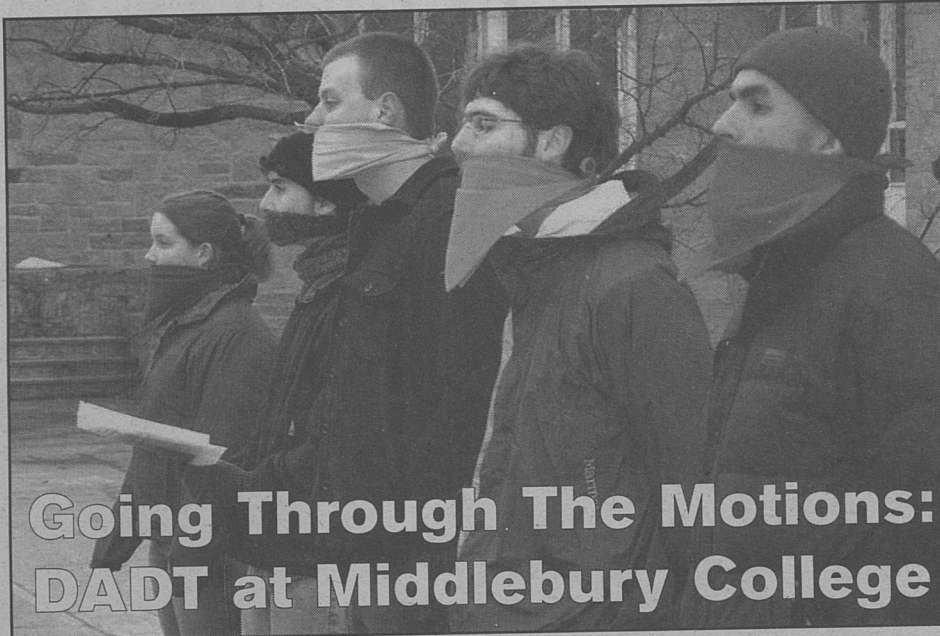


BY KEVIN MOSS

Middlebury – Queer students, faculty, and staff at Middlebury College were surprised to return for the spring semester and find that a Marine recruiter was scheduled to appear, in spite of the fact that the military ban on open gay and lesbian servicemen conflicts with the college's non-discrimination policy. Because of the Solomon Amendment, which denies federal funds to colleges and universities if they don't allow military recruiters, Middlebury allows any employer on campus if its representatives first hold a meeting to 'explain' the discriminatory policy.

Marine Captain David Doucette led a discussion of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" on Tuesday, February 8. Over 160 students, faculty, and staff attended. Under rigorous questioning, the recruiter's comments stayed close to the text of the policy.

Members of the Middlebury College community asked questions about such issues as lesbian baiting, parallels between arguments used to exclude LGBT service members and those used against racially integrating the military in the 1940s, and the fact that requiring service members to lie would seem to be a



Going Through The Motions: DADT at Middlebury College

Middlebury students stage a silent protest outside a talk given by Marine recruiter David Doucette

breach of the service's professed values of honor and integrity.

Doucette claimed queer service members would not be forced to lie, because they cannot be asked direct questions about homosexuality. When asked why it was better

for soldiers not to know someone serving with them is queer, he drew an analogy to pedophiles and bank robbers.

Statistics fueled more questions: why are women twice as likely to be discharged in proportion to their representation in

the service? Why, if homosexuals are incompatible with good order and discipline, have discharges gone down since 2001, when we are at war? Doucette's most frequent answer: "I don't know."

The following day, Capt. Doucette manned an information table at one of the student dining halls, while concerned students, with some faculty and staff, staged a silent protest outside. They wore colorful gags and stood at attention to represent the queer service members who are gagged by the law. JS Woodward, one of the students who organized the protest, collected signatures on a letter to the President and Trustees of the College to change the policy that allowed Doucette to recruit on campus. Queer members of the college community and their allies plan a push to change the college policy to ban all employers who discriminate.

The Solomon Amendment has been legally challenged by the Forum for Academic and Individual Rights and was held as unconstitutional by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. The case is being appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. ▼

Kevin Moss is a professor of Russian at Middlebury College, and a member of GLEAM.

Orb Weaver Attacker Pleads Guilty

Middlebury – The man charged with attacking Marian Pollack and Marjorie Susman pled guilty in Addison County District Court last month. In mid-December, a man broke into the women's home in Monkton, threatened to kill Susman,

and attempted to stab Pollock with a knife. The women fought off their attacker, who then left, bleeding profusely from a head wound (see *OITM*, February 2005).

James Peck, 41, of Burlington, was arrested within an hour in a truck driven by an accom-

plice. The truck matched the description of one seen driving away from Orb Weaver Farm just after the attack.

Peck, who had demanded "weed" from the women during the attack, pled guilty to burglary and carrying a dangerous weapon in the

commission of a felony. Judge Christina Reiss accepted his abrupt change of plea at what was supposed to have been a "status hearing" and sentenced him to 10 to 25 years in prison; Peck began serving his sentence immediately. Charges of aggravated assault and kidnapping were

dropped.

"We are very, very happy to put this behind us," said Marjorie Sussman. "We were glad that John Quinn, who was the prosecutor, took it as seriously as he did. I would have wished that we didn't have to plea bargain it down to only two crimes ... I felt that the aggravated assault was a very real charge and wished that he had been charged with that also, but we'll take what we get.

"The whole thing seems like a very strange dream," she added, "and I'm glad that it didn't go to trial, and I'm glad that it's pretty much over." Sussman said she and her partner Marian Pollack were not in the courtroom for the sentencing.

A month before Peck attacked the lesbian dairy farmers, someone vandalized more than 200 rounds of handmade cheese, nearly a year's production, by puncturing the rinds. That crime remains unsolved.

After both attacks community support poured in for the cheesemakers. Some supporters sent checks, which have been set aside for a reward fund in the unsolved crime. ▼

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