largest retailer to date of old growth rainforest products. The protest was put on by Middlebury's Rainforest Action Group, a fledgling organization that began last year as a division of the Rainforest Action Network based in San Francisco. Similar pageants took place at Home Depot stores across the country, as

rainforest action groups everywhere participated in the "National Home Depot Day of Action."

The Middlebury protesters spent the afternoon handing out postcards, information packets and stickers to customers entering Home Depot.

They were caught in the act by the *Burlington Free Press*, which published a picture of students holding a bold banner reading "Home Depot Stop Selling Old Growth" and students Blaise Holly '00 and Monique Monteverde '00 engaged in dialogue with a Home Depot customer. Although the protest was entirely peaceful, the event was monitored by eight members of the Burlington Police (see *Rainforest*, page 14)



Courtesy photo

Students from Middlebury's Rainforest Action Group protest outside Home Depot.

Huck Finn admirer floats the Colorado

By David Philipps
Staff writer

Editor's Note:

Dave Phillips '00 is spending the Fall Semester walking the length of the Colorado River as part of an independent study project in *Environmental Studies*. This is the second article he has submitted.

Down along the Arizona-California border, the country is literally being torn apart. The continental plates are moving in opposite directions, making a wrinkled landscape known to some as the basin and range. When the Colorado River hits the long, solid mountains of the basin and range, it turns quickly to the south and flows down through a rocky corridor to the sea of Cortez.

As California pulls away from the rest of America, the sea of Cortez gets larger and spreads north. If I had waited long enough, the mouth of the Colorado would come to me, but since I don't have a few million years to wait, I have to keep on walking. From Hoover Dam, the Colorado wanders south through a series of long smooth valleys in the Mojave Desert. Modern America changed these desert valleys into a set pattern of long reservoirs with irrigated farmlands below each dam. Walking through the Mojave felt very ironic to me. I could always see the scrubby bare brush and sharp cactus of the desert up on the hills that cradled the river but I was usually walking along large bodies of water, crisscrossed by jet skis or through green fields full of cotton and melons.

I reached the end of the Mojave after I passed by Lake Havasu (nicknamed Lake Have-a-few because of its prevailing culture of bikinis and beer bong.) Almost immediately, I began seeing Suaro Cacti standing like huge, bristly cigars on the rocky hills. I knew those green giants marked the beginning of the Sonoran Desert.

There is no definite division between the two deserts geographically; they blend and blur each other over a wide border. But there was a definite division for me. When I got to the Sonoran, I stopped walking and bought a boat.

I had studied my maps carefully as I traveled and I know that after Lake Havasu, the river flowed relatively freely. I toyed with floating down the rest of the way and finally made the decision because of a tattered copy of *The Adventures of Huck Finn* and a pair of sore feet.

It is not often that one's desire for adventure and one's desire to sit around all day are in agreement. But since mine were, I hitchhiked to the nearest town and bought an inflatable raft for \$14.99. It wasn't a true river raft — just a little red vinyl thing, designed to cruise around the neighborhood pool. It was barely big enough to fit both my backpack and me; but it was the first boat I had ever owned and I was fiercely proud. I christened it "the Huck Finn" and ran a small American flag up on a stick on the bow.

One puncture wound from a sharp branch could have sent my little air-filled boat, my backpack and

me to Davey Jones's locker. But the river was slow and kind and luck was on our side. Now, nine days after I shoved off, near Parker, Arizona, I am about 150 miles downstream in the last town before the Mexican border.

In *The Adventures of Huck Finn*, Mark Twain turns Huck's raft into an Eden, carefree and removed from the troubles and false morality of the shore. I found it to be the same. Maybe it was as close to perfect life as I have ever been. Each morning, I would wake while the stars still burned clearly in the sky. I wasn't tired but feeling the cold air on my face, I would stay in my sleeping bag and watch the dawn come. First, a line of pollen over the empty mountains in the east, then a bloom of rose, and finally brilliant orange rays that caught on the thin clouds and highest crags.

The sun made each day without a crease or a sound and the first hour of light was always marked by great flocks of migrating birds. I would see them fly over in the thousands, arrow after arrow, pointing south toward the sea, pointing in the direction for me to follow.

The days on the river were all sunny and hot, but in the morning when I packed up my things, there was a chill in the air and the sand was cold on my bare feet. I was glad to feel the warm water on them as I pushed my raft out into the river. I was glad to jump in and lean my back against the soft tube to begin my journey again.

I traveled silently, turning slowly with the green current and following the river's path (see Philipps, page 13)

Farnsworth '65 tackles question of journalism's current state

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member Christ sent evil spirits into a herd of pigs and the maddened herd raced over a cliff and drowned. I think in our swollen numbers, our insane competitiveness, in our rising desperation for ratings, our puritan greed in discussing the President's sex life, in our rush to support unsubstantiated rumor, leaks, and gossip, an evil spirit entered us and we became that herd of maddened swine racing toward our own destruction."

MacNeil's disturbing vision of a news media which brings about its own demise by placing the value of increased viewership and profits over fundamental human ethics and decency seems far from fictional, in light of newspaper editorials and studies revealing Americans' growing dissatisfaction with journalists' inability to recognize limits on reporting.

"The basic rule has always been that if [an issue] remains completely private and it doesn't have

some kind of public policy or public implication than you don't cover it and that rule is gone," said Farnsworth.

Having earned her master's in history from Stanford University after graduating Magna Cum Laude/Phi Beta Kappa from Middlebury as an history major, Mrs. Farnsworth has a particular interest in how historical events such as Watergate and Vietnam have changed the tone of journalism in the United States. "The media did some very important work [in these two cases]," Farnsworth said, "but it also gained tremendous power because of what it had been able to reveal about what was happening in America."

When Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein broke the Watergate story for The Washington Post the two reporters became almost as important as the people they were writing about and interview-

ing. Farnsworth seemed discouraged by this trend of treating journalists as though they were celebrities or political decision-makers.

"Nobody ever elected me to anything," she said. "I am not important in any kind of interview that I am doing. I am simply there to get the information you all

You never see us on the talk shows. My job is to try to represent you and ask the questions that you would ask of the people I ask.

-Elizabeth Farnsworth '65

might want."

Farnsworth's dedication to her job as an objective journalist also reflects The NewsHour's philosophy that journalists ought not to be pundits.

"You never see us on the talk shows," said Farnsworth. "My job is to try to represent you and ask the questions that you would ask of the people I ask."

One question the audience raised during Mrs. Farnsworth's discussion was how much Americans cared about substantive and accurate news. Did Farnsworth think the public encouraged such trends?

The answer was not a simple one, but Farnsworth was under the impression — based on magazine and newspaper articles she had read recently — that a growing number of people are concerned about what print reporters have termed "the tabloidization of the media."

Farnsworth did concede that hour-long news programs such as The NewsHour, which focus on in depth and balanced reportage and do not mask "talking heads" with exciting pictures during interviews, have been going rapidly extinct. These "dinosaurs," as they are sometimes referred to, are being supplanted by twenty-four hour news networks, digital media, and costly news magazines.

As the distinction between politics and the media diminishes, another emerging concern is how much influence politicians wield over journalists.

"My experience is that politicians make sure the ceremony and signing and everything they do is in the news cycle at a time when they can control it."

Part and parcel with the decline in trustworthy media reportage is a similar trend in print reporting too.

Farnsworth, who was herself a long-time print journalist writing for publications such as Foreign Policy and The Nation, said "the loss of really good local newspapers is as devastating as anything."

However, Farnsworth was not utterly pessimistic about the decrease in reputable print publications, acknowledging that there are still "quite a few newspapers owned by conglomerates which are hewing to the old values."

Not only newspapers have re-

sponded to the overall decline in public interest for international news stories but television has too. Mrs. Farnsworth noted that it is now rare for T.V. news programs to lead with an international story. "Ratings plummet during coverage of international stories," said Farnsworth.

For Mrs. Farnsworth—a veteran international correspondent who is considered an expert on South America and has covered international stories for The NewsHour in Haiti, Vietnam, Cambodia, Peru, Nicaragua, Korea, and Japan, and produced award-winning films and documentaries such as Thanh's War—the closing down of international bureaus around the world is one of the tragedies of modern network broadcasting. "All around the world it's like lights have been going off over the past ten years in the network bureaus," said Farnsworth.

While television networks are downsizing their sphere of foreign correspondents, the Internet is becoming an ever-expanding medium for connecting the public to the world.

"We're in the middle of the biggest changes in the information industry that we could imagine," Farnsworth said. "What's happening is like the Industrial Revolution."

Having appeared every bit as spry and diplomatic as she is on The NewsHour, Farnsworth concluded her discussion with a genuine smile saying she could not be sullen about the changing nature of mass media.

"I don't know whether it's just because I'm optimistic by nature, but I do think that this revolution which we're in the middle of does have some really positive elements to it. I hope that it's going to push those of us who are already reporting in what I feel are responsible ways to be even better and that it will give us viewers who want this type of reporting in even greater numbers."

Rainforest Action Group protests Home Depot's sale of old-growth wood

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Force and Middlebury students were provided with both a police and an employee escort when they entered Home Depot to give a tour of the offending section. The Middlebury protesters were also mandated to remain on the road outside Home Depot, while the adjoining sidewalk was forbidden territory.

Co-president of Middlebury's Rainforest Action Group, David Gurtman '01, who works alongside Pedro Zevallos '01, was encouraged by the day's events.

"We've heard that Home Depot is giving in, that they're truly bending this time," he said. "They've promised [to stop selling old growth] before," he said, "and they lied. It's hard for a big organization to just change. So this is progress." When speaking about what he hoped the effect of the day would have on Home Depot customers, Gurtman stated, "We want people not to buy 2 by 4's or dowels that are old growth and can't be replaced. Home Depot does offer alternatives. We want people to be aware of what they're buying as well as the consequences of their purchases." About customer reaction to the event, Gurtman provided the following details: "We got a whole gamut of responses. Some people yelled 'Go get jobs', 'What are you doing here?' and stuck their tongues out as us. Other people were really receptive to what we were trying to do."

Middlebury's Rainforest Action Group has been remarkably active for being such a young group on campus. Last year the Rainforest Action Network recognized Middlebury's chapter as being the most active college group. The T-shirts they sold last year to raise funds for the protection of Cloud Forest in Costa Rica were prominent on campus. The group also had remarkable access to Peter Bejiur, a Middlebury alum who is

currently the President and CEO of Texaco.

The group claims Texaco has done widespread damage to rainforests in Ecuador, despite their efforts to clean up the effects of its mining. Last year the coalition confronted Bejiur in an attempt to question him about Texaco's action in developing countries, and was disappointed with his lack of concern, the Rainforest Action Group said.

They hope, however, to have continued contact with him in the future. Gurtman spoke of the group's relationship to Bejiur, saying, "We're in a very unique position to be as close to Bejiur as we are [because of the Middlebury connection]. No one has the kind of access we do." The organization eventually hopes to convince Bejiur to take a trip to Ecuador to sur-

vey the effects of Texaco's mining, a trip that he has yet to take.

Middlebury's Rainforest Action Group, which currently consists mostly of sophomores and juniors, meets every Monday night in Pearsons Lounge at 9 p.m., often for dessert. They are hoping to have an active year and to expand the breadth of the topics they work with. One of the things they are working on is getting the President of the Rainforest Action Network to come speak at Middlebury for Earth Day.

Next Sunday there will be an introductory meeting for all people interested in getting involved. Gurtman described the group saying, "Basically our key word in 'Action'. We try and put things together that a lot of people can benefit from, and that are educational."

Campus Voices

What do you want to be for Halloween?

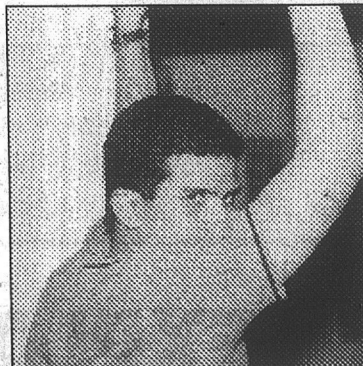
Compiled by Kristine Palmero

Photos by David Barrera



"A lounge pianist."

-Pete Nilsson '99.5



"A Flecktone."

-Adam Popkin '00



"Alice in Wonderland."

-Phoebe Chase '00



"Asleep."

-Jme McLeane '00