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## Celebrating Queer

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5th, with the film *Totally F\*\*\*ed Up*. On Tuesday the 8th, about 100 students, faculty, and staff sat down to break bread for what was billed as an ally dinner. Supportive straights, wearing rainbow colored triangle pins, joined the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning community to empower each other and to formally begin the festivities.

Thursday afternoon, November 10th, found award-winning poet, Mark Doty, reading from his poems to a receptive audience in Middlebury's Chateau Grand Salon. The setting was befitting of Doty, whose book, *My Alexandria*, won the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize.

Later that evening, an enthusiastic crowd gathered in McCullough gym to laugh at the jokes of gay comedian Scott Silverman. Silverman, who has found fame celebrating gay life and spoofing gay stereotypes, did not disappoint his audience. He gave humorous glimpses into his life by discussing his lack of fashion sense, love of cars, college experiences, and his family. He told of his life - a life different from yet surprisingly similar to many Vermonters. When not on the road, Scott splits his time between LA and San Francisco, where his mom marches with him in Pride Day Parades. In fact, he had such a supportive family that rather than wanting him to stay in the closet they helped drag him out saying, "What took you so long?!" His mother

actually forced him to listed to Erasure! Silverman joked about the traumas of meeting new men and forming relationships - even in San Francisco where his opening line is: "Hi, want to be my ex-boyfriend?" He talked of his relationship with his father and step-mother - who is only a few days older than he is. His advice for his father regarding romantic problems is not to divorce her, but to simply "ground" her!

Friday's events brought a more serious tone to the Festival. A day of academic papers began with professor Roman Graf's Plenary address, "We're not in Kansas anymore! - From Feminism to Queer-studies". Introduced by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Graf's talk invoked Glinda the good witch's "Come out! Come out, where-ever you are" along with Eve Sedgwick's gender studies. Graf, who teaches German language and literature, was hired by Middlebury College as an openly gay man. He stressed that the rainbow celebrates inclusivity, tolerance, and peace; that place beyond the rainbow where "troubles melt like lemon drops" and where queer lives are lived in their own way is indeed reachable. He concluded that by Middlebury College holding this symposium, it was granting recognition of queer lives - as if finally listening for voices straining to be heard.

Following the Plenary address the symposium broke for lunch. Many of the

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