## **PINIONS**

The Fat Lady's Song

## A Modest Proposal, Part II

By Geoffrey T. Coffey

The poor Middlebury Dining ervices—they take nothing but abuse. Many of their efforts to make dining a more pleasurable experience, such as decorating ctor with an army of pumpkins in October, playing Christmas music in December, or (dare I mention it?) serving special Winter Carnival meals in February, are not appreciated, and are, in fact, eclipsed by such unworthy acts as ID checking and the infamous "only one entree at a time," leaving Director Ted Mayer open

to ridicule and humiliation.

Students gripe at the grease;
they bellyache over the long lines; they grumble at being obstructed trying to reach a glass, which then turns out to be boiling hot anyway; they weep at the thought of empty milk dispensers; the mere mention of "fried scrod" invokes innumerable grunts and the gnashing of teeth. Constructive criticism has been replaced by dour predictions of impending

As this column has, so far, only added to the wave of execration (twice, in fact), I will now reveal a plan which should end the reign of Proctor-induced misery, while simultaneously solving a few other



will be, if you will excuse what say at first seem an exaggeration. the Plan of the Century

To fully understand the Plan of the Century, you must first consider the environment into which I am proposing it be born First, note that the future of the fraternities looks dim indeed, which indicates that Middlebury's social life will soon be forced into a savage choke hold. As the Deans, Security, the RHA's, and the JC's continue to crack down on parties in dorms, we can expect the incidence of such things as beers on a Friday afternoon and fun to

decrease sharply.

Also, let it be known that the college is currently spending rather a large sum of money on condoms, which they offer for free in the infirmary; if predictions hold, these condoms will begin to accumulate in their bins, unused, and the spem money will be rendered wasteful. Some final points to keep in mind are that money has been a hot subject for the administration lately (i.e. with tuition protests, union demands, professional salary debates, etc.) and that both AIDS and abortion have been dominating the national news for quite some time.

Here, then, is the Plan of the Century. The condom-provision system must be scrapped, while, simultaneously, casual sex must be encouraged and, perhaps, even subsidized. This subsidization might be achieved through coed freshman roommates, college supported dates, or even a secret sex-partner system, which might be molded after the many "Secret Santa" games on campus. In any case, sexual activity must be (continued on page 20)

## Bread Loaf official protests administrative COVER-UP in sexual harassment case The members of the C.O.R.— Middlebury College campus and talking to people who had direct our procedure and with the hope that our community can learn from the Cubra case. The members of the C.O.R.— Middlebury College campus and talking to people who had direct our procedure and with the hope that our community can learn from the Cubra case. College in guaranteeine that the decisively and courageously changed abuse of authors.

nity can learn from the Cubeta case

Without Paul Cubeta's persuasiveness on behalf of Middlebury College, I would not have accepted Middlebury's offer to teach here in 1964. Paul has been my friend ever since, and despite the recent disclosures, I still consider him to be my friend. I am indebted to him for many years of encouragement as a reader of my own poems and for his having invited me to teach at the Bread Loaf School of English since he was appointed its director.

The four students who brought charges of sexual harassment against Paul in the summer of 1988 were all students of mine and have remained in touch with me since they graduated. When undergoing the agonizing decision about whether or not to bring charges against Paul, some of them confided in me and asked my opinion. Painfully, they chose to believe that they made a noble

suffering of these young men.

Provost, took testimony from the students, and a mandated hearing was dents, and a mandated hearing was scheduled in which Paul Cubeta was Con January 27th, as the senion of the given the opportunity to face his accusers in the presence of the memcusers in the presence of the members of the Committee on
Maddox to protest the way this matReappointment. It was an excruciatter was being handled, the institusequent to this hearing. Paul elected
to take early retirement. In my opinlar, I objected to the neglect of the sequent to this meaning, "aut elected to the neglect of the to take early retirement. In my opinion, President Robison should have made it clear to the community at for the basic value of truthfulness in that time that Paul's early retirement came as a result of the hearing so that the role played by the members of the basic value of truthfulness in the role played by the members of the basic value of truthfulness in the role played by the members of the basic value of truthfulness in the role played by the members of the basic value of truthfulness in the role played by the members of the basic value of truthfulness in the role played by the members of the basic value of truthfulness in the same clear to me that the role played by the live and the Co.R. to end decisively an intol-erable situation would be understood Maddox of the seriousness of the and the college community reassured charges against Paul had

cult responsibility on behalf of the college in guaranteeing that a threat something about the abuse of power to student welfare had been promptly and authority that can help us deal removed; they deserve the thanks of with such problems in the future with greater wisdom. written rules and to its proper moral principles to oppose any abuse of po-sition or power inherent in the hierarchical structure of an academic insti-

In the absence of information, what could Robison expect but the very rumor and innuendo that he has publicly condemned! His policy of silence created the atmosphere in which rumor prevailed.

The actions of the administration began to go wrong, however, when Olin Robison created a new position bring charges in order that other stu-dents in the future be spared the kind and offered Paul Cubeta a new apof betrayal that they had endured. I pointment as Director of English. Paul wrote to the Bread Despite my obligations to Paul as a Loaf Community describing his new friend, there was no doubt in my responsibilities, and Jim Maddox, newly appointed interim Director to the safeguarding of future students and the deepest consideration for the suffering of these ways. Paul's past achievements. At this According to specified college point, every public statement that rules, Bruce Peterson, in his role as was issued by Middlebury College made it appear that nothing had gone wrong, that no violation of authority

It became clear to me that

his course of action. His opening re-marks at the Bread Loaf School of English (as printed in The Campus) were direct and clear in apprising the community of the situation, yet suffi-ciently tactful, and truthfulness had its health-giving effect. The school was freed from the rumor and innu-endo that had been caused by the Robison policy of silence. Herein lies, I believe, the main les-

son to be learned. Robison's failure to inform Maddox immediately of the situation in which he had been placed was the same as Robison's failure to inform Hugh Coyle, Bread Loaf's Administrative Assistant (see Coyle's letter to The Campus), of what was happening in respect to Paul's new appointment, or Robison's failure to inform the English Department about the causes of Paul's abrupt retirement so that we could properly respond. In the absence of information, what could Robison expect but the very rumor and innuendo that he has publicly condemned! His policy of silence created the atmosphere in which rumor prevailed.

And, indeed, it did-as in Richard Cornwall's self-serving letter to The Campus, in which, without evidence or knowledge, he distorted the whole issue of abuse of power to make it seem as if the real issue were one of homophobia. Such an assumption, if believed, would shift the guilt away from Paul Cubeta and onto the members of the C.O.R. Such distortion is truly dangerous and must be rejected. In part, it is the result of the Robison policy of having provided the com-munity with no information. Paul Cubeta was not the victim.

On the contrary, he was treated with as much humane concern for his own tragedy as the circumstances, the primary need to protect the students and the community at large, would allow: the students were the victims. At the December meeting of the fac ulty, after damaging publicity for Middlebury College, and pressure from many constituencies, Robison finally made a statement to the community, specifically stating the conection between the hearing and Paul Cubeta's retirement. Late though this statement was, it has, I believe, made possible the necessary subsequent

steps that must be taken in revising our procedures to make them more open and honest, for dealing with the abuse of authority, and in revising the college's printed statement about

sexual harassment, in particular.

As I see it, only truthfulness, even when painful, can restore trust and the assurance of protection to this campus. Sexual harassment and the abuse of authority, just like the destructive, anti-social, and exclusionary behavior that has always been endemic to the structure of fraternities, constitute violations not only against individuals, but also against the academic community as a whole,

Such violations, whether perpe-trated by faculty members or stu-dents, cannot be kept secret to avoid embarrassment to those individuals of the college of which they are part. Their disclosure strengthens the community's commitment to its fundamental value of trust and of mutual empathy and helps prevent future violation. People in a vulnerable situation must be assured that their complaints will be listened to with sympathy and respect. Comments like Robert Baker's surmise that the students were acting out of a motive to take revenge must be deplored. Such an attitude of blaming the victim is all too familiar in our society.

President Robison, having now acknowledged publicly that there was a direct connection between the hear-ing and Paul Cubeta's early retirement, has appointed a committee to come up with new proposals for dealing with sexual harassment. That is a start, but beyond that we need an open and ongoing debate on the sub-ject of the abuse of power by administrators, by teachers, and by students in their social organizations in relation to the college's commitment to protect both the welfare of individuals from harassment, abuse, or exclusion, and the free expression of

These two rights- the right to be protected from intimidation and the right to express one's ideas freelymay sometimes appear to be in opposition, but we must find ways to affirm them both and to bring them into reconciliation. The debate that the new committee on sexual harassment will foster must include ev eryone who wished to be heard, and it will help restore the openness of controversy without which no academic institution can flourish

## Azerbaijan revolt: start of Islamic uprising?

With the recent events in Soviet Azerbaijan, and the increasingly sepThe Azerbaijanis are playing a aratist tone of the revolt there, the isdangerous game. Their rash actions sue of pan-Islamic resurgence in the Soviet Union has become a subject of renewed interest among the Western public. In the past, the Azerbaijanis were content with slaughtering a few Assessing and burning their prop-erty. But in the wake of the recent Soviet Army aggression, the Azerbaijanis may want to establish a state of their own where they could settle ancient scores with ethnic and religious minorities and neighboring republics without interference from the almighty Red army.

Based on its centuries-old blind

hatred of Armenians, the nationalist movement in Azerbaijan is reac tionary in character. Russia estab-lished hegemony in the Trans-Caucasian region as a result of the mutual hatred and suspicion among the myriad of nationalities inhabiting the region. Armenia and Georgia voluntarily became republics of the Soviet Union to protect themselves from antagonistic Muslim neighbors. In attempting to prevent the massacre of the Armenians by hostile neighbors, the Soviet army is playing the

filled almost a century ago.

illed almost a century ago. Asiatic peoples. Previously, most of The Azerbaijanis are playing a the modern republics were mere dangerous game. Their rash actions provinces in the Russian empire, and chauvinistic nationalism invite Because traditional ethnic, religious,

The nature of the revolt and the conduct of the Azerbaijani population have not won them much sympathy at home or abroad. This could prove costly and could facilitate Gorbachev's task by justifying the use of force.

expected to support, unconditionally, Azerbaijani nationalism, has certain reservations about the movement; the Iranian government must be wary of encouraging separatist sentiments in the substantial Azerbaijani population within its own borders. Iran must also placate its giant neighbor to the north, which could be a valuable asset in its crusade against the "Great Satan."

Unlike the case of the Baltic re publics, where nationalism evolved as a part of a broader European it, the Soviet state imposed

the wrath of the Kremlin and gain or tribal allegiances have taken them little sympathy from the rest of precedence over the imported na-the world. Even Iran, who would be tional republic, a mass nationalist movement among Soviet Muslims is unlikely

Azerbaijan is another test of Gorbachev's statesmanship and a challenge to the cohesion of the Soviet Union. The nature of the re volt and the conduct of the Azerbaijani population have not won them much sympathy at home or abroad. This could prove costly, and could facilitate Gorbachev's task by justifying the use of force. But given the present pacifist mood in the the present pacifist mood in the Soviet Union, especially after the war in Afghanistan, the threat of a

lengthy war just might induce the Soviets to cut ties with Azerbaijan. This new independence would in-volve an incredible sacrifice on part of the Azerbaijanis; but, if history is any indication, the people in the Baltic republics would not mind these kinds of sacrifices once given the impetus for them.

Letters to the Editor may be sent to The Campus drawer 30, or submitted to The Campus office in Hepburn. Letters should be received by Monday of the week of publication.