



## President Light, please listen

by Michael Matheson

As I stood at the circulation desk of Starr Library this evening, I noticed several of the staff wearing tags pinned to their shirts: "JOBS ARE LIVES, NOT \$\$." After inquiring, I was alarmed to learn that, due to the imminent budget cuts, the library staff is to be reduced.

Starr Library is one of the most vital academic centers at Middlebury College. Sadly, it is also one of the weakest aspects of this institution. The student body (those who use the library) almost universally acknowledges its inadequacy. Not only is its book volume substantially less than that of comparable colleges and universities, but its open hours are far from sufficient. This evening it was brought to my attention that one of the consequences of the staff cut would be a cut in library hours. No matter how one looks at it, these cuts will have a direct, negative impact on the academic environment and will noticeably affect student study habits.

I acknowledge that this letter is probably too late, that the cuts are inevitable. I bring to your attention, however, as we are both newcomers to Middlebury, the issue of foreseeable and avoidable future dilemmas. I am

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unfamiliar with the precise numbers, but my estimate is that the new arts center will cost in excess of 25 million dollars. The staff cuts for next year will save, as I recall, one to two million dollars. The solution is self-evident: hindsight is 20/20. At some point a decision was reached in the Middlebury bureaucracy which deemed the new project more important

than thirty members of an "expedient" staff. Let it be known that few students are in support of these decisions. How can you build without a foundation? How can the Middlebury Community be served by the construction of new projects if the projects themselves sap the life from the College? I am saddened by these choices. I am disheartened by the ignorance and lack of foresight of these decisions and I am angered by their arbitrary nature.

President Light, I urge you to listen. I implore you to not just hear, but to listen to the voices of the students in the face of future decisions. Believe it or not, many of us care. When I see the destruction of people's jobs, of their livelihoods, I feel we care more than those who are making the decisions. Seize this opportunity, Dr. Light, to listen to those who care. Avoid these tragic consequences in the future by examining your decisions today. And begin by listening—not simply hearing, but listening.

people were burned at the stake because left-handedness was "intrinsically evil," a mark of the devil dwelling within a person.

But before I succumb to my PC tendencies and pass this off as an idea of "the silly, intolerant past, and certainly not (an) idea to be taken seriously by the enlightened people of the modern age" (to quote Mr. Upham's portrayal of PCness in action), let me note that scientific study has shown that ten percent of any population is left-handed, just as ten percent of any population is homosexual.

Of course, you could argue that left-handed people do not pose a threat to society the way homosexuals do. Mr. Upham

defends his right to do just that, yet curiously does not feel compelled to justify his argument in any rational way. Instead, he simply dismisses homosexual acts as "contrary to the physical and spiritual nature of man" and calls them "both unnatural and intrinsically evil," as though such ideas are absolute and indisputable givens. And then he goes on to fret about "political correctness" dictating morality on college campuses....

Once we start looking beyond the negative labels that have been attached to the tenets of political correctness, we might just find that there are some pretty good ideas there waiting to be utilized. Then

# Free speech for whom?

by Richard Cornwall  
Editor's Note: The author is a professor of economics.

President Bush, speaking at commencement exercises at the University of Michigan this past Saturday, added his voice to the many reactionary ones smearing, with the old label "P.C.," those who are concerned about sexism, racism and homophobia. Bush said, "We all should be alarmed at the rise of intolerance [i.e. at putting limits on speech] in our land, and by the growing tendency to use intimidation rather than reason in settling disputes [emphasis added]." This echoed the strong protests by white, straight men at the SGA meeting on April 28 discussing our College's harassment rules. These men expressed the desire not to be unknowingly offensive (but simultaneously mocking this expression of good intention by claiming almost paralyzing confusion over whether to refer to "women" or "girls") but claimed they felt seriously impaired in their speech by the threat of having to visit a Dean to discuss their choice of words.

Come off it Mr. Bush and Mr. Defensive Heterosexual! Before you try to trivialize the idea of oppression by claiming victim status, FIND OUT WHAT REAL THREATS ARE! Find out why many here at Middlebury have had no access to the much vaunted Rights of Free Speech for a long time. Such intimidation is not growing, it is just that you used to be able to take it for granted that none of us would talk back and now some of us do.

Three examples: If you are 16 years old and just beginning to realize that you might be lesbian or gay and your parent responds to a general question about homosexuality by saying all queers should be shot, or even more directly, by trying to

since this is MIDD, after all, do you exercise free speech to say that the new academic field of lesbian/gay/bisexual studies is of great interest to you? Of course, it is these esteemed, politely homophobic colleagues who will decide whether or not to recommend that you get tenure here.

And for this assistant professor, there is an even more important, insidiously homophobic, group of players in your tenure decision: some of your students. As you walk to the Chateau for the first meeting of

describes the first Church Council in Jerusalem in 49 A.D., including Saints Peter and Paul, which specifically rejected the requirement for Christians to follow the Code in Leviticus.

The key lesson for us is that institutions and ethics as social identities change. Thus in the last century, tuberculosis was widely considered not only a disease, but also a moral failing. The strong presumption that people with TB were "unnatural and intrinsically evil" [to quote a phrase that randomly runs through my mind] yielded only

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the class, you overhear some students behind you asking, "Why was this class moved to the queer dorm?" You do not respond. No, you put on your well practiced heterosexual airs so that this group will say nice things when they complete those all-important teaching evaluations at the end of the term, because your academic future depends heavily on those evaluations at a place like MIDD.

So Mr. Upham and "fellow travellers," wake up. Yes, you have the right to print homophobic (that means HATE-ful) things without any concern of a midnight call by a Dean. But for your own intellectual welfare, you might want to inquire a bit more deeply into your beliefs. Find out why Serge and Bachus were made saints of the early Western Christian Church. Find out how Origen or even St. Ambrose told the story of Sodom. What did Jesus say about homosexuality? In fact, the only unambiguous biblical condemnation of sexual activity between people of the same gender is in the Holiness Code

slowly to the discovery that, in fact, it is spread by bacteria. Similarly, social presumptions about homosexuality are changing slowly. Mr. Upham, did you talk with the faculty for the Winter Term course dealing with why psychologists changed their views of homosexuality?

Some people at MIDD seem to leave their minds rooted in old Time (circa 1966) magazines thinking that homosexuality is "a second-rate substitute for reality.... It deserves no encouragement, ... no fake status as minority martyrdom." Such folks seem unable to see the difference between the threat they see from the almost totally ineffective rules here on offensive speech and the threats which some women, people of color and affectional minorities still experience at Middlebury.

OK, so we must put the right of free speech above all other libertarian guarantees of access to civil rights and stop quibbling over word-choices. Besides, there is only strong, not unanimous, evidence by

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kill you (no, you in Old Chapel, this is not hyperbole!)—if you are this 16 year old, do you exercise your "rights" to free speech to find out what it means to be lesbian or gay?

If you are an untutored professor and your colleagues make faggot jokes, subtle and clever

of Leviticus. Do you follow all of that Code, forswearing clothing of mixed fabrics, rare meat, etc.? Even if you are so "politically correct" and dogmatic in your own practices, you might be more forgiving toward others who think of themselves as Christians since Acts 15:1-29

again, many students feel it would be easier just to ditch the whole concept. By the same practice, we could go through the inventory of value systems and ideologies and ditch every other code of behavior, including Upham's take on Roman Catholicism.

Political correctness may have its problems, but in that it embodies a greater sensitivity to diversity and a more inclusive distribution of societal power, I would prefer it any day to a community whose indoctrination into morality includes the beliefs of someone like Mr. Upham.

Lurking behind these claims that political correctness is infringing on the rights of stu-

## Raven

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view, two pair of four monstrous beasts clawing at the damp earth, trying desperately to escape their fate. Atop these eight enslaved beauties sat eight fiery goblins, each different hues of trailing fire. The goblins had great bulging eyes and goaded the blindfolded horses with whips down the muddy track. The horses all had the crazed look of terror etched on their faces as froth ran off their chins.

As they sped directly before me, a soul-shattering snap rang in my ears. One of the horses went down, screaming in mortal pain as it pitched the goblin to the ground. The other horses raced on, unable to aid their lost companion for the whips at their sides. The downed horse struggled in vain to walk again for several minutes until a race official put a 45 mm slug through his brain.

I left the track then; the feeling in my stomach had grown too great. My early visions of lazy bluegrass meadows had been shattered by smells of blood and fear, by sounds of cheering crowds hushed at the realization of what they had done. So it was that I never saw the running of the Kentucky Derby.

## PC

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switch. It is one in which views promoting tolerance of homosexuality are considered wrong and are stifled (Kevin Moss's excellent rebuttal of Upham's first letter would have been completely censored, for example); in which homosexuals themselves are silenced, criminalized, and persecuted (or, in the extreme historical manifestations of such righteous religious zeal, murdered)—in short, it is an exchange of one world order for another.

No matter whose world order you are looking at, it seems someone's always being persecuted. In odd days, left-handed