

Editorial

Real Life Responsibility

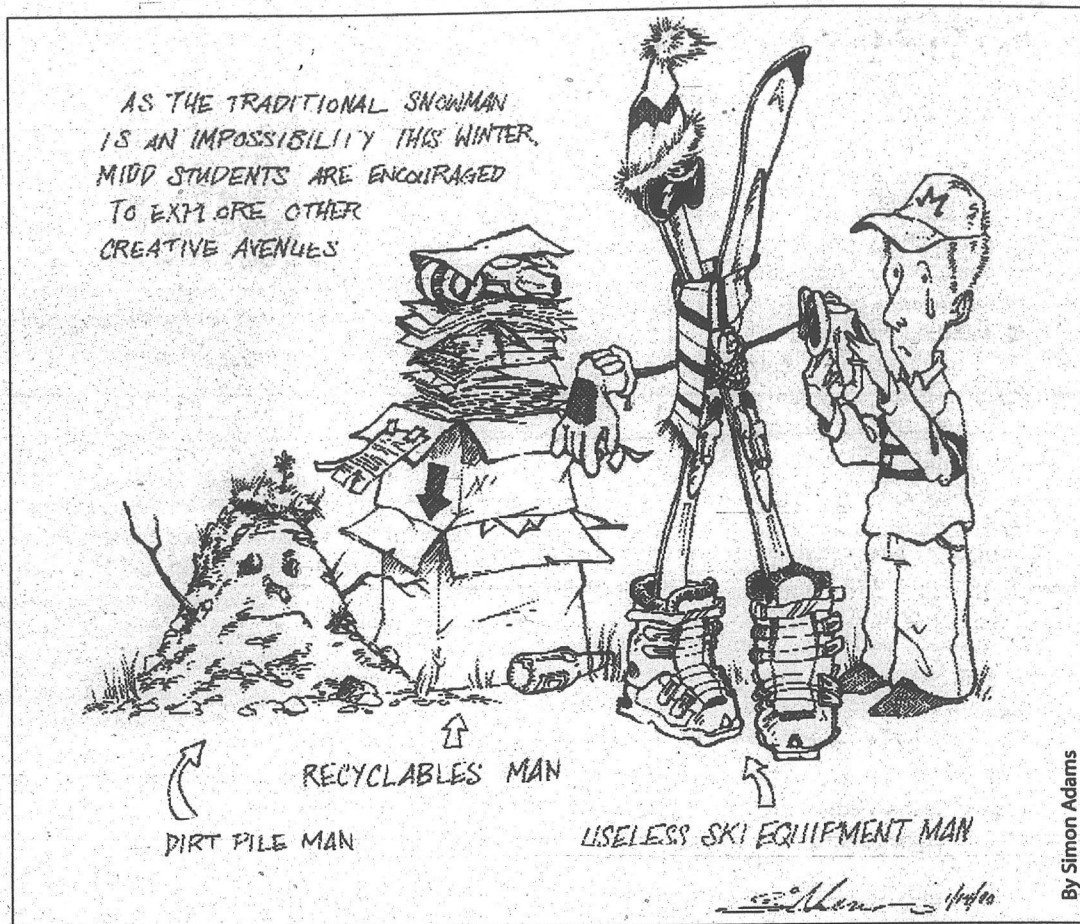
In the wake of extensive absences by student athletes, the College has decided to establish a maximum percentage of classes that students can miss. This policy, in the eyes of the College, will ensure that students remain more focused on their studies than on athletics. It is true that athletics and academics occasionally interfere with one another, but the College's proposed solution is not the correct one. In drafting this policy, the College is forgetting that its purpose here is not to act in loco parentis but to encourage students to take responsibility for their actions.

Every student is well aware that missing class is detrimental to their studies, but sometimes students feel that other matters are more important. A student must have the ability to weigh the pros and cons of missing a class and to decide for themselves whether or not to attend. When this year's senior class goes out into the workforce, there will be no one saying how many days they can miss. Instead, each person will be expected to be responsible for themselves and suffer the repercussions of their actions.

An imposed limit on the number of missed classes still might not change the situation in the case of some professors. Every student is aware that there are professors at this college who allow students to regularly miss classes, especially for athletic events. An imposed limit will not change a professor's decision as to whether someone is "absent." If they feel the absence is warranted, they will merely ignore it.

There are effective steps that the College can take to limit the interference between academics and athletics while still allowing students to make their own choices. The NESCAC schools have continually debated the merits of post-season play and whether it interferes with education. If there is concern about post-season play, what about games that are scheduled while students are supposed to be in class?

The College stands in the position of stressing both the importance of education and the value of athletics at a liberal arts institution. A severe limit, or perhaps even outright ban, on mid-week games would probably be widely accepted by NESCAC. It would show that academics are important, not to be trumped by athletics, and vice versa. It would limit concerns about athletes missing classes. And, finally, it would ensure that students learn the decision-making skills that they will benefit from long after they leave the College.



Seif warns against global warming

In light of the past few months being unseasonably warm, I must ask, "Does anyone care about global warming?" At a recent conference I attended at UVM called "The Impact of Climate

Amy Seif

Change on Vermont's Economy," I learned that human-induced climate change may cause the downfall of all of Vermont's major industries, namely skiing, forestry, maple sugaring, and fall tourism. Not only are these industries the backbone of the state's economy, but they are what makes Vermont special.

We are no longer in the era of 'Pandora's Box' regarding global warming, when scientific uncertainty shadowed concerns by environmentalists that our gluttonous appetite for energy and our love for our automobiles were slowly warming the planet. The majority of scientists now agree that the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases will increase global temperatures. The scientists that don't agree may be loud, especially when the dollars flow in from corporations responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions, but they are few. Note the tone in these recent headings from The New York Times: "Human Imprint on Climate Change Grows Clearer" (June 29, 1999), and "Scientists Warn Against Ignoring Climate Change" (January 29, 1999). Of course, we still can't prove that the warm day today is due to the emissions of carbon dioxide from our cars or the burning of coal in power plants. However, when looking at the patterns of weather over the past hundred years, it becomes harder to refute the claim that temperatures are rising in an unnatural way.

However, I see little indica-

tion on campus that people are really concerned. Where are the staff and faculty who are pushing for vanpools so that they don't have to drive to work in their single passenger vehicle? Where are the students who are signing petitions asking the government to agree to Kyoto Protocol resolutions? Where are the students and staff who are choosing to buy lower-emission vehicles instead of sporty SUVs? Perhaps the community

We are no longer in the era of 'Pandora's Box' regarding global warming.

is aware of global warming and the scientific research that proves its certainty, but we don't understand the consequences. I often hear people saying, "Well, if this nice weather means that we are warming up the planet,

then that's OK." However, warmer temperatures bring more than fun in the sun. Warmer temperatures increase precipitation and extreme weather events, which may bring more destructive ice storms and droughts to Vermont. A change in climate could wipe out species that are not very mobile and therefore cannot move to a zone of colder temperatures, such as the monarch butterfly or Pacific salmon. Global warming may offer lovely tropical temperatures, but with it comes the migration and growth of tropical pests, such as mosquitoes bearing malaria and other disease vector organisms.

We at Middlebury College have the power to do something to thwart these dangers. We can join with Clean Air Cool Planet, a Northeast-based alliance that seeks to bring about actual greenhouse gas

(See Seif, p. 10)

The Middlebury Campus

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Seniors encouraged to voice class gift ideas

This is an open letter to all members of the Class of 2000 encouraging you to take part in the Senior Class Gift Program. Currently, the program consists of two important aspects. The first being selecting

Blake Rutherford '00.5

a gift reflective of our time here at Middlebury. The second is raising enough funds to purchase the gift of our choosing. The Senior Class Gift Committee is asking for as much input as we can have from the entire class. We are also asking that everyone begin thinking about making a contribution towards this effort.

We are actively seeking opinions and advice from a broad range of people, representing the many facets of the Class of 2000.

The Senior Class Gift is our first opportunity to show how much our Middlebury College experience has meant to us. As the first class to graduate in the new millennium, and at the time of Middlebury's Bicentennial, there is no greater opportunity in the history of our College to give something back. The time of Middlebury's Bicentennial, there is no greater opportunity in the history of our College to give something back.

We're looking forward to your opinions, ideas and contributions. Please feel free to contact Kate Lockwood or myself at extensions 6471 or 4733, or via e-mail: at lockwood@middlebury.edu, rutherford@middlebury.edu. Thank you.

Blake Rutherford is Co-Chair, of the Senior Class Gift Committee

Beetem encourages students' role in promoting child literacy

You've probably all seen the commercials on TV that tell you to read to your kids. Celebrities volunteer to remind you that "If you don't, who will?" The truth is

Liz Beetem '02

that reading to kids from a young age helps them learn to read better and helps them do better in school. Many kids in Addison County, as well as other places in the U.S., are well below their grade level for reading. This is

more like 30 book kids. When adults read to kids it also demonstrates that reading can be enjoyable and is not just related to schoolwork.

Last summer I was reading a novel on a whitewater rafting trip when a 14-year-old boy asked me, "Why are you reading in the summer?" When I said that I was reading for fun he could not believe that I would voluntarily pick up a book, let alone read the whole thing. This is where I think the school system in America is failing. We should not be turning kids away from literature but encouraging them to read about things that interest them outside of school.

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often because they do not get enough one-on-one help at home. Many parents are too busy to read to their kids.

I was a student teacher in a kindergarten class this fall and even at that young age I could tell which kids had been read to and which had not. Most of us were probably 1000 book kids, while many kids in Addison County are

Middlebury College students are attempting to improve literacy and the desire to read in Addison County through Page 1, an organization that sends volunteers to many local schools. Page 1 also donates money and books to local children. So far over 100 students have volunteered for Page 1, a number which is rising.

Peaceful solutions lie in greater discussion and cultural exchange

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on respect and understanding. The Peace Symposium:

Respect and Social Action, an inter-group organization, is going to move onto the national level. For a couple days in April, colleges and universities around the country will be engaged in discussions about what it means to live in culturally diverse, religiously pluralistic, world.

At Middlebury, on April 13th, Professor Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot of the Harvard University Graduate School of Education will deliver a speech-based on her book, "Respect."

Here at Middlebury discussion have begun and will continue through April.

Although all of our lives are extremely different, what we have in common can be extremely powerful. The greatest surprise, and the greatest joy, as seen by the rescue in Greece, is what comes out of our shared understanding.

If you are interested in getting involved with the Peace Symposium, contact either Joseph Barker '00, Jonathan Reiber '00, Maika Prewitt '03, or Miyuki Matsumoto '00.

Many students enjoy taking time out of their busy schedules and sitting down to read with a child. The kids really look forward to the college students coming and repeatedly ask their teachers and other students who is coming to read to them. They might prefer to play soccer or basketball with their college students, but when they settle down they also enjoy reading or just talking to them.

College students also serve as mentors for the kids. Many of the children have very few positive role models in their lives. Their parents may not have finished

high school, let alone gone to college. What their college students think and do really can affect them. The kids at Bristol Elementary School

recently put on a play and at first only girls would be in the play.

Then two boys found out that their college buddy had been in theater in high school so they decided to be in the play. The buddies really do affect the lives

of the kids as well as their reading ability.

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To find out more on Page 1, please call Margaret Sanchez at extension. 3010. You won't regret it.

Commons' success lies in students

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who put forth a proposal at last year's faculty meeting to disband social houses, can crunch those numbers.

Another attribute to the Social Houses is that every student on campus is guaranteed the opportunity to be in one if they so chose. Each student decides whether or not to join. Thus, each member is a part of a Social House because they wanted to be. In a few years when rising sophomores are forced to live with in their Commons, I doubt they will view the situation in the same manner.

Identity is found in the Social Houses, not in the Commons. Social House members identify with their organization while some students still don't know what Commons they live in. This allegiance to one's house is stronger for some than others. The non-gender biased "brothers" in my social house call me "Waldo" because they can never find me. On the other hand, I know one kid who moved in the spring of his sophomore year and did not leave until graduation (summers included).

Membership in a Social House is what you make of it.

Unlike the "Enhanced" Commons system, Social House identity is built around more than living together. Friendships that develop through participation in intramural sports, annual pledge events, and yes, weekends parties, create a strong attachment to the

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institution. Instead of drinking in closets, kids in social houses drink together. Some debate Plato over a few beers. Some, despite the stereotype, don't drink at all.

Students in Social Houses develop strong bonds between each other and with the school. The care and respect between members is awesome. After all, these places are called "houses" for a reason. For the sake of the capital campaign, Social House members also come back in droves on homecoming weekend.

All of these positive qualities are absolutely not exclusively found in Social House members.

That, in fact, is the beauty of the system. Social Houses are a part of the social scene, not the scene. There is a lot more to Middlebury than Social Houses and hopefully there will always be a lot more to Middlebury than the Commons.

As a member of the class of '99.5, I am a veritable grandpa on campus. Most Commonists would use this fact to discredit my argument. I can hear them now: "He wasn't introduced to the 'enhanced' Commons his freshman year, so obviously he won't like it." Or, more likely, "he's graduating in two weeks so who cares." For their sake, I wish my opinion would graduate with me. However, even

though I don't have a "Cook '03" t-shirt, I happen to spend a lot of my time with freshman and sophomores. They don't like the Commons System either.

Finally, the Administration's favorite argument in this type of situation is "student memory only lasts four years." Basically, what the Middlebury students of today think doesn't really matter. This 'ad nauseam' attitude is imbued in certain (tenured) members of the Administration to the point of no return. Will the Middlebury experience of the class of '08 be different? Probably. Will it be better? That's for you to decide.

Seif explains need for environmental activism

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emission reduction through the commitment of colleges and other groups. Since the government won't commit to the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, signed by the United States in December 1998 but not yet ratified by the Senate, Clean Air Cool Planet is asking colleges to make their own commitments towards reduction of gases without waiting for the government to act. If Middlebury College chooses to become a member of this alliance, we will need to take steps to reduce our emissions to an amount determined by the college. Fortunately, any steps the college takes towards ending the emission of greenhouse gases will help in

other areas as well. For instance, a reduction in automobile travel contributes to lowering air pollution and death rates. Using less energy to heat our buildings will translate into reduced energy costs and reduced reliance on harmful methods of energy production. Therefore, even if we find, fifty years from now, that the warm weather was due to natural weather variations, we wouldn't have lost out by reducing our emissions. Where we stand to lose big however, is if we don't do anything to reduce our emissions but later learn that we have caused irreversible damage. So, does anyone care about global warming?

Amy Seif is the College's Environmental Coordinator.

The Middlebury Campus



The Middlebury Campus is looking for people interested in the following positions. No previous experience is required for any of the positions.

Sports Editor

Responsible for assigning, editing and laying out stories for each issue of the Campus. Attendance at the weekly editorial meeting is required. A strong interest in sports is preferable. Usually requires six hours of work per week. Work schedule is dependent upon the editor.

Staff Writer

Staff writers are needed for all sections of the paper. If you enjoy writing in any form, you should apply. There are no specific hours. Deadlines for each section range from Sunday through Tuesday night depending on the section.

Copy Editor

Responsible for catching grammatical, spelling and other mistakes. The last line of defense before the paper is sent to the press. The total number of hours of work is flexible, although working late is necessary. This is a paid position.

If you are interested in any of these positions or would like to receive additional information please contact Chris Morgan or Emily Manning at extension 5736.