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Middlebury students march to take back the night

By Rebecca Plona

On Thursday, April 16, members of the college community took part in the annual "Take Back the Night" march and rally, featuring a candlelight march, music by Alicia Mathewson '92, a speaker, and an open microphone session. This year's march was organized by Sara Weale '92, Lisa Darak '92, and Tracey Merrill '92.

"Take Back the Night" marches began in the early 1970s in response to the dangers posed to people, especially women, during the nighttime hours. Since then, the marches have spread and are now held annually on college campuses and in towns nationwide. "It was started because women were sick of being afraid at night," said Weale.

Following a presentation by Susan Sweetser, founder of Survivors of Crime and a survivor of sexual assault herself, an open mike session was held in Upper Proctor, at which women were encouraged to share their experiences with others.

Sweetser related the story of her own sexual assault eleven years ago at the hands of a man she stopped to help on a Vermont country road. She told the audience of her ordeal in graphic detail, and her struggle with the Vermont criminal justice system to get this man, a prior sex offender, convicted. She struggled for eleven and a half years with the Vermont courts, trying to find justice and was met with disappointment, disinterest, and failure.

"I went to the system looking for

justice," she said of her court experiences, "and after two years, I had found none. After four years it became humiliating. After nine years we realized that the court doors were closed to us."

Sweetser decided in 1990 to go public with her story in the hopes of aiding other victims of violent crime, be it sexual or physical assault, abuse, or domestic violence. She founded Survivors of Crime that same year with another woman who had also been raped. The Vermont organization, which has dedicated itself to working for legislation that will protect the victims of crimes, now has about 1200 members.

"It's time to stop focusing on the victim's conduct, and start focusing on the offender's," she told the group. "It's not what the women do wrong, it's what the men do wrong."

When the open mike session began, students who were victims of a violent crime, or close to someone who was, got up to speak in front of the group. Some of the survivors spoke of their own ordeals. Others tried to share their frustration and fear. Still others gave advice to the audience on dealing with an assault, or how to prevent one.

One survivor expressed frustration with the lack of safety measures on campus—namely, poor lighting and lack of emergency phones, which can be found on many campuses across the country. According to the speaker, the administration felt that until proof of need was demonstrated, these safety



Students light candles in preparation for march.

Photo by Roberta Stewart

measures were unnecessary.

"Why do we have to wait for an attack to happen before something is done?" she asked. "Nobody should have to feel this way."

Another survivor advised the crowd
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Rain puts a damper on Earth Day activities

By Lisa Healy

This week marked the 22nd celebration of Earth Day, a day on which the environment is recognized as something that must be protected and preserved. Although Environmental Quality worked to plan events for last Saturday in celebration of Earth Day, these activities were cancelled due to inclement weather.

After a scheduled picnic was moved indoors, the speakers from Vermont Public Interest Research Group and the Department of Environmental Conservation decided that the new location would be an inappropriate forum for their lectures, as space would be a problem. Booths representing various organizations and workshops planned to be held outside were also cancelled. Despite all the cancellations, one band, the Pete Sunderland and Friends String Band, entertained crowds in Upper Proctor during Saturday lunch.

Earth Week events scheduled for this past week included music and letter writing to Congress on Proctor terrace, and nature poetry readings in the Gifford Amphitheatre on Wednesday evening.

Earth Day was founded in 1970 as more and more people began to realize that the earth needed a good public relations event. Organizers believed that people needed to be informed that the nation's drinking water was be-

coming polluted, the air was dangerous to breathe, and nursery schools were being built on top of toxic waste dumps.

The founders of Earth Day had hoped that this day would bring about a new era in which people would make efforts to protect and preserve the environment. Earth Day serves as the birthday of the environmental movement, a day celebrating the increased environmental awareness that has developed in our country and all over the world since the first Earth Day twenty years ago.

Since Earth Day 1970, the government has taken monumental steps to protect the environment. Congress has passed such legislation as the Clean Air Act, the Superfund regulations and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Environmental Studies has become a major at most universities, and careers in environmental law and environmental consulting have become more and more popular. Our own college not only has an environmental studies major, but also an environmental studies house where those interested can live in a low-impact, environmentally aware area.

Tara Thomas '93, president of Environmental Quality, said, "It is unfortunate that it couldn't be a large outdoor celebration, but we must take what the earth gives us. And in this case, the earth gave us rain and snow."

Congressman Sanders speaks out



Vermont Representative Bernie Sanders discusses his views.

Photo by Ed Soh

Tuesday, April 21, The Campus interviewed Vermont's Independent United States Representative, Bernard Sanders. Sanders, Vermont's sole representative, is a Democratic Socialist in the second year of his first term in Congress. The following are excerpts taken from that interview.

Campus: Last year when you visited Middlebury on Earth Day you expressed concern over the fate of the local family farms of Vermont in the light of recent Federal policies. What has happened to local farming since then?

Sanders: It has been a very bad year. Politically, there were several of-

forts to try to protect family farms, and we have, frankly, not been successful. Senators and Congressmen from farm districts are not a significant force in Congress. The population of family farms has significantly dwindled, and in their proper representation, the fact of the matter today is that family farms have their backs up against the wall. In many instances the amount of money they are bringing in is not equivalent to how much it costs to produce the product. What you are seeing, and have seen in the last ten years, is the loss of hundreds of thousands of farms. We are down to 2400 farms in Vermont. The fact of the matter is that we can save the family farm. But you would

need a strong Federal legislation, which would develop what you call a two tier supply management system, [for example] guaranteeing farmers a fair price for the milk and at the same time preventing over-production which is why farm prices go up. But unfortunately we have a President of the United States who is much more interested in protecting the interest of agribusiness. He is developing devastating policies for family farms. Here is a debate; if you believe in free market economics, then what the President of the U.S. would tell you is, "what's the problem?" That is what the free market is about. The danger with that theory of agriculture,

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