

Open your mind, Mr. Upham

by M. Carrington Spangler
I am writing in response to David Upham's article in the 25 April edition of the Campus. I find his views rather disconcerting and cached in a rationalized sophistry which does not hold to careful examination, even his own.

Mr. Upham argues that his right to free speech and discus-

male." We are not one big happy family just because of our sexual orientation, just as the heterosexual world is not. Before attempting a true dialogue of sorts, I think Mr. Upham should truly question why he believes what he does, including questioning the sources that he uses to back up his beliefs. His numerous articles in The Campus belie the

quired very little time commitment and was on a pass/fail/honors grading criteria. None who wished to audit was turned away from this course. I do not remember Mr. Upham seeking out this forum for discussion, however. Nor has Mr. Upham sought out for "non-classroom" discussion any members of the MGLBA during the current year. Both Jeff Spencer, convener of MGLBA, and I sit within 10-20 feet of Mr. Upham during a French class three times per week. Never have we been approached to engage in the meaningful dialogue which so eludes Mr. Upham.

Equally as elusive as this dialogue are the sources from which Mr. Upham bases his "evidence." After searching the CDROM catalogue, neither Mr. Dilenno nor his masterpiece "Homosexuality: The Questions" seem to exist even in the Library of Congress, much less in the on-line catalogues to which Middlebury has access. Taken out of context, Mr. Upham would seem to be supported by the quote from Mr. Dilenno in any case.

In 1976, the DMSI-III, the standard diagnostic manual for mental disorders, does indeed make reference to homosexuality. This diagnosis on page 72, however, reflects the distress experienced by those who feel homosexual arousal or the ab-

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sion of controversial issues are being limited by the College's inclusion of homosexuality in its sexual harassment policy. I think it rather significant to note that homosexuality was chosen as his example. Why were not potentially offensive comments about Afro-Americans taken as the example since they do represent more of the population of the campus? I do not see Mr. Upham crying out for the "right" to call someone a "nigger" or a "darkie" on campus. I think that even Mr. Upham realizes that this is unacceptable. Yet Mr. Upham would not find epithets against gays and lesbians as deserving a place beside other minorities in the harassment policy. Quit the sophistry, Mr. Upham, even you should be able to tell the difference between "negative comments" and "expression of opinions." Expression of opinions cannot be called out from passing cars, dorm windows, etc. Hate speech thrives there.

I think that perhaps part of his argument might be that homosexuality is a sexual disorder. Homosexuality is more than sex, just as heterosexuality is more than male-female genital contact. We, too, have our own culture including our own history, art, literature, and even language. This culture is just as rich and diverse as any culture. Just as it is impossible to sketch out a "normal white heterosexual male" it is just as impossible to accurately draw a portrait of the "normal white homosexual

fact that he is being prohibited from expressing his views. Yes, I found his views repugnant, yet has he been called into the Dean's office?

Mr. Upham in his 25 April article eventually concedes that the policy "allows for 'classroom' discussion of homosexuality" which he finds insufficient. Before finding this insufficient, he should perhaps consider participating in one of these courses. He makes reference to a course during Winter Term taught by the Psychology Dept. entitled, "Controversies in Psychology." Contrary to what Mr. Upham would have us believe, the topic pertaining to homosexuality was in fact its origins,

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i.e. genetic or environmental, and not whether homosexuality itself is in fact a controversy in the field of psychology. Perhaps Mr. Upham would have been better informed had he taken this class. Another class was offered in Winter Term as well. This class also felt the absence of Mr. Upham's in depth analysis and well-thought out opinions. The course was entitled, "Gay, Lesbians, Straight Dialogue: Can We Really Talk To Each Other?" The class re-

sence of heterosexual arousal when a heterosexual relationship is desired. In the other standard diagnostic manual, another reference is made to this "adaptation." However, again the diagnosis concerns the, "persistent and marked distressed about one's sexual orientation." (Psychiatric Diagnostic Interview Manual, 1983, p.296) In both instances, homosexuality is not in question. The anxiety felt is in response to entering a hostile heterosexual

Let students choose speaker

by Elizabeth Blanchfield, Juliet Dulles, Eileen O'Brien

For the past two weeks a number of seniors have been involved with the effort to include a student-selected speaker at the 1991 commencement ceremony. The impetus for these actions has been misunderstood by many in the College community. The commencement ceremony is the culmination of four years of hard work. Seniors and their families look forward to this public recognition of their achievements. Middlebury's ceremony has always included a graduation speaker. Although student representatives have been on the selection committee, their influence in the decision making process has been limited. They cannot even vote.

Increasing the involvement of the senior class has been our goal throughout this process. We hope that in the future all

seniors will be given the opportunity to participate in the selection of their commencement speaker. We believe the pri-

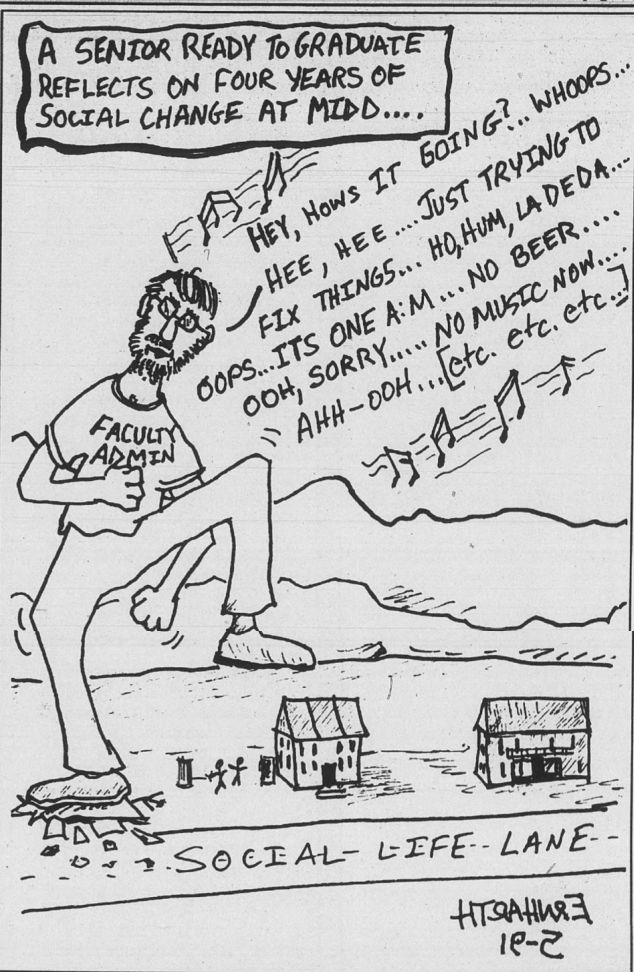
In order to make graduation truly a day for seniors, it is only right that there be a speaker, and a speaker who they have chosen.

mary goal of an effort to reform this process should be to incorporate an election. As it stands right now, the only apparent change the administration has made has been to inform the juniors of the selection process. While they have solicited the class for ideas they have not altered the manner in which the

speaker is chosen.

We compiled a list of feasible speakers, organized an election, and tabulated the results in less than a week. Of the 285 seniors who cast their vote last Monday, 257 endorsed the idea of a student-selected speaker, 28 were opposed. The numbers testify to the high level of interest in this aspect of commencement.

In our meetings with President Light, he expressed his belief that the Commencement ceremony should be uniquely for the graduates. We agree with him on this point. However, he also stated that he was considering eliminating the speaker entirely from the ceremony. We think that this would be a mistake. In order to make graduation truly a day for seniors, it is only right that there be a speaker, and a speaker who they have chosen.



environment, and an awareness of the ill-treatment of homosexuals in our culture.

His reference taken from the Psychiatric Annuals of 1976 remains in question. I could not find these in Vermont, only in Massachusetts and New York, Mr. Upham's home state. How then could he have recently done this research? During spring break perhaps? Not likely. I also find it problematic that his

SGA secrecy is inappropriate

by Jack Jessup
Amidst the hoopla of Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections, it is easy to forget that a few weeks ago, student representatives were ushered in almost covertly. Pollsters I spoke to reported a less than 25% voter turnout rate. This was not so much due (as Bob Goldthwait would have it) to a collective shrug of the shoulders, as it was to campus-wide ignorance. Neither SGA, nor the candidates themselves, put out phone mail messages reminding us to vote. Posters were almost non-existent. Most people found out about elections by bumping into the mailroom voting table. Others stumbled across similar tables in the lobbies of their respective dorms. The absence of these in Barnes and the Chase contributed to the dorms' abysmal (not even 10%) voter turnout rates and served to illustrate a disturbing fact: most students are not getting a say in the workings of the SGA.

Every day, I hear complaints about the administration's in-

clusive sources are so old. He would contend that homosexuality remains a controversy in psychology, meaning that there still remains a chance that the Mr. Uphams of the world will once again become the establishment, the norm. The only thing controversial about homosexuality seems to be opinions about it by the students here on campus. This is a beginning, but not an understanding.

difference toward issues regarding student life. These complaints more accurately reflect the SGA's failure to adequately communicate student opinion to the administration.

Every issue affecting campus life, including the Commons System, has been effectively cleared by the SGA (in the Commons' case, by a significant margin). If we care enough to make our views known, the SGA's Sunday night meetings have always been open to the public. Rather than consign ourselves to oligarchy, we should use this open forum to air our grievances and direct attention to that which has been overlooked (perhaps in the process, we may learn something ourselves). We must also make our representatives accountable for their decisions and not permit them to remain anonymous, with voter apathy as their only ally. Above all, we must vote. Without this crucial procedure, our caring does not mean a thing and we merely compound the problem.

Mr. Upham seems to take refuge in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Look out, David, there is a leak in the cathedral roof. Homosexuality remains a controversy there, too. Try taking a look at Richard McBrien's "Catholicism" for a beginning on where the dialogue sits within your safe place. But look out, David, "intrinsic evil" lurks in your Church: I too am Catholic. I look forward to the day when a meaningful dialogue with you will be possible, but that will involve your knowing as much about my culture as I do about yours. We could, however, start with coffee in the Crest Room sometime, if it's free speech you are really worried about. Relax, I promise not to oppress you for your ignorance.

Free speech

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psychologists that imposing rules on allowable words has a positive effect on underlying attitudes. If offensive speech is constitutionally protected, then some of us will throw it back. Just as by 1968, resistance by much of the white mainstream had led many to lose hope that the promise of the Civil Rights Act would be fulfilled and, in response to this "white backlash" in the North, to organize Black Power to keep the pressure on, so the dominance of the same mainstream in the 1980's has led to the birth in the past year of Queer Nation. Some may want to write home to celebrate that there are some pretty QUEER professors at Middlebury College.