

Middlebury empowered by Take Back the Night

By Lilia Gerberg

Sexual assault is not a pretty topic, not one that many people want to talk about, and not a common dinner subject at Proctor. However, it is a problem and it occurs throughout the country, in Vermont, and yes, even at Middlebury College.

Last week, members of the Coalition for Feminist Consciousness worked to educate people about assault against women with a series of events. Thanks to the intensive efforts of seniors Jen Kupperman, Brooke McDonald and Tina Buchholz, Middlebury

College held Take Back the Night. The original Take Back the Night was held in San Francisco in 1978. Its purpose was to empower women to feel comfortable without the fear of rape and assault constantly hanging over them.

The idea spread to other universities and colleges. At large universities, Take Back the Night is usually just one day, and participants stay out all night long.

Kupperman got the idea to bring Take Back the Night to Middlebury after she attended a sexual assault

awareness conference at Columbia University this past February break.

Kupperman realized that because of the size of our campus, the event could not be held at quite the same level as at some of the bigger universities.

She also considered the fact that the majority of students at Middlebury might never have heard of Take Back the Night.

Therefore, she was faced with the challenge of engaging students and faculty and reaching as many people as possible.

Last week was sexual assault awareness week, with five days filled with numerous activities culminating

with the Take Back the Night march on Thursday.

All the events over the course of the week helped raise awareness and educate people about violence against women.

Violence against women does in fact occur on the Middlebury campus although it is often silenced or ignored.

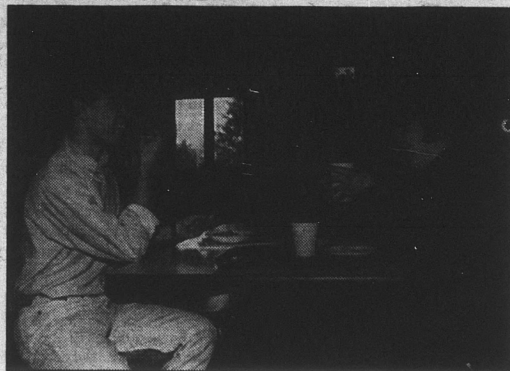
There was a diverse range of activities in order to involve and educate different groups of people. The first activity occurred on Sunday, April 23, when students gathered in

Club; and Adam Werbach, President of the Sierra Club Student Coalition, were all present to offer their opinions on this controversial issue.

Each speaker began with a five minute opening remark concerning their personal role in the environmental justice movement within the Sierra Club.

Cox spoke of his desire to raise consciousness about the environmental injustices minorities suffer within American society. He participated in the first National People of Color Environmental Summit which was held in October of 1991. The summit served to focus national and governmental attention on the issue. Its aim was to gain federal support for investigations into the problem of environmental racism and to demonstrate the existence of injustices.

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Heather B. Thompson
Students, taking pride in their ingenuity, seek new social spaces in which to spend their time. The Crest Room has always been a favorite meeting site.

front of McCullough to make white candles which would be carried during the march.

People walking by saw the candle making and some stopped to observe, and in this way the event contributed to awareness.

On Monday evening, there was a self-defense workshop, organized in part by Edna-May King '95. King has earned a black belt in karate and she invited her master to campus to teach an introductory course.

The session lasted almost two hours, and although students learned but a few basics, it was still very empowering. It imparted the idea that no matter how big an assailant is, the would-be victim still has a way to defend herself. The power dynamics are not necessarily fixed.

On Tuesday evening, Jean Kilbourne's film, "Still Killing Us Soft-

ly" was shown in the Undergrad. Kilbourne is a dynamic speaker who has spoken at Middlebury in past years.

Her engaging and informative film is about media depictions of women and the how media tends to promote and perpetuate the degradation of and violence against women.

Most of the piece was filmed at a lecture Kilbourne gave at Harvard University a few years ago, and it included some heart-wrenching statistics concerning child abuse, acquaintance rape, spousal abuse and murder.

On a different note, the next evening storytellers performed in the Gamut Room. Abi Sessions and Joan Robbinson told funny, fictitious stories with female heroines. The stories were modernized fairy tales involving powerful women. The storytellers put empowerment on a light and humorous level, and everyone in the packed room seemed to thoroughly enjoy the show.

All these events led up to the main event — the march on Thursday night.

A few members of CFC brought a ribbon tree to dinner at Proctor, (continued on page 12)

Alternative social space discovered

By Josh Irwin

Here at Middlebury, we take immense pride in our ingenuity. Seldom does there arise a problem or thorny dilemma that two or three quick thinking kids or a couple of Old Chapel administrators can't resolve in a matter of minutes.

A fitting example of such acumen is the recent installation of the Middlebury Interactive Kiosk Environment, the new contraption opposite the Crest Room.

Students in financial straits can now settle PIN bills by charging their outstanding balances to a major credit card. The resulting interest payments and poor credit record may haunt them for years but at least their phone will be reactivated.

Clearly, expensive resolutions to imaginary student needs require reconsideration. But happily, students have uncovered genuinely clever solutions to a most persistent problem: the dilemma of social space. Socializing in the cramped first-year dorms or conversing in whispers outside the rooms of thesis-burdened seniors inevitably proves difficult.

Certainly weekend nights are a different story, amid lower inhibitions and raised spirits, students think nothing of packing 25 kids into a Milliken double or elbowing for keg access at Sig Ep.

But where does the average, everyday social interaction take place? Where do kids relax, commiserate about work, discuss the SGA elections, plan the coming weekend or indulge in hall gossip?

Hungry for space, and with typical ingenuity, Middlebury students (continued on page 12)

Speakers address environmental racism

By Julie Moriarty

As part of the Middlebury College Earth Week celebration, the Environmental Council and Environmental Quality sponsored events with the hope of promoting awareness of our physical environment and surroundings. They succeeded in bringing several prominent speakers from around the country to the campus to discuss their views on various issues.

One of the highlights of the week was a panel discussion on the topic of "Environmental Justice." As the newest and hottest topic in the environmental movement, environmental justice confronts the fact that minorities in the United States are exposed to a disproportionate number of environmental hazards. Their communities shoulder the burden for the rest of the population and thus they suffer a disproportionate number of deaths and illnesses due to exposure to toxic wastes and pollution.

Four prominent members of the Sierra Club, a leading national environmental organization, participated in the panel. Robbie Cox, the national president of the Sierra Club; John McCown, the Director of the Environmental Justice Program; Bill Redding, President of the Mississippi Region of the Sierra

Club; and Adam Werbach, President of the Sierra Club Student Coalition, were all present to offer their opinions on this controversial issue.

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McCown spoke elaborately on the environmental injustices that

minority communities suffer in the southern United States. The statistics he presented were astounding especially since Americans like to think that we have made great strides toward eradicating racism in our society.

He stated that one in two African Americans live in close proximity to our nation's toxic wastes. And the people in those communities suffer from cancer and other diseases due to the environmental hazards to which they are exposed daily.

Redding spoke next and was more general in his statements. He acknowledged the importance of achieving sustainable development and eliminating overconsumption and overpopulation. Recognizing that these are the prime goals of the environmental movement is the first step toward saving our planet.

However, Redding believes that until race is no longer an issue, we will not reach a sustainable community. Thus it is important to focus on the environmental justice movement as a first step toward achieving our environmental goals. The environment is an American problem, and for that matter a global problem. We must all work together to solve the crisis.

The last panelist to speak was Adam Werbach of Brown University. He emphasized (continued on page 12)

International festival promotes awareness

By Emily Stone

Although many are looking forward to May 12 as the last day of classes, as a beacon of hope in sea of homework and papers, others are busy planning for a higher cause.

On Friday May 12, there will be an international celebration on the Arts Center Terrace from four to six o'clock. Co-sponsored by Building with Books and Global Links, the event will feature song, dance and food from around the world. The festival is free and its organizers hope to attract a large number of people from the college and community.

Kifu Kidane and the New Nile Orchestra, who played on campus this fall, will provide music for the afternoon. Kifu was born in

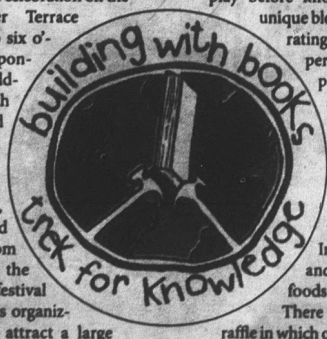
Ethiopia, where his musician parents taught him to sing and dance. His New Nile Orchestra combines singing in ancient Ethiopian tongues with modern instruments such as the electric guitar, bass and keyboard.

Anyone who has heard the band play before knows that this unique blend of invigorating music is the perfect accompaniment for an outdoor celebration.

The day's international cuisine will feature traditional Indian, Thai and Chinese foods.

There will also be a raffle in which one lucky person will take home half of the raffle ticket sales, the other half going to the two sponsoring organizations.

There will also be tables set up by both Building with Books and (continued on page 11)



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A panel on Environmental Justice was a highlight of Earth Week.