Dear Faculty and Staff Members,

After a year long leave of absence, it is good to be back at Chellis House. In spite of budget cuts, we have been able to host a number of engaging academic and activist events this semester.

A series of talks focused on education: To commemorate the tragedy of 9/11, we started off with a talk by Veeda Javaid, Director of Pakistan’s Presbyterian Education Board. She stressed the need to educate boys and girls in order to achieve world peace. Student Genevieve Dukes ’13 talked about her school’s efforts to help teenage mothers continue with their education. With the help of the national organization “Becca’s Closet,” they organized a prom to inspire the young mothers. Middlebury alumna Sheyenne Brown ’09 gave a repeat performance of her one-woman play “A Colored Girl’s College Tour” to great acclaim. In her performance, she brought to light her experiences pursuing her education at an elite liberal arts college. Professor Sarah Hutton from Princeton’s Institute of Advanced Studies introduced us to Anne Conway and Damaris Masham, two of a small minority of 17th century women who were able to pursue an interest in philosophy. Challenging the major philosophers of their times, they argued in favor of the education of women.

In commemoration of Gay History Month, renowned writer David Leavitt talked about Alan Turing, a scientist who broke the Enigma Code, thus significantly contributing to the victory of the Allied Forces in World War II. Professor Leavitt addressed the connections between Turing’s sense of himself as an outsider (a function of his sexuality) and the originality of his thinking.

Over the next weeks, we will continue our series “Health Care—a Human Right or a Commodity?” which was initiated by Professor Ellen Oxfeld with her talk on single-payer health care and its benefits for women and children. On November 11, James Haslam from the Vermont Workers’ Center will talk about his group’s campaign to recognize health care as a basic human right.

In November and December, three events will home in on Latin America and the Caribbean. Writer Julia Alvarez will start the “16 Days of Activism to End Gender Violence” with a talk and slideshow on the Mirabal Sisters, to whose memory the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was dedicated. Tina Escaja, Professor of Spanish at UVM, will talk about women, alterity, and Mexican identity in the novel Like Water for Chocolate, explaining how alterity (otherness) deconstructs the patriarchal principles that have defined and marginalized the identity of Mexican women.

On December 1, World AIDS Day, we will screen the movie Odô Yà! Life with AIDS by Tânia Cypriano (Brazil/USA, 1997), an affirming story of how Candomblé, an Afro-Brazilian religion, has become a source of strength and power for a group of its HIV-positive followers.

I would also like to remind you to come and use Chellis House, the women’s resource center right behind Proctor. This “safe space” for women AND men is open from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day of the week. We have a comfortable living room and kitchen downstairs and a library with two computers upstairs. If you would like to schedule Chellis House for an event, please contact me.

All best,
Karin Hanta, Chellis House Director
Todd Swisher ’09
I’m a senior SOAN major. I’m also a student member of the Sexual Assault Oversight Committee, Feminist Action at Middlebury, and Students Against Violence. Through my affiliation with these groups I will be active in fighting sexual violence here at Middlebury.

The last few years for me have been full of many revelations about just how destructive gender inequality continues to be for women (and, indeed, men). A number of strong women in my life have given me a real education in this regard, as have some great professors. The upshot is that I’m convinced that men must advocate for change along with their female peers if we are to make substantial progress towards gender equality.

A little more about myself… I’m a JOB, a Spanish minor, and an IM soccer player. I will be doing a thesis this year on the role of fantasy and myth in our everyday lives. Hope to see you around!

Ethiopiah Al-Mahdi ’10.5
I entered Middlebury College during the fall of 2005. An original member of the most recent graduating class of 2009, this fall marks my return to the school as well as my unofficial induction into the Class of 2010.5. My time off served as a way to refine and redefine my intro- and extraverted self, particularly in contextualizing the “Middlebury experience.” In this pursuit, I have gained a clarity of self and space that has allowed me to move and operate with better awareness, focus and control.

As an American Studies major, I welcome opportunities that allow me to apply my scholarship to a variety of passion driven interests and activism. I am particularly interested in exploring and discussing issues pertaining to women of color, within the construction of Middlebury and beyond, and the related complexities of multiple, dispersed, and often conflicting identities.

Mariam Boxwala ’13
When coming to Middlebury, I knew that I first wanted to look for activities within my personal field of interest, social activism. Throughout high school I was a member of “Spread the Word,” a club that really got me thinking about not only global, but local activism. Through the guidance of an amazing teacher and mentor, I gained an insight into domestic violence, gender based violence, adolescent struggles, LGBTQ issues, government corruption, and several other issues in the realm of social justice and activism. Although dedicated to awareness around all these ideas, I was particularly drawn to a few — one of which was gender studies; I chose to explore this further, outside the realm of academia. In grade 10, I advocated for ARMAGH, a second stage housing shelter for female survivors of abuse, and through the Youth Philanthropy Initiative program, I was able to win them a grant of $5000. Since then, my interest and volunteer experience in this area has grown tremendously, and it was with this passion that I chose to join the Chellis House. I hope to provide help and assistance wherever it is needed and to enhance my passion for social activism through this great opportunity.
Mahnaz Rezaie ’13
I am an Afghan girl who stepped out of many boundaries and came to Middlebury. Afghanistan is a country where being a woman is a pain. It is a place that if you want to find yourself, you must fight negative cultural beliefs. You need to tolerate people who believe in men’s superiority, but not human dignity, and it is even worse to see that it is educated people who spread these ideas. I am a first year student like others but with a different experience. I realized that finding a golden chance and rare opportunity to come to Middlebury College is very valuable. I came to find myself where I’ve heard you are allowed to be yourself, America.

I experienced being under the regime of the Taliban until my family immigrated to Iran. I experienced true racism in an Islamic country, Iran, when they took me out of the class because I was an Afghan student and did not allow me to study, not until I paid for it. My father was an engineer and paying tuition for his five kids and supporting a family was difficult. We were stuck until we decided to come back to Afghanistan once the Taliban left. My father said, “Life in Afghanistan will be difficult but at least you will have your own future there, you can be educated.”

Gabriela Juncosa Calahorrano ’13
I was born and lived in Ecuador for most of my life. At the of 17, I started to attend United World College in South Wales, UK.

Latin American countries share a unique magic due to the existing diversity in terms of natural environment and their people. This is the kind of place I grew up in, a place that still struggles with making these differences come together without undermining others people’s ways of life. Ecuador is a country in which religion might or might not bring people together and where constant debate is taking place to define who we are as individuals and where we want to go as a country.

Women, regardless of their ethnicity or religious background, play an important role in these ongoing discussions. In my country, women have been recognized as essential to family life and very often they are the ones who make the decisions, but they have also often been discreetly discriminated against in public.

Having experienced this as a young woman, but more importantly as an Ecuadorian woman, has definitely shaped the way I see things and I am looking forward to working at Chellis House to learn other perspectives in this area.
Student Groups at Midd

Women of Color:
Co-Presidents: Mona Quarless ’12 and Shanta´ Lindo ’10

Meeting Times: Sunday, 3 p.m., Chellis House

Women of Color (WOC) is an organization whose mission is to spread sisterhood, support, and profound purpose throughout the Middlebury campus. This organization will work by unifying women of all races and creeds to discuss issues we feel plague us and the greater Middlebury community. For this purpose, we hosted our annual Black and Pearl Ball on October 17th, where the student body was introduced to WOC.

Beyond the Black Pearl Ball we plan on hosting schoolwide discussions on issues such as domestic abuse, eating disorders, and women in higher education. We also plan on having a weekend dedicated to honoring women who have supported us and made a historical or personal difference in our lives. We will be working to establish relationships with other schools as well as strengthen inter-grade relationships among Middlebury women. Our future goal is to host a New England conference for women. Please stay informed about WOC and all of its events!

Distinguished Men Of Color:
Co-Presidents: Dane Verret ’12 Felipe Guevara ’12

Meeting Time: Saturday, 1 p.m. (biweekly) Gifford Annex Lounge

Distinguished Men of Color promotes cultural understanding and awareness amongst all members of Middlebury’s campus by providing an integrated community for men of color on campus.

DMC optimistically seeks to unify and mobilize Middlebury’s cultural groups, particularly within the first-year class. However, DMC grounds itself in its commitment to bring people together—we are focusing on raising campus-wide awareness of social issues in a collaborative effort with a wide spectrum of the cultural organizations.

Further, DMC is continuing an awareness campaign composed of various events that will help Middlebury understand and hopefully support the D.R.E.A.M Act. Initiated last semester, The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, or D.R.E.A.M., would give illegal immigrants who arrived in the U.S. before the age of 15 an opportunity to pursue higher education.

Mona Quarless

Shanta´ Lindo

Felipe Guevara and Dane Verret
African American Alliance (AAA)
President: Tahirah Foy
Meeting times: Sunday, 2 p.m.
Coltrane Lounge

Originally founded in 1967, the African American Alliance (AAA), then known as the Black Students for Mutual Understanding (BSMU), aims to promote cultural leadership and consciousness around various forms of black expression and identity. From visual art to theatre, history, dance, music, literature, government and social science, AAA engages a wide array of disciplines and interests. Cultural enrichment and social activism also play a central role in AAA’s mission.

AAA welcomes and encourages diverse membership through the promotion of entrepreneurial responsibility and community leadership. AAA presents a safe place for all students to discuss issues, both personal and societal, and to celebrate diversity.

Feminist Action at Middlebury (FAM)
Co-Presidents: Carolyn Birsky ’9.5, Cat Campbell ’10.5
Meeting times: Monday, 7 p.m.
Chellis House

Carolyn Birsky ’10.5 currently serves as co-president of Feminist Action at Middlebury, a student group which raises awareness about issues relating to the wellbeing of women both on campus and in society at large. In addition to debates during weekly meetings, FAM also organizes several events throughout the year. Annual mainstays of the FAM calendar include the “I Love My Body” Fashion Show (addressing body image/eating disorders) and Lovefest (addressing violence against women).

Carolyn enjoys exchanging ideas with others passionate about so-called “women’s issues.” These individuals are often other women, but FAM believes in the importance of welcoming male allies to the table.

Carolyn reports that in the coming year FAM will look to join forces with, and share its budget with, other activist organizations on campus, to “make our voice louder.” It will put together its usual complement of events and then brainstorm others together with various partners. Since Carolyn also happens to be a member of the Sexual Assault Oversight Committee, Sister-to-Sister, and Students Against Violence, she has a leg up on creating cross-links between these and other campus entities.
Middlebury Open Queer Alliance (MOQA)

Middlebury Open Queer Alliance (MOQA) is a student organization that welcomes everyone, regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation. MOQA members are diverse politically, culturally, and socioeconomically. Weekly meetings are held on Sunday at 7:30 p.m. at Chellis House, which is an open space for students to freely discuss issues related to the LGBTQ community and its allies. Jean Lin ’10 and Wayu Niederhauser ’12 are working together as MOQA’s co-presidents for the 2009–10 academic year.

Jean Lin ’10 was born in New York City and identifies as Chinese-American. She is a senior at Middlebury College and majors in Japanese Studies. She is interested in women’s healthcare, supporting a women’s right to choose, and raising LGBTQ awareness. She became involved in MOQA during her first year at Middlebury. As a co-president, she aims to emphasize the support aspect of the organization this year.

Wayu Niederhauser ’12 was born in Austria. He studied at Lester B Pearson UWC of the Pacific, British Columbia. He is a sophomore at Middlebury College and he intends to major in Japanese and minor in Psychology and Music. He speaks seven different languages. As MOQA’s co-president he would like to change slightly the approach the group took last year. He feels that in the past the group was focused too much on political issues. Like Jean, Wayu would like to offer more personal support to its members. MOQA will be working on the creation of more spaces for everybody to seek help, join, and find constructive ways to listen to each other’s opinions.

Jean and Wayu encourage people to accept themselves for who they are, hope to raise awareness and deconstruct some common gender stereotypes this year.
Santy Barrera ’12 was born in New York City. His parents came to the United States from Ecuador in 1982. He grew up in Washington Heights, a Hispanic neighborhood mainly comprised of Caribbean immigrants. Santy learned to speak Spanish in and out of the household, thus retaining his Hispanic heritage holistically. Through the Student Sponsorship Program, Santy had the opportunity to study in a private parochial high school in the Bronx. He spent time learning about cultures, wrote fiction, poetry, and short novels in his spare time and was involved in various leadership clubs and internships. In 2008 he applied for the New York Times Scholarship Program, a prestigious academic scholarship competition for New York City high school seniors. The New York Times Committee elected 20 winners out of a pool of 1400 applicants, and Santy was one of them. With a full scholarship, he was able to come to Middlebury College where he plans on double majoring in English and Political Science. Since his arrival, he has been an active member of the Alianza Club and Voice of Indigenous People. His goal is to work and learn to the best of his abilities, with passion and strong dedication, and to take full advantage of everything offered at Middlebury College, to pursue his dreams and change the world.

Mariella Cristina Saavedra ’11 was born in Lima, Peru and moved to Miami with her family when she was five years old. She attended an elementary school with a large Hispanic population and spoke Spanish with her family at home. She remembers being an introspective child and always paying attention to her surroundings. She loves listening and talking with people as a means of learning more about them, herself, and the world as a united entity; this could be the reason why she chose Psychology as a major. She has also enjoyed studying languages and, as early as fourth grade, expressed an interest in learning French. Currently, Mariella is also studying Portuguese and Italian along with Spanish literature. She really likes being in Alianza Latinoamericana y Caribeña, because it allows the Hispanics on campus to get together and share the beauties of our culture: food, dance, and way of life. Mariella feels like she is a mixture of behaviors and words, talking and silence, Spanish and English, Portuguese and Italian…essentially as diverse as she allows herself to be.
In late October, Heidi Grasswick (Philosophy) presented at the “Feminist Legacies/Feminist Futures” conference in Seattle, celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Hypatia, the leading journal in feminist philosophy. Her paper “Developments in Social Epistemology: Where does Feminist Epistemology fit in?” was presented as part of a panel session “Situating Feminist Epistemology in 2009”. Professor Grasswick is currently an Associate Editor of Hypatia.


Shawna Shapiro (Center for Teaching, Learning, Research) had an article published in the HEIS News (published by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages- TESOL) in September of 2009. It is entitled “Resisting Institutional Marginalization at the University of Washington” and is based on her doctoral dissertation research.

Carol Rifelj (French) published an article entitled “Memoirs and Marie-Antoinette: Constructing the Past through Fashion” in the journal Dix-neuf 12 (April 2009).

From August 29 to September 4, 2009, Paula Schwartz (French) participated in the European Summer University at the concentration camp memorial of Ravensbrück (the only concentration camp for women, located northeast of Berlin), where she gave a lecture on gender and the occupation of France, and a workshop on gender-specific aspects of the deportation. This year, the theme of the summer university was “Gender and the Occupation in Poland, France, and Italy.” It was attended by doctoral students and scholars from all over Europe.

Patricia Saldarriaga (Spanish) received a scholarship from the Marion and Jasper Whiting Foundation for an art project in Mexico entitled “Hispanic Religious Art of the Baroque.” The Marion and Jasper Whiting Foundation grant provides funding for a trip to Mexico during her leave year (2009-2010), during which she plans to visit museums, churches and Baroque architecture.

Matty Woodruff (Philosophy) is continuing her research on women and gender in the ancient Greek world, ranging from historical women philosophers to female characters and gender conflicts in Greek tragedy. She gave an invited paper (titled “Antigone on Eros, Friendship, and Androgyny”) for the “Year of Antigones” in Chicago, May 2008, and she had another paper (titled “The Midwife of Ideas and the Priestess of Pregnancy: Reflections of Philosophical Birth in Plato”) accepted for a conference on “Philosophical Inquiry into Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Mothering” at University of Oregon, May 2009.
WAGS 2010 Winter & Spring Term Classes

WAGS 1014 Gender and the South Asian Diaspora
9 hrs. lect (S. Moorti)

SPRING 2010

WAGS/ENAM 0114 Reading Women’s Writing
3 hrs. lect./3 hrs disc. LIT (M. Wells)

WAGS 0200 Foundations in Women’s and Gender Studies SOC CMP
(S. Moorti)

THEA/WAGS 0206 Contemporary Women Playwrights (CW)
3 hrs. lect. ART LIT (C. Faraone)

WAGS/AMST 0230 Gender Images in American Popular Culture (CW)
3 hrs. lect. NOR (H. Allen)

WAGS/JAPN 0250 Gender in Japan (in English) LIT AAL (L. White)

WAGS/ENAM 0270 Postcolonial Literatures: Passages from India
3 hrs. lect/disc. LIT CMP (Y. Siddiqi)

WAGS/SOAN 0304 Women, Culture and Power in Comparative
Perspective (CW 5)
3 hrs. lect/disc. SOC AAL CMP (E. Oxfeld)

FMMC/WAGS 0347 Remote Control: Global TV Culture
3 hrs. lect ART SOC NOR CMP (S. Moorti)

WAGS/HIST 0393 A History of Gender in Early America (CW)
3 hrs. lect/disc. HIS NOR CMP (A. Morsman)

WAGS/PHIL 0434 Feminist Epistemologies
3 hrs. sem.
PHL CMP (H. Grasswick)
Rayna Rogowsky
What I learned from WAGS

Through WAGS I developed academically and personally by getting a lens to look at a number of issues that are important to me and affect the way I want to live and communicate and the work I want to do. I was constantly engaged with everything I studied, and was able to be in close contact with all of my professors throughout. The opportunity to develop a lens throughout my studies as well as the academic and personal support from my professors was my biggest take-away. I have felt that my studies always felt relevant and contributed to my professional development as an advocate...

My thesis
My thesis was called “Herstory Helping History: ‘The Visions and Struggles of the Battered Women’s Movement’ in Vermont.” I attempted to portray the history of the early movement in Vermont by interviewing some of the women who helped start the first domestic violence shelters and programs in their communities (in Burlington, Brattleboro, Rutland and Addison County).

What I am doing now:
Over the summer I worked full-time as an advocate at WomenSafe and I started my AmeriCorps position in Portland, Oregon in September. I am at an organization called Insights Teen Parent Program. I have a few different roles: I’m co-facilitating a Teen Parents Seminar at an alternative high school. The class is an elective for all students who are pregnant and parenting. I am also conducting the initial intake and light case management through home visits for an Insights program that works with parents on child development assessments, school readiness and child well-being. In addition, I am facilitating weekly drop-in hours when teens in Insights programs can access our food and donation shelves. Furthermore, I serve on number of committees and task forces related to teen pregnancy and parenting. I’ve started attending and participating in the planning of a statewide Adolescent Sexuality Conference scheduled for the Spring.

Zohra Safi
When I came to Middlebury as an international student from Afghanistan, I was interested in majoring in a field that would enable me to excel academically while being involved in activities that would give me some rudimentary social justice skills. During the first week of school, I learned about the WAGS program and after attending one of the events in Chellis, I was greatly inspired by the energy and commitment of the staff, faculty and students towards improving gender parity in our communities. Without a second thought, I declared WAGS as one of my majors and over the four years the Women’s and Gender Studies program offered me the best liberal arts education I could hope for. It gave me the tools and knowledge to work for women’s
emPOWERment and I believe when I return to my home country of Afghanistan, the skills I have acquired will significantly help me in tackling issues pertinent to women and gender.

**My thesis:**
My senior thesis was about forced and arranged marriages in Afghanistan. It was titled “A Union of Coercion and Arrangement: Forced and Arranged Marriages in Afghanistan.” Working on this project was a very fulfilling experience for me as I dealt with one of the most critical problems women face in Afghanistan. Furthermore, I became aware of the important distinctions between forced and arranged marriages and the custom of Baad marriages. The conclusion highlighted the need to find Afghan-based solutions to problems that women experience.

**What I’m doing now:**
My post-Middlebury life has taken me to West Virginia where I work at the Bailey & Glasser law firm. I’m planning on pursuing a legal career where my WAGS education will certainly be an asset.

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**Christine Bachman**

**What I learned from WAGS**
From the very beginning of my time at Middlebury, I felt quite at home in the WAGS program. In the various courses I took as a joint WAGS and SOAN major I was given a brand new vocabulary of feminist, gender, and queer theories with which to analyze the world we live in. Together with my professors and classmates, I was allowed the opportunity to challenge the boundaries of heteronormativity and patriarchy, constantly confronting my own assumptions about gender, sexuality, race, nationality, class, and so on. The Program in Women’s and Gender Studies, and the faculty that drive it, are largely responsible for my addition to gender and queer theory, and the resulting impossibility of my ever seeing the world as I used to—so, thank you!

**My thesis:**
My senior thesis, “Grabbing Madonna’s Crotch: Queering Gender, Sexuality, Race, Class, and Age,” examines Madonna’s use of the “crotch grab,” or in other words, her use of the Phallus and phallic power. In order to explore the importance of the crotch grab, I conducted a content analysis of several of Madonna’s most significant music videos, live performances, and tours throughout the past two and a half decades. In these performances, the crotch grab becomes an important intersection of meaning, as Madonna uses gender, sexuality, race, class and age to communicate an ever-changing message to the audience. To think through the significance of the crotch grab, I draw primarily on the theories of Judith Butler, Judith Halberstam, Pierre Bourdieu, Anne McClintock, Lee Edelman, Michel Foucault, and Donna Haraway. In my analysis of Madonna’s crotch grab, I seek to discover whether or not Madonna queers gender, sexuality, race, class and age. Throughout this year of research and writing, Madonna helped me to learn that for those already marked as “other,” power can only be attained by queering it.

**What I’m doing now:**
These days, I am living in the North End of Boston, Massachusetts, and working for a non-profit called Cambridge Cares About AIDS, coordinating agency-wide volunteer projects, events, and a lecture series called HIV Today. I am enjoying living where there are more people than cows, and I’m keeping busy exploring the ins and outs of the Boston area. I’m already feeling the academic itch, and plan to attend graduate school within the next three years.
Interview with Catharine Wright

Catharine Wright is a Visiting Lecturer in Writing and currently teaches in the Writing Program. She also is the faculty liaison to the Queer Studies House.

What role did you play in the formation of the Queer Studies House? Who were other prominent figures in this formation?

I did not play a role in the formation of the house other than to write a letter of support to the Community Council. The key figures in forming the house were three students, all MOQA officers: Christine Bachman, Ryan Tauriainen, and Molli Freeman-Lynde, and a number of faculty and staff members, most notably Sujata Moorti, Roman Graf, and Laurie Essig.

For how long has the creation of such a house been in progress? Were there many hurdles in attaining this goal?

I understand that in the 1990s several students tried to create a house that would serve as a safe space for LGBTQ students, but that their proposal was turned down. No major initiatives occurred on that front until the fall of 2007 when Christine, Ryan and Molli, with the support of MOQA and guidance from faculty and staff, drafted an initial proposal for the current house. They made a critical, important decision to propose an academic house, not an identity based house, for Middlebury. They researched LGBTQ residential and academic houses on other college campuses, delineated the role the house would play in relation to Chellis House, WAGS and MOQA, and outlined the origins of queer studies as a discipline. They garnered the support of the SGA despite the opposition of some of its leadership, and in January 2008 they presented their proposal to a packed house at community council. Dozens of people showed up in body to support the proposal and many others wrote letters. It was an exciting and emotional time for many people—the product of a lot of hard work.

What mission does the Queer Studies House hope to pursue?

The original mission was clearly articulated by the founders of the house—that the house would serve as a space for students interested in queer studies; that it would be a gender neutral space where students of all sexual orientations—not just queer students—are welcome. Applications to live at the house ask students to talk about their interests in relation to queer studies, not to identify their sexuality. The current RA, Kyle Drevline, feels strongly that the mission of the house is to offer programming that pertains to all Middlebury students. They have Thursday evening tea with live music that is open to the whole community: In early October they hosted an open mike at the Gamut Room on coming out stories. They want all interested students to feel welcome to learn, discuss issues, share experiences. And of course it’s not like the only thing they talk about at the teas are issues pertaining to sexuality; they’re also talking about other areas of interest.
about the Queer Studies House

What type of student lives in the Queer Studies House? Are there requirements?

Any student with an interest in the house is welcome to apply for residency.

What does the Queer studies house provide to the changing social and academic climate of the campus?

Oh, gosh, its really very exciting—queerness is such a liberating concept, and bringing attention to queer studies can only invigorate the scholarship of students across the disciplines. There’s so much in literature and art and the social sciences to explore in relation to sexuality—so much human history to examine through that lens. I remember the first time I heard about queer theory was at an event at Cook Commons—a speaker had been brought in from San Francisco and I was bringing essays pertaining to gay and lesbian existence into my writing classes, and I hadn’t heard about queer theory! This was in the early or mid 90s. The room was packed, and as he explained queer theory I remember having this sensation that things were falling, like shingles, from around my body, as though it had been in a case and the case was falling apart. It wasn’t about gay liberation—I had experienced that and its profound political implications. It was something even deeper, having to do with our understanding of ourselves as beings, sexual beings but also beings in other ways—escaping the pervasive sense of duality that controls us. I find that many Middlebury students have a sense of what the word “queer” means but they don’t really know the theory. The history of the word is also interesting, of course—taking a pejorative term and making it into something new. This is all a long way of saying that having a QSH on campus will play a significant role in bringing to students’ attention the relevance of this topic—its connection to so many aspects of our lives. The timing is great, too, that we now have the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity and the QSH. I think that Chellis House, the CCSRE and the QSH can work together in exciting ways to support programming and scholarship that examines social issues. Having each of these houses and centers—some run by faculty and staff, and others by students—contributes to a synthesis of academic and social life is important. We live in a hybrid world and Middlebury is increasingly waking up to the academic side of this. The QSH will also help to socially legitimize the range of gender and sexuality expressions on campus—this will be useful to a range of students including those who are currently questioning their own gender or sexuality. The significance of all of this really can’t be overestimated—it affects peoples’ thinking, their ability as future leaders, and the depth and breadth of their lives.

“...as he explained queer theory I remember having this sensation that things were falling, like shingles, from around my body, as though it had been in a case and the case was falling apart. It wasn’t about gay liberation—I had experienced its profound political implications. It was something even deeper, having to do with our understanding of ourselves as sexual beings but also beings in other ways—escaping the pervasive sense of duality that controls us.”
Update: Sexual Assault Oversight Committee continues to work towards a safer campus
By Todd Swisher ’10

As the school year proceeds, the Sexual Assault Oversight Committee (SAOC), created in the fall of 2008 to coordinate Middlebury’s sexual assault education, prevention, response, and assessment efforts, shifts into gear once again. Chaired by Karen S. Guttentag, Associate Dean of the College, the fifteen-member SAOC consists of faculty, staff, and student members. Together the members of the Committee are seeking to reform the school’s sexual assault policy and to reinforce the new policy by improving the services Middlebury provides to survivors, as well as promoting community norms that make assault a less likely occurrence here on campus.

Last year the SAOC split into several subcommittees, each of which was charged with a separate facet of the larger task. The “Policy and Procedure” subcommittee, for instance, researched other schools’ sexual assault policies and made a “wish list” of what they would like to see in a revised Middlebury policy. The “Web/Communication” subcommittee, meanwhile, drafted the blueprint for a website that will consolidate information about sexual assault, including emergency info, policy, procedures, internal and external resources, and information for special groups (men, GLBTQQ, etc.). This summer a new poster was drafted. It outlines which resources on/off campus are confidential and which are not.

Additionally, a subcommittee dedicated to “Resources and Support” issued an all-school survey in April which assessed what kind of support students coping with sexual assault felt they needed and how they were accessing and experiencing existing support. Nearly 500 students weighed in. Their responses indicated that students who believe they may have experienced sexual assault are leaning on their friends, highlighting the need for students to be made aware of how they can help in such circumstances. Enter the “Education and Prevention” subcommittee, whose work covers not only how to disseminate basic information to students, but how to encourage students to intervene in potentially dangerous situations they see happening before them.

In 2009-2010 the work continues much where it left off. I’m honored to be one of the new student members of the SAOC, along with Carolyn Birsky ’10.5 and Andrea Jones ’10. In addition to us, several other students will be contributing to the subcommittees on an informal basis. Said subcommittees have been reshuffled somewhat as the SAOC enters its next phase. A new group is processing the results of the all-school survey. Another group is investigating what grants may be available to fund (and, with luck, expand) the sexual assault-related programs.
WAGS-Chellis Calendar of Events

Wednesday, November 11, 7 p.m., Axinn 109
Como Agua Para Chocolate
Movie Screening of Alfonso Araú’s 1992 film based on Laura Esquivel’s novel in preparation for

Thursday, November 19, 4:30 p.m., Robert A. Jones ’59 Conference Room
Women, Alterity, and Mexican Identity in Como Agua para Chocolate
Lecture by Tina Escaja (Spanish Dept., University of Vermont)

Friday, November 13, 12:15 p.m., Chellis House
Flawed Light: American Women Poets and Alcohol
Talk by Brett Millier (English & American Literatures) on her recently published book.

Friday, November 13, 12:15 p.m., R. A. Jones ’59 House Conference Room
Fumatrici: Women and Cigarettes in Italy from the Belle Epoque to the 1960s
Lecture by Carl Ipsen (Dept. of History, Indiana University)

Event Series: Health Care – A Human Right or a Commodity?
Wednesday, November 11, 4:30 p.m., Library 201
How Vermont Can Lead the Country & Make Healthcare a Basic Human Right
Talk by James Haslam (Vermont Workers’ Center)

16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence
Every year since 1991, tens of thousands of activists from every region of the world have taken part in this campaign. Its central messages—women’s rights are human rights and violence against women constitutes a violation of human rights—have been a rallying call for the women’s movement.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
Tuesday, November 17, 7 p.m., Library 201
Chasing the Butterflies
Talk and Slideshow Presentation by Julia Alvarez on the Mirabal Sisters, to whose memory the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was dedicated

On the occasion of World AIDS Day
Tuesday, December 1, 5 p.m., Axinn 220
The AIDS Game
Our AIDS Game is a great way to test your knowledge of HIV and AIDS.

Tuesday, December 1, 7 p.m., Location TBD
Odô Yà! Life with AIDS
Film by Tânia Cypriano (Brazil/USA, 1997, 58 mins.)

This is the affirming story of how Candomblé, an Afro-Brazilian religion, has become a source of strength and power for a group of HIV-positive people. Shot in Rio de Janeiro, São Paolo and Bahia, it shows the rituals of Candomblé and Carnival. It features the personal struggles and words of wisdom from those whose faith has brought endurance and pride.

On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre
Wednesday, December 2, 7 p.m., Gamut Room
Candelier Vigil and Talk
The Montreal Massacre, during which Marc Lepine shot 14 female engineering students on December 6, 1989 because he “hated feminists,” went down in history as one of the worst single-day femicides. It has led to stricter gun control laws in Canada and the world-wide propagation of the “White Ribbon Campaign” to signify opposition to violence against women.
Watch for white ribbons around campus!
Prom Dresses & Pregnancy

Genevieve Dukes, a first year student at Middlebury College, gave a spirited talk about “Prom Dresses & Pregnancy” at Chellis House. In highschool, she headed the Tulsa chapter of “Becca’s Closet.” This national organization provides formal attire to high school students who would otherwise not be able to afford a dress.

“Becca’s Closet” has a total of 80 chapters around the country; they follow a no questions asked policy and do not require any financial information. They work on donation basis, receiving both money and clothes from the community.

Genevieve also started to volunteer at the Margaret Hudson Program, an alternative school for teenage parents. Genevieve, together with her peers, decided to support the program by offering academic support and helping out in the nursery service. Also, they wanted help create as normal and fulfilling a high school experience as possible for their friends at Margaret Hudson. That is how the idea of organizing a prom came up. Many dresses from Becca’s Closet came in handy. Margaret Hudson students reported that the prom for them was a really empowering experience and motivated them to finish their education.

If you would like to find out more about Becca’s Closet and/or start a chapter in Middlebury, go to www.beccascloset.org. Please contact Chellis House director Karin Hanta for information about space (khanta@middlebury.edu).

Educating Women and Children in Pakistan: Building Peace in a Post-9/11 World

On Friday, September 11, 2009, Veeda Javaid gave a talk on the education of women and children in Pakistan. Veeda Javaid is the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan (PEB). Presbyterian educational work was first introduced to Indo-Pakistan by an American group in 1856. It focused on providing quality education for the poor, irrespective of class, color or creed, and, a revolutionary idea at the time, girls.

In 1972 the Pakistani government nationalized all private schools. During that time, the government’s budget for education was less than 3% of the GDP and the quality of education was poor. Since 1998, however, eight schools have returned to PEB’s control.

PEB is mainly concerned with offering quality education at an affordable cost; according to Ms. Javaid, “quality education builds bridges to develop a peaceful society.” This kind of education includes courses on cross-cultural understanding and tolerance. In this way, PEB hopes to work for a more inclusive and just Pakistan.

Incidentally, Ms. Javaid’s talk took place on 9/11. “Tragedies give us a clue” said Ms. Javaid. “a clue as to how make people work together and not against each other.” “The interwovenness of religious beliefs, education and gender roles, combined with a fundamentalist approach to religion, leads to conflict. It therefore is very important to educate girls, not against their religion and beliefs, but to give them the necessary tools in order to help them stand up for themselves.” If you would like to find out more about the organization, visit www.friendsofpeb.org.
Sexual Assault Facts

✓ In 90% of college cases the offender is known to the victim (ex. a classmate, friend, or acquaintance)

✓ It is estimated that 20-25% of college women will be victims of an attempted rape or completed rape during their college careers

✓ First-year students are most at risk for being sexually assaulted during their first six weeks of school

✓ On average, at least 50% of college students’ sexual assaults are associated with alcohol use

✓ In light of these frightening statistics, take care of yourself and take care of each other!

Students against Violence

President: Kenzie Chin ’10.5

Kenzie Chin is a senior from Belmont, Massachusetts. A Sociology/Anthropology major, she is also pursuing a minor in Chinese. This academic year she is heading Students Against Violence, a group which aims to get students talking about the issues of rape and sexual assault on campus, with the intention that out of such conversations will come community efforts towards protecting ourselves and our friends (male and female) from getting involved in distressing situations.

Kenzie has chosen to dedicate herself to Students Against Violence out of a conviction that “women and men should have equal rights” including the right to “freedom from being sexually assaulted.” She knows the topic can be intimidating, but she believes strongly that it must be confronted here at Middlebury and everywhere else it occurs.

Over the course of 2008-2009 SAV will hold discussions, artistic events, and workshops focusing on sexual assault prevention. In these endeavors, SAV plans to collaborate with organizations such as Feminist Action at Middlebury and the Sexual Assault Oversight Committee. Kenzie welcomes individuals with an initiative in mind to approach her, saying, “I’d like to really let whoever has an idea for an event take the lead, and I’ll do everything in my power to help facilitate it.”