

OPINIONS

DKE continues to discriminate

by Anne Elizabeth Pellett

Over the past few months, I have been monitoring the fraternity situation with great interest. I was dismayed to learn, upon reading the February 16th issue of the Burlington Free Press, that DKE has decided not to comply with the College's policy regarding the admission of women in fraternities.

I was, however, infinitely more disturbed by what I read in last week's Campus article entitled "Former fraternity begins legal action against College." What moved me the most was the following statement made by John Buttolph III, President of the Alumni Association of the Middlebury chapter of DKE: "It has gone beyond the gender issue. It is about someone's right to force someone else to do something that is against their will"

With all due respect to Mr. Buttolph, I would like to point out that it is precisely DKE's refusal to admit women, it is precisely "the gender issue," which began all of this controversy in the first place. It is DKE's staunch unwillingness to allow female members of the Middlebury College community to join its organization that compelled the administration and the Community Council to expel it from the campus. Gender is the core issue here, and I think Mr. Buttolph has grossly underestimated the intelligence and discernment of the student body if he believes that he can divert their attention away from and gloss over this root problem by making a rather questionable appeal to freedom and the Constitution.

The suggestion that the legal action undertaken by DKE somehow represents a noble crusade against the attempt of one group to force another to do something against its will is, quite simply, ludicrous. Middlebury College is a society of individuals, and every society, every community, must be governed by a set of rules or laws to

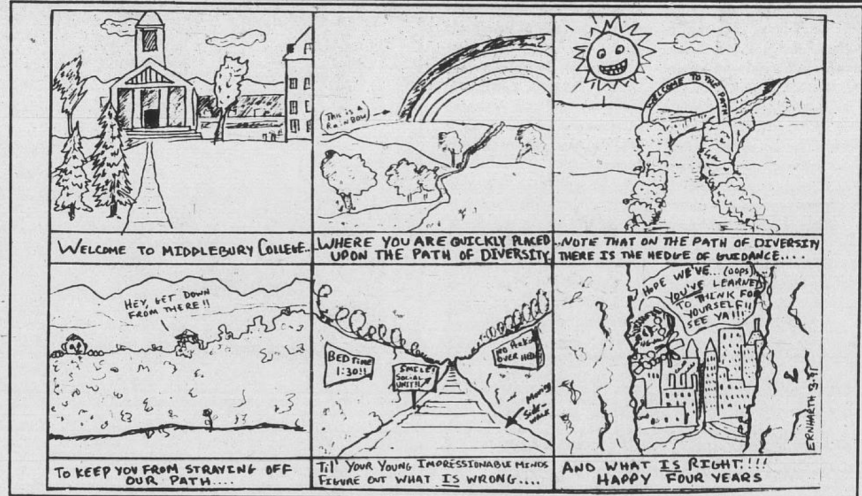
insure that all of its members are treated in a fair and equal fashion. For example, during the 1950s and 1960s, the United States Congress passed legislation to secure greater rights and freedoms for African-Americans as well as to open for African-Americans the same opportunities available to Caucasian men and women. Society recognized that a segment of its population was being wrongfully discriminated against and it took steps to remedy that situation. Of course, there were those who disagreed with the new legislation, and who felt that the government had no right to tell them that had to eat in the same restaurant with, go to school with, work in the same law office with, and use the same water fountains as their African-American neighbors: that

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they had to associate with them as equals.

You are probably wondering what all this has to do with DKE. I submit that Middlebury College, after painstakingly and systematically analyzing its social system, came to a similar conclusion that a segment of its society, namely the female segment, was suffering from a form of discrimination at the hands of the all-male fraternity system. To remedy this, and to gain greater equality for Middlebury women, Middlebury decided that fraternities should become co-educational; it passed "legislation," if you will, to correct an injustice.

Mr. Buttolph and his brethren may not like being forced to do something against their will, but, in some sense, that is the nature of rules and laws. If no



one had the right to make anyone do anything against his/her will, then I guess that we would be living in a state of anarchy. For instance, if John Doe wanted to murder someone nobody

would have the right to tell him he could not do what he wanted to—that would be acting against his will.

In answer to DKE's argument that the College's policy infringes on their freedom of association, I respond that with freedom comes responsibility. If your code of socializing infringes upon the rights of others, renders them unequal, alienates them, and contributes to the social subjugation of the women of this institution, which, as Middlebury College has determined through an extensive investigation, DKE's does, then you are not exercising your freedom of association in a responsible manner and you deserve to lose that freedom.

Finally, in the formulation of its gender discrimination policy, Middlebury College is only mirroring what is occurring in society as a whole. Great forces of change are at work in the real world and for Middlebury to ignore them would mean its certain death as a liberal arts institution.

Such traditionally all-male bastions as the Rotary Club, the New York Athletic Club, the Friar's Club, the Union League Club, and countless others have opened their doors to women—why not DKE? DKE's adamant refusal to welcome female members, the fact that the College's directive to admit females is so "against their will" that they are willing to expend countless hours and thousands of dollars on legal action proclaims loud and clear that gender is indeed the issue and the only issue at stake here.

All I can say is that it is a shame that DKE National does not take "all of [the] resources" it has committed to fight the Middlebury administration and use them to achieve a far more lofty end than the preservation of the "old boy network."

If, as Mr. Buttolph has predicted, "Middlebury become[s] a celebrated test case, with all the attendant national publicity," this is one future alum who will be lending her support to the administration as it valiantly attempts to make needed changes on this campus.

In the light of the sun the truth will shine...

This is in response to Crisen Brooks's "Womagna" when we will see the sun"

Dear Editor,

As I was sitting in the dark auditorium, wrapped up by the cold silence, the warmth of a light made its appearance revealing nine figures, nine chairs, and a platform in the middle. Very simple choreography, but Roshun Austin was not looking for anything fancy and sophisticated; that was not the case. All she was looking for was to have contact with the public and get the message straight to them, in them, for them. Decorating such a crude reality with elegance would only cover up what instead has to be shown in its full nakedness!

The voices of the actors were clear and strong. They were words of strength, anger, justice, dignity, suffering, and wisdom.

My dear friend, we were not there to be impressed by the singers' powerful and beautiful voices. We were there to be confronted with the realities that the so-called "decency" of human beings has produced throughout history.

Roshun Austin managed, in my opinion, very success-

fully to concentrate the cries of millions of people, the sufferings throughout decades, into the mouths of those nine figures, into their words, into their bodies, into their hands... My dear friend, if you felt dismayed by the staged slave auction, I am sorry. That is unfortunately what our developed ancestors used to do: is that not incredible! The problem is that by feeling this astonishment and following the attitude of being dismayed, we are still supporting that reality of the slave auction, we keep alive our ignorance and our lack of wanting to learn the truth about where each one of us come from, why, and where we are going to.

How many of us left that room with something more in our minds, in our hearts? Maybe it is a dream to think that all of us did, but that is the way I like to think! Maybe it is easier to be impressed with beautiful singing and a staged slave auction than open our eyes on ourselves and say: "I have a dream."

I wish you good luck, my friend, and I hope your children will grow to be deeply respected as anyone of us wants and deserves.

Viviana Gentile

The meaning of political correctness at Middlebury

by Daniel E. O'Neill

Regrettably intellectual freedom at Middlebury College, as well as throughout a significant segment of American academia, has been consistently asphyxiated by the pathetically disgusting phenomenon of Political Correctness. It has become painfully evident that Middlebury's administration and faculty have made a deep commitment to the suppression of "incorrect" opinions with regard to sexism, racism, elitism, and various other perceived social inequities and injustices.

The relentless determination, perhaps enthusiasm, demonstrated by several prominent administrators in their drive to eliminate fraternities—to the point of explicitly threatening with suspension and expulsion those students who dare to question, by due process of law, the

college's fraternity policy—is indicative of the authoritarianism of the present Old Chapel regime. Less radical, yet equally abhorrent, is the recent campaign to remind the college community that, among other "offenses," "negative comments concerning sexual orientation" constitute sexual harassment and consequently are subject to administrative discipline. Obviously, dissent from politically correct positions, even when expressed in a peaceful, minimally confrontational manner, is strictly prohibited.

There are, I would suggest, members of the faculty who actually endorse diversity of opinion. Yet the faculty in its entirety is condemnable as well. One need only recall its unsightly role in the abolition of fraternities and observe its current deliberations over a com-

munity service requirement, apparently designed to instill an exceedingly "correct" sense of social consciousness in students. It would appear that much of the faculty is less interested in teach-

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ing than in meddling in the extracurricular lives of the students.

The most recent attempt at thought control is the proposed mandatory course in environmental science, "Cherishing the Earth." While the existence of pressing environmental issues is undeniable, there is at present a vast divergence of opinion re-

garding the severity of the situation and appropriate alleviating measures. The instructors of such a course, who almost certainly would be highly politicized and perhaps environ-

mentally extremist, would find this opportunity to impose their personal views upon students irresistible. Worse, the severe penalties imposed this past fall by Stanford officials on members of the university's marching band following the organization's satire of Oregon's efforts to save a threatened breed of owl reflect the intolerance of

mere disagreement with "correct" environmental thinking. Given this situation, is free thinking really encouraged?

Furthermore, the implementation of "Cherishing the Earth" would represent a dangerous precedent in the hands of those who would require mandatory courses of instruction in the Western culture's continuing oppression of women and minorities. Simply consider the efforts of the University of Texas English Department to replace the equivalent of Middlebury's "Freshmen Writing Courses" with a standard course on the pervasive nature of sexism and racism in contemporary American society. Hayerford College's "Social Justice Requirement," which may be fulfilled by courses such as "Psychological Issues of Lesbians

and Gay Males" or "Feminist Political Theory" is similarly repulsive, yet dangerously near. In short, no course dealing with any single, highly politicized subject should be incorporated as a graduation requirement.

Fortunately, however, there remains one party within the Middlebury community which appears to oppose the College's nonsensical agenda. At the March 10 meeting of the Student Government Association, an overwhelming majority of elected representatives adamantly rejected "Cherishing the Earth." This follows the SGA's initial and subsequent votes affirming its belief that the institution must respect "a student's right to associate with any organization outside the boundaries of the College." Somehow the fact that the stu-

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