

Take Back the Night march confronts rape and violence

By Raegan Randolph
Staff Writer

Confronting such issues as rape, sexual assault and domestic violence members of the Middlebury College community gathered to gather last Friday night to participate in the Coalition for Feminist Consciousness' annual Take Back the Night March. The march was the culmination of a week of activities sponsored by the CFC to raise awareness of the violence against women and to commemorate and empower the victims of sexual and physical abuse.

Coordinator of the Coalition for Feminist Consciousness (CFC) Kate Landis '99 was pleased with the number of people who supported the march. "We had a lot of people who had never been involved in the issue before," said Landis. An estimated 60 people, one-third of whom were male, attended the event. Landis viewed the group as "a cross-section of the community."

There was an especially significant attendance this year on behalf of different campus minority and activist groups and by men, including male students, the college's Vice President Ronald Liebowitz and President John McCardell. "One thing that really struck me," said Melissa Fuller '01, "was the amount of guys there to support the women. It shows that it's not just a woman's problem; it's something everybody needs to be aware of." Fuller was one of the several members of the women's rugby team who supported the march.

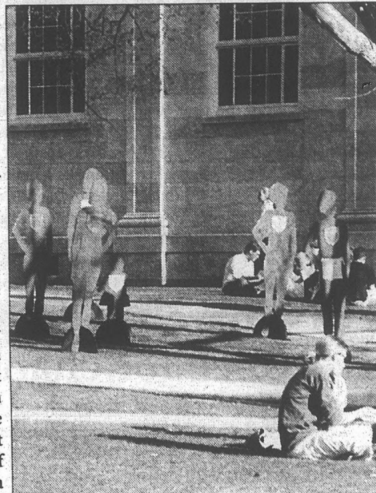
The Take Back the Night March, an event celebrated every April on college campuses and in town communities as part of Sexual Assault Awareness month, began at 8 p.m. Friday at the Chellis House and wound its way through the entire campus. The crowd processed holding candles that were difficult to keep lit with the force of the wind and shouted out affirmative statements that addressed the is-

suues of sexual assault and violence. The crowd chanted such phrases as "good sex starts with yes" and "Middlebury College unite, take back the night." The participants tailored some of their statements to address the issue of sexual assault specifically at Middlebury; in these chants they demanded blue safety-lights and a more effective sexual assault policy. The CFC holds these two problems as most urgent in the college community.

In 1996, Jennifer Handal '98 conducted a study of blue lights on 26 college campuses comparable to Middlebury and found that Middlebury was the only college without them. For example, Handal found that Williams College has 270 blue lights. According to Handal, Middlebury's lack of sufficient campus lighting violates the Campus Security Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1992. But it is not the legality of the issue that concerns the CFC as it continues to fight for blue lights. "Blue lights provide people with a sense of safety and make other feel that they need to be aware of the possibility of sexual violence on campus," said Landis. The other major concern expressed in the Take Back the Night March was Middlebury's sexual assault policy. Handal calls Middlebury's sexual assault policy "toothless."

Last year the Sexual Assault Policy Task Force and the Safety Task Force collaborated to draft an extensive sexual assault policy with a protocol for the process of reporting a sexual assault offense. The task forces submitted the policy to the College. The College adopted the policy officially but also reduced the policy to what Landis called in an Opinions article published in last week's edition of *The Campus*, "a mere half column that nobody knows about."

According to Landis, Middlebury has not treated the sexual assault policy with the attention and seriousness it deserves in part, because the administration is ignorant of the sexual assault problems on campus. Landis also claims that the silence kept by student victims of rape and sexual assault is a result of Middlebury's lack of programs



Carina Curnow

Silent Witness spoke during Take Back the Night.

that foster open discussion of the issue. Handal agreed with Landis on the College's neglect of the issue. "The administration doesn't realize that sexual assault is a silent epidemic." Anyone who attended Take Back the Night Week's Speak Out last Wednesday cannot deny that sexual assault, rape and violence against women are real problems at Middlebury (see *Take Back*, page 12)

Teleconference seeks to create literacy programs

By Siti Masturah Ismail
Staff writer

On Thursday, April 16, a nationwide teleconference sponsored by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and mediated by Vice President Al Gore and entitled "Making After-School Count" was broadcast live from Louisiana into Middlebury College's Sunderland computer lab. The teleconference sought to engage teachers, principals, parents and other interested members of the community in a discussion on how to create effective after-school programs across the country.

Invitations to participate had been extended to everyone in Addison County; however, only five community members were in attendance, including Director of Student Activities Tiffany Sargent, representing Middlebury College's Page 1 program. Launched as part of the college's Bicentennial celebrations, the Page 1 Literacy Project hopes to promote literacy and reading in Addison County through student, staff and faculty involvement.

After-school programs were one avenue through which Sargent had hoped Middlebury College could focus its literacy efforts. During the conference, Gore outlined four reasons why the need to establish after-school programs has now become an issue that demands immediate national response. Gore said that effective after-school programs help parents cope with the difficult task of juggling work and family, turning the problem of idle time for youth into a major opportunity for learning of new skills and in turn providing a safe environment for children otherwise vulnerable to harmful activities. These programs also draw communities together through the full utilization of local resources.

To support community-based initiatives, Congress is expected to approve \$1 billion over the next five years towards the creation of

after-school programs, especially those that will involve technological learning, enrichment classes, recreational activities and drug-prevention.

The Middlebury community has not responded with an application for funding, despite efforts by Sargent to raise awareness of such a valuable resource.

As a "rural" community, Middlebury would have stood a good chance at securing the aid. Sargent



Courtesy photo

Gore mediated the teleconference.

thinks there has not been a huge local participation because after-school programs are already in existence in most schools in the area.

She is, however, intrigued by the idea of community partnerships that were brought up in the discussion, where local agencies, businesses and schools are encouraged to work together to empower the community. Sargent hopes to address new ways through which connections between the College's Volunteer Services Organization (VSO) and the existing after-school programs can be strengthened.

At present, some Middlebury students are already actively participating in programs like Mary

An Ode to Lisa

By Kristine Palermo
Features Editor

My sister Lisa, a high school junior, called me two nights ago. A senior named John had asked her to the senior prom three weeks ago and now they were discussing post-prom plans. Because she attends boarding school, her prom experience includes the following: traveling to the prom venue in a bright yellow bus and having to check-in upon arrival at the Inn and having to check-out before leaving campus for post-prom festivities.

However, before one can check-out, the post-prom goer must have an invitation from the parents who are presumably chaperoning the off-campus party; a permission slip from the parents; and an okay from the deans, stating that you are neither an academic nor disciplinary probation. Lisa's all right with those three criteria. As for the parental yay or nay, my parents had told her something along the lines of "If you want to go, then go" which, of course, has the hidden message "But we hope you choose not to."

"I don't know if I should go," she said. "I mean, my friends say that the prom experience IS post-prom, but I'm not so sure." I assured her that prom, even without the post-prom party, would be fun.

Now, my sister is the epitome of naivete and innocence, which are all the more endearing when you meet her. She is 2.5' with a heavy laugh and almond-shaped eyes that disappear when she smiles, which is often.

Well, there are two parties: one's at Homer's but I hear there's going

to be weed and the other one's being organized by Jeremy Dodd and everyone wants to get plastered. I couldn't help but laugh. "What's so funny?" Nothing.

"Well, he's got this other idea," she said. "A group of us can take a limo to his brother Tom's apartment in New York and hang out in the city. Does that sound good?" Uh... She continued, "Tom was in your

"Well, he's got this other idea," she said. "A group of us can take a limo to his brother Tom's apartment in New York and hang out in the city. Does that sound good?"

history class. Do you trust him to take care of us?"

I couldn't think of anything to say, so I reduced my argument against her going to Manhattan to the following: "Lisa, Tom's an artist" and "You're a smart girl but I wouldn't want you to be walking around New York City at three in the morning."

As much as I like both Tom and John, the mere thought of my little sister walking around Manhattan with hopes of painting the town red just didn't do it for me. I know how to cross the street, hail taxis and I think John does, too. Besides, John's a smart guy. He got into Johns Hopkins early decision. You have to love her logic.

"Lisa," I replied, "you cross streets in a place where the single traffic light in the town center (which is called the Village Green, making New Yorkers think that the Village Green is some great place to hang out) where you're stuck in traffic like Mary

the Green boasts includes an IGA, a restaurant called Chinese to Go, and the post office."

This afternoon, she called me and said that she was still debating whether or not to attend any post-prom parties. Her latest problem though is the dress that she had received in the mail. "Is it too small?" I asked.

"No, it's too big." Such is the repartee between two sisters, four hours away from each other. Long-winded messages, which she always ends with some Tracey Chapman or Jewel song; cyberflowers; and every

so often, she will call me, complaining. "I can't believe he wants us to go for Concert Band rehearsal the same night we have our Ring Banquet" or the oft-heard "Kim's Tickle-me-Elmo which Elliot gave her won't shut up!"

Yet in the same ironic sense of things, she's my big sister too. She's been up to Middlebury thrice; she's met most of my friends, who make fun of me because all three times Lisa would shake her head at the sight of my closet and desk and organize my things; she listens to me when I talk about that thing which beats relentlessly within my bosom; she also listens to me rant and rave. ("Careful," she warns me, "you have to watch your heart and don't forget that insanity runs in our family.")

But back to prom... Can you believe that I'm attending the senior prom! Wow, I'm getting to be a big girl now. She had said three weeks ago, concluding her sentence with a shrug, "She's right, you know, you