

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The ongoing CIA debate: two sides of the same issue

To the Editor:
 In your October 20 edition of *The Campus*, you ran an editorial by Fred Christen entitled "Beating the CIA at their own game." Christen is president of the organization, ACT NOW, that barred the CIA from our campus for the next three years. Although ACT NOW is celebrating a victory over the CIA, its temporary victory was a means of achieving this victory were means and wrong. Christen and his followers have done a great service to the Middlebury College community as a whole and deserve to be mentioned to the full extent allowed by the College handbook.

No one should be subjected to Act Now's flippant conduct.

I simply wanted to learn about one of the alternatives I might have after graduating from Middlebury. The process of learning, however, was hindered by several members of Christen's group.

The CIA people fielded questions from the students. I recall one question asked by a protester disguised as an interested student. He asked "If I wanted to become involved in the merciless killing of innocent civilians abroad, which division of the CIA would I want to be in?" The CIA members who were unfortunate

enough to be selected to come to the Middlebury campus, responded to this sort of question very well. No such flippant conduct. These CIA members were teaching Middlebury students about their jobs and about a government. This knowledge is valuable to many students. The protesters were interfering with the hindering of the process of education.

After having succeeded in disrupting the first gathering of Middlebury students with the CIA, the protesters were hungry for more. They congregated outside Adirondack House where Middlebury students were scheduled to be interviewed for future employment by the CIA. Christen and his group showed blatant disregard for the fellowship that should exist in a community of our size. Individuals on our campus obviously are interested in pursuing a career with the CIA. The CIA came on campus to help these individuals and facilitate the process of entering this branch of government work. Barring the CIA from returning to the Middlebury campus is not hurting the CIA. If it is hurting anyone, it is those students at Middlebury who are trying to land a job. What gives Christen the authority to interfere with job possibilities offered other students, who have earned the right to a Middlebury education?

I admire the protesters for protesting something they feel strongly against. I, however, find nothing admirable in their means of protesting. They acted not out of the interest of the majority, but rather they acted hastily and without considering the repercussions that might be felt by the entire student body. If the CIA is true to the agreement, no one presently enrolled in this school will be afforded the opportunity to meet

with the CIA on campus. In addition, organizations other than the CIA may be dissuaded from recruiting students at Middlebury after hearing of how the Middlebury community received the government community.

I am confident that if this sort of extreme behavior is allowed to go unpunished, the display put on by ACT NOW will become the norm for all student organization protests. Christen stood up for what he believed, which is good. He did this, consistent with attitudes of the Middlebury College. Not only did ACT NOW violate the handbook that it claims to have defended, but also they interfered with the job hunting process of innocent Middlebury students. The protesters were overtly rude to the CIA and caused potentially irreversible damage to the entire student body. The group, ACT NOW, should be ordered to issue a statement, signed by Christen and directed to the faculty and student body of Middlebury College, apologizing for its actions. Moreover, the individuals that participated in the protest should be brought in front of a review board that will ultimately decide the disciplinary action to be taken against each of the students involved.

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the free press, promoting political terror, and supplying the training and hardware necessary to these covert actions, the CIA has operated out of the sphere of international law and disinformation campaigns, and the appeal of social and economic reform to regions of this globe that have suffered centuries of deprivation and oppression—in many instances compounded by U.S. intervention—has been targeted by the secret teams of the post-war era as Communist propaganda. The business that the Agency does remains at a distance from you even through its language. They do not torture, they "interrogate." They do not assassinate, they "neutralize." They do not terrorize, they "pacify." This position

has been used to support the fact that the purpose of the CIA is to train and support terrorists.

The purpose of Middlebury College is to train self-sufficient minds. The popular culture, asking a logical "To what end?" assumes this training to prepare that self-sufficient mind for "the real world." College, consequently, is seen as an enclave of unreality, one in which dissent is necessarily uninformed about "real life," in which obedience to the "entry-level" paternalism of the job market is mistaken for responsibility and sobriety—in which work in all its aspects is reduced to an act performed to sustain the self-sufficient mind.

Refuse to settle. Your job description may ask you to relay seemingly harmless information. To translate foreign languages. To arrange the travel of your co-workers, to travel yourself. You will call hotels, arrange meetings, review stipends, budgets, cost sheets, you will manage an office. Reports will need to be proofed and edited, even written. At a foreign desk, you may act as a liaison. Few here imagine that the moral sensibilities of Middlebury students are so low as to tie a man's wrist with wire.

Terror is the function of the company. Your support services are necessary to them.

Don't help the CIA kill politicians, critics, reformers, schoolchildren, schoolteachers, clergy, authors, musicians, human rights monitors, funeral attendants and Americans. Do not coordinate for an agency that runs schools for the thugs of the Third World. Middlebury College asks that education remain lifelong, to observe of the rights of others in the immediate and extended community. The CIA does not belong on this campus.

Seth Richardson '90

An alarming problem in Gifford

To the Editor:
 I recently had a very distressing experience. As a resident of the new, improved Gifford Hall, I entered this beautiful new building in September feeling strangely proud and confident. Having spent last year in Hepburn, the other "elevated" dorm on campus, this sense of security was not new to me, but was further reinforced by a dorm that seemed truly fireproof. Here was the safest dorm on campus, a place one could sleep soundly, never once experiencing the terrifying sensation that somewhere in the building, a fire could be raging, claiming lives and property. These new devices detected even the faintest trace of smoke, whether it be a few wisps from a cigarette, or jasmine incense. And as testimony to this foolproof system, the fire alarm sounded a few times in the first few weeks. We all heard them. They were loud and piercing. If ever there was a fire, we'd know it, the second it occurred.

Then, gradually, for one reason or another, we heard the alarm more, and then more. Often these would be heard in the early morning, sometimes late at night, times when we'd be in our rooms, studying, sleeping, or even showering. Now, being a one-time Junior Fire Marshall, I heard these shrill warnings and proceeded outside in a slow, orderly fashion. So did others.

At first, these days, should the Gifford fire alarm sound, you will find many of our hardy residents lounging in their rooms, turning up their stereos to drown out the noise. People hearing the alarm outside will casually proceed to their destination inside. In fact, the alarm cuts into their dreams,

and the hide under their pillows in an attempt to pretend it's not really happening. Well, see, that's the point. It's like the boy who cried wolf, you know? Nobody's going to respond because nobody believes there's a fire. We've just heard that damned sound too many times. Calm crazy, but isn't this a potentially dangerous situation?

"What can be learned"

To the Editor:
 I want to thank you for your careful and balanced report and editorial (Campus, November 3) about Paul Cubeta and the college's handling of the events following his resignation and retirement.

I think it is appropriate that you focussed on the college's unwillingness to acknowledge a year ago that anything at all had happened. This matter goes way beyond the perfect hindsight of which we all are capable. While there is a moral obligation both to respect privacy and at the same time not be governed by fear of litigation and negative publicity, the engendering of public trust may involve risks that must be taken.

This tragic and sad story is not over, and its resolution has not been reached. You are right to be concerned about what can be "learned" from it all: I'd like to believe the administration at least knows now that more extensive consultations might have led to a different sequence of decisions. But a more important outcome is that we, the college community, now reconsider how we deal with such situations. Middlebury College (as well as other institutions) may need a special procedure when charges of intimidation

I don't claim to speak for everyone in Gifford Hall. Nor do I speak for the other dorms on campus which most likely have similar reactions. Next time you hear a fire alarm in your building, run outside. See how many people are out there, no matter what time it is. And then think about how many are not out there.

CLARIFICATION

through sexual harassment arise. These matters are so complex in human terms that the responsibility to assess allegations and to make judgements might well include people with no connections to the college whatsoever.

Although some may see risk in such inclusion, public trust in the process can be enhanced by the willingness to involve outside reviewers when charges of sexual harassment are formally heard.

Sandy Martin
 Chair, Dept. of English

There has been something of a flap over the recent Fat Lady column entitled "Flapdoodle"—many Catholics feel that they have been slandered. Let it be known that the column, rather than a factual description of a new trend in pedagogy, was actually a sarcastic spoof on the state of today's education system. The Catholic Church was used as an example of an institution which has suppressed knowledge in the past (the reference was to Galileo), and all further references to "the church" were intended to mean "organized religion," not "The Roman Catholic Church." Obviously, Catholics are not dedicated to stupidity, ignorance, or lobotomies, nor are they necessarily diehard supporters of Creationist theory—please excuse the misunderstanding.

Geoffrey T. Coffey

ATTENTION: The positions of Opinions Editor and Assistant Opinions Editor are open beginning in January. Any and all interested students are strongly encouraged to apply.

The Opinions Editors are responsible for soliciting pieces about national and campus issues from members of the college community. In addition, the Opinions Editors are responsible for sorting through the voluminous mail received each week and organizing the Op-Ed pages in the Campus.

Potential suitors should be aware of current events and have a grasp on those issues which rock the college campus from week to week.

Applications will be available starting Monday, November 13 at the Student Activities Office.