

OPINIONS

The Fat Lady's Song Good Night, Mommy

By Geoffrey T. Coffey
Now gather around, boys and girls, and Uncle Geoffrey will tell you a bedtime story... what? Of course it's your bedtime, children! Mama Midd has taken special care to know exactly what bedtime is best for you! Now sit still, and listen to the story.

No, you silly geese, I'm not going to read *Uncle Wiggly* again. Tonight's story is "The Mysterious Tale of the Report of the Task Force on Student Social Life." Yes, I think you will find it very enlightening and entertaining, and just to make sure you do, we will go over the morals of the story as we proceed.

Now, first, you must realize that you are indeed children. Of course you are! It is implicitly implied in the third point of the Task Force Minority Report. Just listen: "Presently, fraternities have little outside influence. Adult presence and judgment could add strength to any system." Isn't that nice... children? Let's go over the things that, as Middlebury children, you are allowed and not allowed to do.

Things that are allowed:

- 1) You may stick a paper tube filled with dry leaves into your mouth, light the end on fire, and suck on it.
- 2) You may fornicate on water beds, in hot tubs, in the open air, in closets, or in any other place which suits either your or your partner's fancy.
- 3) You may wear combat fatigues, wield a rifle, and have your appendages violently removed from your body in foreign lands.
- 4) You may cast a ballot, and thus have a say in the election of an absolute coxcomb to the Presidency of our nation.
- 5) [Applies only to Middlebury children who have reached the age of twenty-one] You may imbibe inebriating beverages until you vomit.

Things that are not allowed:

- 1) You may not make responsible judgments concerning your own life.

Oh, wait, there's Trustee Pat Palmer, announcing in Mead Chapel that you are adults after all! Now observe her face closely, children. Can you see? That is called a "condescending look." Can you say "condescending"?

Now then, let's move on to the next part of the story. It concerns that portion of the Task Force Report known as "The Majority Report." It reads as follows: "Fraternities should be abolished by May 30, 1990." Now let us read from the rationale behind this suggestion: "As we approach the 21st Century, Middlebury is striving to become a more diverse community. We are committed to going beyond mere tolerance of differences to an era in which we appreciate the cultural diversity that makes America a unique and strong nation." What? Are you confused, children? Oh, yes, you must not understand a statement which includes both "abolition" and "appreciation of diversity" as its simultaneous goals. Well, children, it's very simple. This is your first lesson in hypocrisy. Can you say "hypocrisy"? I thought so.

What? You want another lesson in hypocrisy? OK, here's lesson #2. First, consider that the Task Force is an unbiased, disinterested, neutral, and open-minded group which has been asked to vote on a delicate issue. Now consider the ac-

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What is "responsible journalism?"

To the Editor:

Mr. Baker's accusation that The Campus is guilty of yellow journalism only proves to me that, in the deepest sense, the administration and its supporters are responsible for the tremendous apathy and ignorance that exist at Middlebury College.

The Campus is, for once, finally taking a stand on an issue. As a result of this resolve, it seems that they are also beginning to employ the best examples of investigative journalism. For, whereas a year ago, or even less, The Campus was a public relations mouthpiece for the College, they are now beginning to cater to the best interests of those they are supposed to serve, namely, the student body and the faculty. The lesson, I believe that has been learned here is, perhaps, one Mr. Baker did not want learned, simply that faculty and staff cannot commit unethical practices of any sort and think they can get away with them.

The truth will out, Mr. Baker, as has happened time and again. The press must remain a vehicle of information and truth. In The Campus, they are taking the first steps down the road of good journalistic ethics. For, whereas the administration attempted for many years to hush up an affair that affects all of us, The Campus has now taken responsibility out of their hands and put it in the hands of the moral majority: the stu-

dent body, faculty, and staff.

Mr. Cubeta's actions were deplorable. But what was and is more deplorable is the unwillingness of the administration to address this affair. As far as transgressions against individuals are concerned, they have already been committed, Mr. Baker. An entire school was rocked by Mr. Cubeta's lies. It is still struggling under the weight of years of misinformation. By his very actions he has given the right to be trusted, to be pandered to, to be protected from the justice that is due. It is the same situation in which many other public figures have found themselves—Jim Bakker, James Wright, Barney Frank. Are you telling me that the American public has no right to know what these people are up to? That these people should be protected from public wrath? This is the argument that you make, Mr. Baker. For in saying that The Campus is modeled on "The worst

journalism" you are indeed indicting *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, and the Congressional Ethics Committee of the same "yellow journalism." What The Campus has done is attempted to protect Middlebury College from more such heinous violations of justice, whereas the administration attempts to quietly sweep the whole affair under the rug. Has

administration done very much to support the administrative staff of Bread Loaf and the victims of Mr. Cubeta's punishment? I put to you that the answer is no. It seems that Mr. Cubeta's punishment, a slap on the wrist, will not prevent more people from getting hurt. There are and will be more victims Mr. Baker. Of that I can assure you. Had this not been published in The Campus Cubeta would have been able to move on to other institutions and caused the same pain. As it is, the administration continues to attempt to hush the whole affair and as a result, Mr. Cubeta still has not received full punishment.

Jeanne Zeltvogel '89

To the Editor:

It is unfortunate that there remains in our society a deplorable tendency to repeatedly victimize the victim. I refer to Professor Baker's thoughts in the November 17 issue of *The Middlebury Campus*. It is made quite clear that Professor Baker cares more for the college's reputation (and keeping the matter out of *The New York Times*) than for the sexual harassment victims themselves. He claims that they "hunger for vengeance" and implies that the students should not have spoken out this summer, or ever. He writes that "One must wonder... at the timing chosen

by the victims for their coming forth." What is the wonder? Who in their right mind would want to come forth and bare deeply blistering wounds before a college community while still a student? I hold tremendous respect for those who had the courage to return to this college, describe their ordeals, and possibly make this campus a safer place for students in the future. We should learn from the pain inflicted on these students so that it will never happen again; not vainly cry over our college's tarnished reputation. Damn the college's reputation! These are human lives whose horrible experiences should not be distorted with moot debate over the propriety of *The Campus's* investigative reporting. It is also disheartening to read Professor Baker's claim that "the major emotion here is a desire to vent spite." Instead of trying to understand the crime and the devastation it causes on lives, he seems more interested in further attacks upon the unfortunate victims. The next time that Professor Baker wonders "at the timing chosen by the victims" I hope that he realizes that responses such as his are exactly what keeps harassment victims silent. Victims quite rightly fear the "spite" held by the supposedly "liberally educated" persons that continue to blame them for their misfortunes.

Robert Baran '90

There is nothing humerus about it

To the Editor:

Two years ago, in May 1987, the door to my office in McCullough gym was smashed in, and a naked torso of a mannequin was left on my desk. It was one of several like occurrences on campus. This year, the human-bone skeleton was taken from my office on November 19, and the skull of our newly purchased plastic skeleton was also removed, leaving me face to face with a headless body

as I sat down at my desk on Monday morning. These actions reflect general discomfort with the human body and with those who care about it in a way which is worth both contemplating and changing. Out respect for ourselves—our individual physical selves, and by extension, for other people, for animal species and for our earth—is basic to world peace and global survival. The issues are not small and are not funny. In cer-

tain shamanic traditions, it is said that the ability to name the bones is the foundation for wisdom. I ask for the assistance of the college community both in contemplation of the issues at hand and in action towards change: contemplation of what it means to violate the physical body and invade another person's property and private space, and in the return of both the skeleton and the skull to my office in the Dance Program in the

service building and perhaps, more importantly, return to a respect for the human body—a body which we all share.

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