

Local Global Warming Coalition Convenes

By Nicha Rakpanichmanee
Staff Writer

Reverend Paul Bortz did not believe that last Saturday's 50-degree weather was a fluke. Neither did the 20-some others at the third planning meeting of the Multifaith Global Warming Action Coalition. On Nov. 29, the group met at St. Stephen's Church and brainstormed a wide array of environmental campaigns.

"We are the environmental action committee of the spiritual community of the Middlebury area," explained Professor of Political Science David Rosenberg, who attended the meeting. He shares the group philosophy that there is a "spiritual obligation to be stewards of the Earth."

"We belong to the land; the land doesn't belong to us," Rosenberg cited an old Native American saying.

Bortz, who also leads the Rip-ton-based Spirit in Nature program, spearheads the Multifaith Global Warming Action Coalition. Membership includes a long list of religious groups, such as Unitarian Universalists, Congregationalists, Jews, Quakers and Episcopalians. In addition, several environmentally concerned members of Middlebury

College have involved themselves over the years. Along with Rosenberg are Sustainable Campus Coordinator Connie Bisson, global warming expert and Benjamin E. Wissler Professor of Physics Richard Wolfson, as well as renowned environmentalist and author, Visiting Scholar Bill McKibben.

In the past, the Coalition has collaborated with many campaigns led by Environmental Quality (EQ). Likewise, some EQ members are regular participants, even board members of the Coalition. Because of academic conflicts, however, only two Middlebury students attended the Nov. 29 meeting. Rachel Cotton '03 is on the EQ Executive Board. Emily Berg '05 is a member of the new student group called Middlebury Initiative for Sustainable Development (MISD).

Local Plans to Save the World

The Coalition resolved to initiate several campaigns to reduce local emission of greenhouse gases. Emphasis was on a positive campaign, promoting fuel-efficient cars and other environmen-

tally conscious decisions. The majority at the meeting wanted to avoid the "offensive" nature of an anti-Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV) campaign, for example.

"Personally, I was a little disappointed that the whole group did not want to be anti-SUV," said Bortz. The idea of placing mock tickets on SUVs surfaced during discussion. "One minister said it was offensive. I think it's offensive to destroy God's creation all around us. For me, the Earth and God's creation are two terms for the same thing."

As voiced at the meeting, another reason for a positive campaign was that virtually everyone knew the car dealers in town.

The Coalition, however, did agree overwhelmingly on the many dangers posed by global warming. McKibben cited evidence that by 2050, there could be no winter in Vermont.

The New England Regional Assessment (NERA) projected a six to 10 degree increase in average annual temperature of the six New England states and upstate New York. Published in 2001, NERA is

[Because of global warming] there'll be no skiing, no fall foliage, no maple trees, no maple syrup.

—Reverend Paul Bortz,
director of Spirit in Nature

one of 16 regional climate analyses nationwide, conducted at the request of the Presidential Science Advisor in response to the Congressional Act of 1990.

According to NERA, if the six-degree rise is added to the 30-year annual average temperature in Boston, Mass. (51.3 degrees from 1961-1990), the result is about the equivalent of the 30-year annual average temperature in Richmond, Va. (57.7 degrees). Similarly, if a 10-degree increase is added, Boston's temperature would become the average temperature of Atlanta, Ga. (61.3 degrees).

The projected climate change could affect the weather patterns, animal habitats and species composition of New England, according to an August 2000 study by the Tellus Institute for the World Wildlife Fund, entitled "New England's Global Warming Solutions." The study cited serious threats to the regional economic and recreational sectors.

"There'll be no skiing, no fall foliage, no maple trees, no maple syrup," Bortz explained.

Bortz also noted two issues that he believes to be results of global warming. "Buffaloes went all



Louisa Conrad

A coalition of town and campus environmentalists met on Nov. 29 to discuss the imminent threat of global warming brought about in part by gas emissions from SUVs.

through November without snow for the first time in 130 years. And in the last 25 years, Lake Champlain has not frozen over half the time. This is in comparison to records kept from about 1830-1855, that only once did it not freeze over. This is a pretty dramatic indication in just 200 years."

One campaign, proposed by McKibben, is to alert Vermont winter enthusiasts to these projections. Ideas that came up during the brainstorming session include passing out literature and talking to people on ski slopes.

"It involves tapping into something that's symbolic of Vermont," said Bisson. "Save Winter. Save Maple Syrup. Save the Foliage. We want to link up with people from that standpoint. Tying into that, we also want to offer them everyday choices that will make a difference in reducing the negative impact on the climate."

Another campaign, strongly advocated by Wolfson, is to reserve a few prominent parking spaces downtown for promoting Low Emission Vehicles (LEVs). LEVs are newly manufactured cars that release less greenhouse gases than allowed by the federal emissions standards. Vermont, New York, Massachusetts and Maine have adopted LEV programs to reduce regional air pollution. As the program becomes fully implemented, the Air Pollution Control Division of Vermont will not register non-LEV vehicles.

The Coalition wants to advertise LEVs as an environmentally friendly alternative to larger, less fuel-efficient cars, like SUVs. The plan is to ask the town for some visible parking spots, as well as religious organizations for reserved spaces in church or temple parking lots. The Coalition will contact local car dealers for available LEVs, and will place literature on

the advertised car for passersby.

Another plan, appropriately suggested by Rosenberg, is to lobby Middlebury Selectmen and local organizations on vehicle buying decisions.

Moreover, Rosenberg proposed lobbying state legislatures to avoid any "regressive subsidies," which award quantity discounts for gasoline or electricity.

Some other ideas include placing bike racks at churches and temples and setting up a booth to educate the public about LEVs and global warming during the Middlebury Union High School spring event.

The Challenges of Successful Campaigning

"The goal is to educate people and inspire them to want to change their lifestyle," said Cotton. She sees the positive campaign

groups. But students should be responsible for doing it."

"I don't think anyone is particularly well-educated on the global warming issue, except for a very small number of people," said Wolfson. "It's a complicated subject, and there are a lot of grounds for misconception."

"We're not going to require that everybody take a course on global warming," he continued. "This is not a College problem; it's country-wide. There isn't a lot of controversy about global warming. But the problem is that people who don't believe in global warming are very vocal and very well funded. They don't understand that there is a very firm consensus on the part of the scientific community that global warming is happening."

The Coalition also hopes for energetic student participation in this year's campaigns. Bortz is optimistic from experience. He noted about two-thirds of last year's participants in the Bike to Work Day Parade were Middlebury students.

We seem to be rethinking [our campaigning method]. Something like the anti-SUV program might not be as successful as ... positive solutions [like] the Yellow Bike Program.

—Rachel Cotton '03

plans of the Coalition as analogous to EQ's shift this year to more positive campaigning.

"We seem to be rethinking [our campaigning method]," added Cotton. "Something like the anti-SUV program might not be as successful as offering positive solutions, with the Yellow Bike Program, for example."

While optimistic of the public response to a positive campaign, several members of the Coalition recognize the challenges that lie ahead.

Bortz noted the importance of receptiveness on Middlebury campus, in addition to the town.

"[The College] is a concentration of the single highest voting population in the country," he remarked. In addition, Bortz cited a survey that found half of the 1,000 cars owned by Middlebury students, faculty and staff to be SUVs.

"I think more awareness needs to be raised," said Ben Brouwer '04, who is on the EQ Executive Board. "It could very well be the role of EQ or MISD or some other

As for the fact that only two students were able to make the Coalition meeting, Bortz said, "Students don't seem too big on planning. They like to do stuff."

"I think [students] are relatively active," said Rosenberg. "But it's very seasonal. They have a different rhythm of involvement from the town. On the whole, townspeople are more involved on a year-round basis. Students are more involved when they don't have exams."

However, the question of involvement may rise above time commitment, in Wolfson's opinion.

"Ten to 20 percent of the land area of Bangladesh will be underwater if the projections are true," he said. "Do we have a responsibility of relocating these people when we emit 25 percent of the world's greenhouse gases and when the United States is one of the countries refusing to go along with the Kyoto Protocol? That's an ethical question people should be asking themselves."



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Editorial

A Necessary Conversation: Campus Safety

Since the burglary and assault that occurred in Hadley last Friday, the entire Middlebury College community is aware that our safety cannot be taken for granted. Students and administrators must now reassess campus security, bearing in mind that our rural community is not immune to crime.

The College administration and the Department of Public Safety have taken steps to protect students by locking all residence halls, effective as of last night. This will continue until further notice because the suspects in the burglary have not been apprehended. While authorities continue to investigate, *The Middlebury Campus* Editorial Board trusts the Department of Public Safety to use its discretion in locking dormitory buildings.

It is crucial, however, that all members of the College community convene and discuss how the College should proceed in dealing with security issues before any permanent security policy is implemented.

The Student Government Association (SGA) is holding a public "emergency" meeting, tentatively scheduled for this Thursday at 9 p.m. in the Robert Jones Seminar Room, to address a bill regarding dorm safety and other security concerns. In addition, Community Council has been directed to begin an investigation and evaluation of policies about dorm security and student safety. These are only the first steps toward ensuring that the entire College community are involved in all long-term decision-making.

By the time classes resume in Winter Term, the Department of Public Safety must have formulated a more long-range plan for securing residence halls that does not involve 24-hour lockdown. We hope that this decision will be a product of community-wide consensus.

After the break, we urge the College leave residence halls unlocked but encourage students to take the responsibility to protect themselves and their possessions by locking their individual rooms at night and when they leave the building. By taking the initiative to secure their rooms and their belongings, students can contribute to fostering a safer environment.

Nevertheless, we cannot let the locking of residence halls give us a false sense of security. Doors can still be propped open and those who wish to enter a building can enter with others.

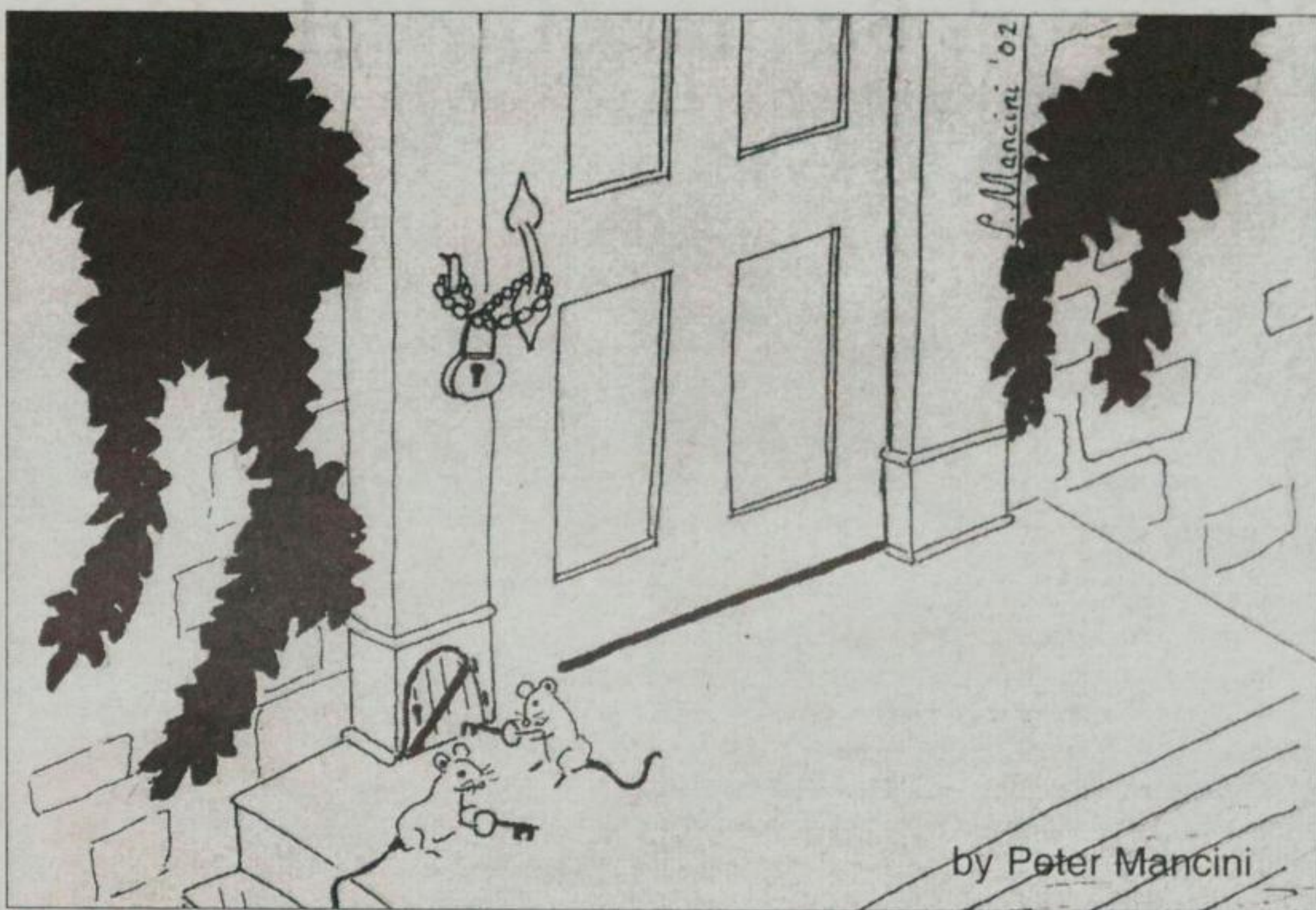
The College can also take more attainable and less intrusive steps to increase safety. As it continues to expand, parking lots will move toward the periphery of campus. College officials must realize that new remote lots, as well as current peripheral lots, will require increased security. At many colleges of comparable size and locale, blue phones are successfully integrated into campus landscapes.

While Middlebury already utilizes call boxes at parking lots and other locations, none of these have the features of blue phones, which sound an alarm and set off flashing lights if touched by a person in danger. Adding blue phones can be easily implemented and will be a deterrent to potential attackers. It would be prudent for the College to utilize blue phones, but also for it to take into account the aesthetic values that are part the Facilities Planning mission.

Campus lighting must also be addressed. Currently, broad expanses of walkways are poorly lit, raising issues of security and general safety of students. There must be ample lighting for students to walk safely across campus at night, but this does not mean that all paths must be flooded with light.

One possibility is to have a single, well-lit and visible pathway connecting all academic buildings, providing an alternative to other routes not as effectively illuminated. A similar path could be constructed to connect residence halls. It is not necessary for this to be the most direct path. What is crucial is that there will be at least one well-illuminated route for students to take, because we must consider that some students are uncomfortable walking in poorly lit areas at night.

The College has many decisions to make in the coming weeks about campus safety, and in doing so should be actively listening to student voices.



-Rachel Cotton '03-

“Yellow Fleet” Saves Cash and Gas

We're the people who ticketed everyone's Sports Utility Vehicles (SUV) last year. We also fixed up a bunch of bikes, hoping that they would be taken for rides, loved and left in appropriate locations after use. With the introduction of "the yellow fleet," our plan was to memorialize the status of bicycles on campus. As an organization, our main focus lies in reprioritizing transportation standards within the local community.

What you may not know about Environmental Quality (EQ) is that serious issues do indeed lurk behind our seemingly "sensationalistic" agenda.

In a Nov. 24 opinions piece for *The New York Times*, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. pleads the case for an increase in American fuel economy standards. In doing so, he raises several key points relating fuel efficiency, oil conservation and

national security. One of Kennedy's most compelling arguments is based on a one mile per gallon increase in auto fuel efficiency yielding more oil than is contained in two Arctic National Wildlife Refuges. In extending this logic, he notes that a 2.7 mile

Most of us will purchase an automobile in our lives. In doing so, it is our responsibility to future generations, the earth and ourselves to choose the most efficient options.

per gallon increase would eliminate the United States' need to import any oil from the Middle East.

Kennedy's article offers an easy and practical solution to some of the most pressing issues on the national agenda. Why isn't Detroit moving rapidly to incorporate increases in fuel economy, then? It

is because auto manufacturers neither see a demand from the American public nor a requirement from the American government to modify the overall efficiency of their products.

Since the most frequently purchased American automobile — SUVs — are also the most notoriously fuel inefficient, data appears to indicate that most Americans do not value fuel economy over image. The lure of driving a rugged yet stylish recreational vehicle entices many. By repeatedly filling

up America's most popular vehicles with gas without a complaint, the public is essentially granting permission to Detroit, Congress and the president to remain stagnant on the issue of fuel economy. The situation is exacerbated by the power and money of auto and oil lobbies who operate in their own self interest.

In attending a meeting of The Middlebury Multifaith Climate Change Coalition last week, I was reminded of the importance of community organizing. The group discussed ideas for exclusive "fuel efficient vehicle only" parking spots in town and a "campaign to save winter in Vermont." The overall consensus of the meeting was that in order to protect the future of the planet what needs to change is the American notion of what makes "a good car."

In developing campaigns such as the yellow bikes and the anti-SUV, EQ is trying to raise the consciousness of the Middlebury community. In fostering an environment of education, through modes of action and discourse, our goal is to suggest wise, informed decisions.

Most of us will purchase an automobile at some point in our lives. In doing so, it is our responsibility to future generations, the earth and ourselves to choose the most efficient options. We should decrease demand for "gas guzzlers" by increasing our demand for fuel-efficient vehicles. In making wise decisions, we need to establish fuel-efficient, hybrid and hydrogen powered vehicles, along with bicycles, carpools and foot-steps as the preferred methods of American transportation.

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QUICK TAKES

BOOYAH!

Midd-kid Katie Samson '02 to make us proud carrying the Olympic Torch.

BOO HOO!

Where's the snow? Our Reef Sandals are getting stuck in the mud.

BOOYAH!

Old Storrs Ave. duplex relocated to make room for new library. Confused residents wake up with a new backyard.

BOOYAH!

Weekend's Casino Night big hit with students. One unlucky student lost his Old Storrs Ave. house.

Compiled by the editors of The Campus

Corrections

In last week's edition of *The Campus*, the headline, "Depression Haunts One in Three Middlebury Students," was meant to say that one in three students at the College visit the Center for Human Counseling and Human Relations for personal issues or problems. Not all of those persons are suffering from depression.

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